

The times and spaces of racist violence: pathways to violence in protest against Swedish migrant accommodation, 2012–2017

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Abstract

All explanations of racist violence, across historical periods and national contexts, have to face the tension between diversity and unity. On one hand, racist violence is very diverse, involving a wide range of actors, motives and means. On the other, diverse cases of racist violence typically occur at approximately the same time, against the same targets, and in the same places. Rather than solve this tension, existing research reinforce it by disaggregating individual cases into narrower, decontextualized categories, or by disregarding diversity altogether.

This thesis approaches the problem of unity and diversity by locating cases of racist violence in time and space, examining how attacks emerge from causes located in meso-level interactions between different assailants, and between assailants and wider networks of racist protesters and their opponents in bounded geographical areas. Applying the processual framework from social movement theory, the thesis studies these interactions in the context of local protest against migrant accommodation in Sweden between 2012 and 2017. The thesis thereby observes a wide variety of assailants, including radical right activists, youth gangs and “ordinary” residents, interacting with local politicians and government authorities, moderate organizations and mainstream political parties across 85 local cases. In order to study these cases, the thesis combines protest event analysis of nearly 3000 violent and nonviolent events with qualitative case studies based on primary and secondary data from municipal and court documents, social movement organizations and political parties, social media, and 61 interviews with actors on different positions vis-à-vis migrant accommodation

The main outcome of the thesis is a typology of six pathways to violence, each consisting of a specific combination of causal mechanisms and occurring across a variety of empirical settings. The typology is based on the distinction of three different temporal sequences between violent and nonviolent protest, and two spatial orientations in the framing and organization of protest. Across four empirical chapters, the thesis develops the central causal mechanisms within each pathway, locates them in the course of the empirical cases, and shows how different pathways are associated with contextual conditions at the local and national level. The thesis details the processes through which violence emerges out of weakly coordinated sets of locals, private networks, radical right milieus, and cells of violent specialists, in parallel with, after, or independently of, nonviolent protest.

The thesis contributes to the study of racist violence, and to the study of political violence more broadly. In the literature on racist violence, the thesis contributes to the bridging of unity and diversity by contextualizing instances of violence in their broader spatial and temporal setting. It also contributes to the interpretation of contextual causes, and to the interpretation of different types of actors in relation to violent protest. In the literature on political violence, the thesis contributes an analysis of violence in contexts where protest is weakly coordinated, informal and largely occurs in private settings. It thereby helps extend the analysis of political violence away from a focus on repeated public confrontations, and onto the dynamic between public and private interactions.

Keywords: racist violence, processual framework, radical right, political violence, refugee crisis

Foreword

This thesis is the result of four years of long walks, train rides, plane rides and bus rides. It is the result of pacing alongside the railway from Novoli to Palazzo Strozzi, listening to *Killed by death* and getting more or less brilliant fieldwork ideas. It is the result of hiking through the Scanian countryside and glimpsing pieces of analysis between the cattle standing in front of me. It is the result of 10-hour workdays in the depth of December in a freezing Luleå apartment. Across a pandemic and through the chaos of trying to live abroad for the first time, the thesis has been one of very few constants. To let go of it feels strange to say the least.

There are, of course, other constants. Throughout our distant- and not-so-distant relationship, Alina put up with all of my stress and anxiety and nervous energy. I love her even when I am too tired to speak. My parents were supportive from the start, and without them I am not sure I would have gone to Florence at all. At Palazzo Strozzi, at Sardo, at the cantines and elsewhere, the SNS community made university life feel as warm and intimate as high school ever was. Back in Malmö, Sara, Robin, David, and so many others kept me grounded in real life. When thesis anxiety overwhelmed me, Jesper was my biggest source of comfort and escape. Kärstin and Robert, in very different ways, made the thesis seem significant in ways few others could. Finally, I'm deeply thankful to everyone whom I've been in bands and other projects with, for keeping me in touch with what's important and for putting up with my complicated living situation. In short, I would have gone insane without Von K, Välkommen till Malmö, Tiny Oceans, The Dive, Hast, and whatever number of others.

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I dedicate this entire thesis to Gunnel Sundkvist. I think you would have been proud.

List of abbreviations

ABT	Temporary accommodation facility (<i>Anläggningsboende, tillfälligt</i>)
HVB	Residential care (<i>Hem för vård och boende</i>)
M	The Conservative party (<i>Moderaterna</i>)
MV	The Swedish Migration Authority (<i>Migrationsverket</i>)
NAK	No to Asylum Centres in Kungsbacka (<i>Nej till asylboenden i Kungsbacka</i>)
ND	The National Democrats (<i>Nationaldemokraterna</i>)
NMR	The Nordic Resistance Movement (<i>Nordiska motståndsrörelsen</i>)
NU	Nordic Youth (<i>Nordisk ungdom</i>)
PEA	Protest event analysis
S	The Social Democrats (Socialdemokraterna)
SM	Social movement [theory/studies/literature]
SSH	Svenska semesterhem
SvP	The Party of the Swedes (Svenskarnas parti)
SÄPO	The Swedish Security Service (Säkerhetspolisen)

1 Introduction

1.1 Background and aim

Racist violence is a puzzling phenomenon in the universe of political violence. Broadly defined as the infliction of “physical or psychological damage to individuals or property with the intention of influencing various audiences for affecting or resisting political, social, and/or cultural change” (Bosi & Malthaner, 2015, p. 439) with regard to issues of “ethnic, ‘racial,’ religious, cultural or national origin,” (Bjørger & Witte, 1993, p. 6), it is incredibly diverse in terms of means, motives and actors (see also Blee, 2005, 2017a). In some cases, the concept can refer to drunken spur-of-the-moment attacks against single individuals, involving youth gangs and subcultural groups. In others, it can refer to mass riots, terrorist attacks or pre-meditated mass killings of political opponents (e.g. Bjørger & Witte, 1993; Brass, 2005; Horowitz, 2000; Ravndal, Lygren, Ravik Jupskås, & Bjørger, 2020).¹ At a higher scale of analysis, however, different types of racist violence are surprisingly unified, as different actors, each possessing different means and motives, come to use violence at the same time and in the same places (Disha, Cavendish, & King, 2011; Esser & Brosius, 1996; Frey, 2020; Jäckle & König, 2018; Müller & Schwarz, 2018). Whether we look at segregationist violence in 1960s US, anti-minority violence in early 1990s Germany, or nationalist violence in the crumbling USSR, we see how very different actors come together to commit simultaneous acts of violence in the name of the same ethnic, racial, religious, cultural or national identities and frames (Beissinger, 2002; Blee, 2005; Karapin, 2007).

Most current explanations of racist violence reinforce, rather than solve, these tensions. Some authors emphasize the diversity of violence by adopting narrower concepts based on the attackers’ modus operandi and/or ideological profile – e.g. radical right violence, hate crime, or right wing terrorism (Bjørger, 2003; Deloughery, King, & Asal, 2012; Mills, Freilich, & Chermak, 2015; Ravndal, 2015) – or on the victims’ characteristics– e.g. xenophobic violence, anti-migrant violence or interethnic violence (Bhavnani, 2006; Fourchard & Segatti, 2015; Karamanidou, 2016). Others reject diversity altogether by focusing on the macro-level conditions – e.g. socioeconomic grievances, the scale of migration, or political opportunities –

¹ Throughout the thesis, I knowingly exclude cases of state-sanctioned or state-conducted violence. This decision owes entirely to analytical considerations, as the scale and institutionalization of state violence makes it very different in causal terms from its non-state counterparts. In discussing this issue, it is important to note that states are the main perpetrators of violence based on ethnic, national, or racial categories, even in the European Union (Karamanidou, 2016; Walia, 2021). Aside from obvious cases of ethnic persecution and genocide, the enforcement of internal and external borders in the EU and beyond causes the deaths of thousands of migrants annually. Noting the scale of violence, the international organization for migration has declared the Mediterranean the “world’s deadliest border” (IOM, 2017).

that make violence more or less likely in a given time and space (Dancygier, 2010; Dancygier, Egami, Jamal, & Rischke, 2019; Doering & Davies, 2021; Garcia, 2015; Jäckle & König, 2019; Koopmans & Olzak, 2004; McLaren, 1999). The result of the former is a theoretically fragmented literature, an excessive focus on single events, and insufficient attention to the broader context of violence (Blee, 2005; Ravndal, 2017). The result of the latter is a body of contradictory results, with mostly weak explanatory power, which forces us to question whether racist violence can be treated as a unitary phenomenon at all. Hence, while the existing literature has contributed greatly to understanding the nuances of racist violence, as well as its overall patterning, it has not been satisfactory in explaining its causes.²

The tension between unity and diversity that characterizes racist violence can help us discuss and understand the complexity of political violence in a broader sense. I therefore find it useful to maintain the concept not despite, but because of, its internal complexity. To do so, however, means abandoning the search for catchall explanations, instead using the concept as a comparative frame that can allow us to trace different causal pathways to the same outcomes (cf. Blee, 2017a; Bosi, 2012; Bosi & Zamponi, 2020; Gill, Horgan, & Deckert, 2014; Horgan, 2008; Isaac, Coley, Cornfield, & Dickerson, 2020; Viterna, 2006). The aim of this thesis is to develop a typology of such pathways. Drawing on social movement (SM) theory, I define pathways as recurring, generalizable sequences of interaction among protesters, authorities and third parties that make a subset of the participants regard violence as a legitimate and effective means for addressing political grievances (Alimi, Demetriou, & Bosi, 2015; della Porta, 1995, 2013; Goodwin, 2001; McAdam, Tarrow, & Tilly, 2001; Tilly, 2003; Wood, 2005; Wright, 2007). In terms of analytical logic, this means that I shift attention away from general accounts of *why* people use violence, and onto *how* violence becomes a viable option in the course of temporally and spatially bounded processes. In other words, I locate the causes of racist violence in time and space.

To address the thesis' aim, I conduct a mixed-method comparative study of 85 sequences of nonviolent and violent protest in the course of local migrant accommodation in Sweden between 2012 and 2017.³ In this period, attacks against people perceived as migrants,

² For a similar argument on existing explanations of radical right wing activism, see Caiani, della Porta & Wagemann (2012).

³ Throughout the thesis, I use "migrants" and "migrant accommodation" as a generic term to refer to registered and unregistered asylum seekers, unaccompanied minors and recently arrived refugees with residence permits.

responsible politicians and civil servants, and migrant accommodation facilities proliferated across the country, cresting at an average of five attacks per week in the final quarter of 2015. Among the attackers were a diverse group youth gangs, neo-Nazi activists, unorganized lone actors, and others, and the attacks occurred against the background of an even more intense sequence of nonviolent protest against migrant accommodation throughout the country (see fig. 1.1–1.2). The Swedish case thereby allows me to observe a wide range of pathways from nonviolent to violent protest, involving diverse actors within the same time and space.⁴ Given the diversity of motives, actors and targets (e.g. political representatives, buildings, different groups of migrants), framing the attacks within the concept of racist violence allows me to take a broader grasp than would be possible within a narrower comparative frame such as xenophobic violence or right-wing terrorism. As such, the Swedish case helps improve our understanding of racist violence specifically, and of political violence more generally.

As Walia (2021) argues, the distinction between refugee, asylum seeker and migrant is highly unstable, and ultimately reinforces a discourse of 'deserving' refugees vis-a-vis "undeserving" migrants. Inversely, I do *not* use the concept to refer to any group of international travellers. Likewise, I prefer the term "wave of migrant accommodation" to terms such as "refugee crisis," which are also commonly used to describe the same period. On one hand, my term is considerably more specific to my research interests (in this sense, it is similar to the concept of a "refugee reception crisis" (Rea, Martiniello, Mazzola, & Meuleman, 2019). On the other hand, it does not directly represent the period as a moment of crisis.

⁴ Sweden can also be seen as a critical and understudied case within the study of racist violence. As Ravndal shows, Sweden has long had one of the highest absolute levels of lethal right-wing violence in all of Western Europe (Ravndal, 2017). The majority of these attacks have targeted migrants and ethnic minorities, or victims that the assailants perceived as migrants, making it a decent measure for racist violence more broadly. Despite its prevalence, multiple authors looking at Sweden have noted the poor predictive capacity of conventional approaches to racist violence. Indeed, the trend and distribution of racist violence in Sweden does not follow predicted socioeconomic and political correlations, either cross-sectionally at the local level (Törnberg et al., 2020) or longitudinally at the national level (Doering & Davies, 2021).

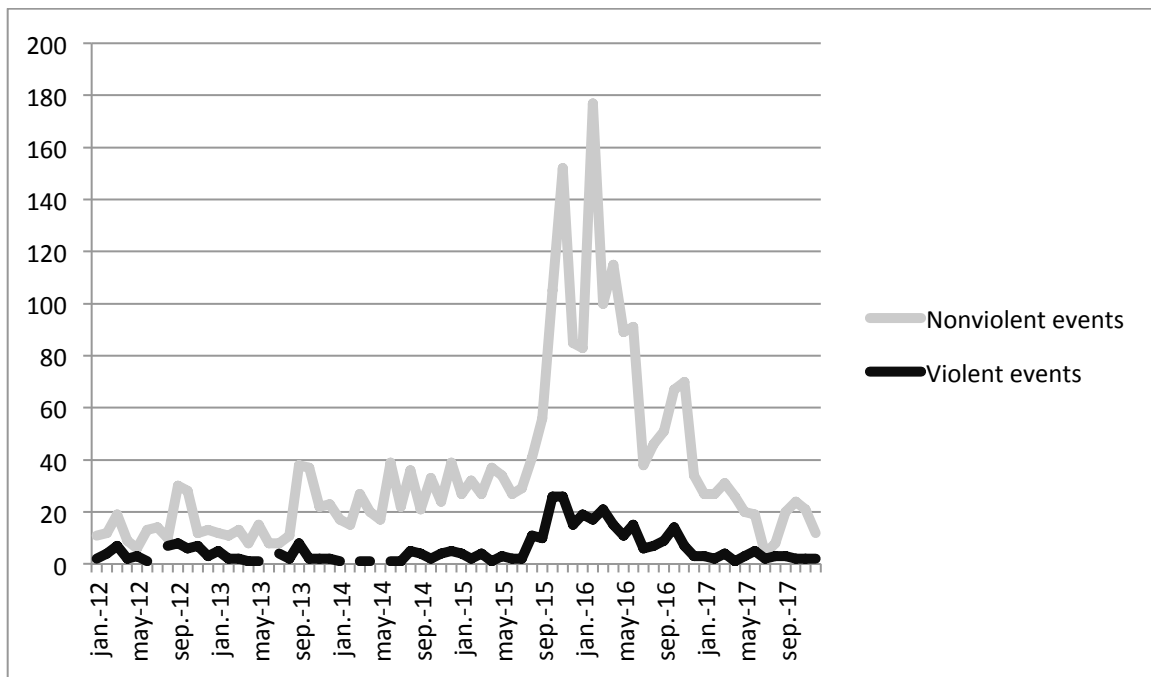


Fig. 1.1. Nonviolent and violent protest events targeting Swedish migrant accommodation, 2012-2017

Although I find the events in Sweden in the period to be sufficiently diverse to answer the thesis' aim, the choice of studying a restricted category of violence necessarily limits the scope of the results. First, the pathways that I describe in the coming chapters may not be immediately applicable to cases where attackers target stationary minorities, or other types of targets. However, research on the US context shows the importance of migration, even at the city-level, as a trigger for violence against domestic minorities (Green, Strolovitch, & Wong, 1998; Olzak, 1992). Second, because the study concerns violence in a context where the targets are in the relative protection of the state, it cannot account for state violence, or for the emergence of violence in contexts where state actors are directly involved in supporting the attackers. Third, the study does not cover the wide range of processes that are likely to occur in locations where ethnic cleavages are strongly articulated, or where racist violence occurs in the context of high levels of social conflict (including civil war). In such cases, where politics is organized along ethnic lines and where frames of ethnic difference are widely resonant, the structure of protest and violence is likely to be very different than in the current case (Koopmans & Statham, 1999a; Koopmans, Statham, Giugni, & Passy, 2005).⁵ Fourth, by

⁵ In "deeply divided" societies, such as North Ireland, violent and nonviolent protest can become embedded in past sectarian patterns. In this sense, existing cleavages may inform other ethnic, national or racial oppositions (Savaric, 2014).

studying violence primarily as the outcome of local processes, the study does not take into account the fact that racist violence – as political violence more generally – may also develop in translocal settings such as social media (Müller & Schwarz, 2018; Wahlström & Törnberg, 2019), or through indirect diffusion and spillover effects (Braun, 2011; cf. Esser & Brosius, 1996; Löw, 1995). Rather than disqualify my results, however, these disclaimers point to the need of further research into the full diversity of racist violence, and political violence more broadly.

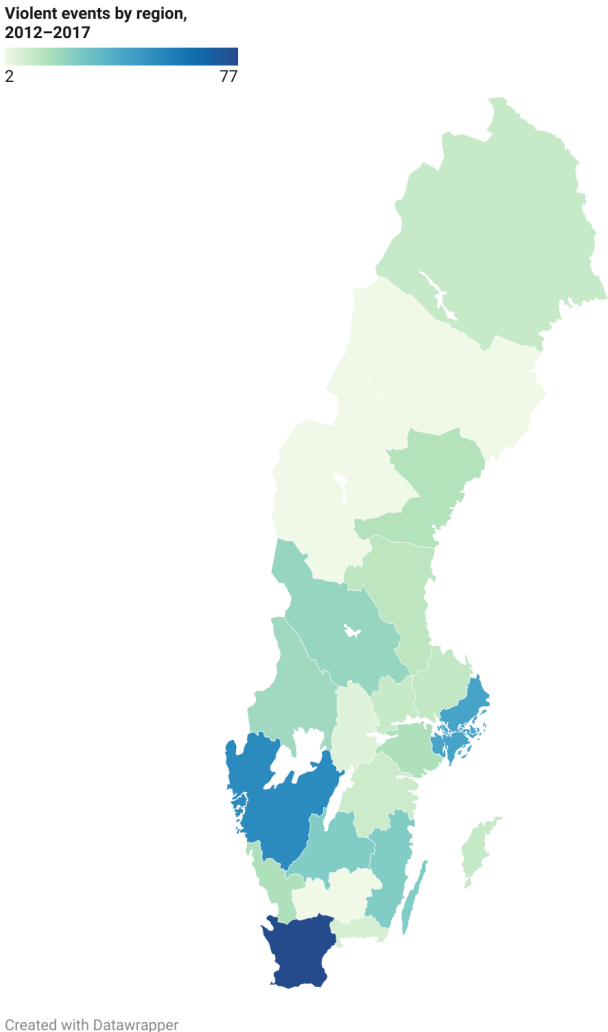


Fig. 1.2. Violent events by region, 2012–2017

The chapter proceeds through four sections. Section 1.2 discusses the decision to study racist violence through the lens of SM theory, and the way I operationalize the SM approach in the empirical study. The section thereby establishes the conceptual framework that I will use throughout the thesis. Section 1.3 expands and reflects on the absence of SM theory in the

literature on racist violence. Section 1.4 presents the Swedish case, and discusses it in relation to the conceptual framework and to issues of generalizability. In section 1.5 I summarize the argument so far, and present the plan for the thesis.

1.2 SM theory and the processual framework

This section introduces the thesis' conceptual framework. The section begins with a brief presentation of SM theory and its relationship to the categories of time and space. Through the course of this argument, I develop my interpretation of SM theory as a processual framework for explaining political violence. I then go on to describe how the processual framework employs a mechanism-oriented logic of explanation. The section ends with the operationalization of four types of mechanisms related to framing, the elicitation of emotions, the attribution of political opportunities, and the configuration of social relations.

SM theory explains violence as the contingent outcome of interactions among activists, authorities and third parties in the course of sustained political protest. It thereby locates the causes of violence in meso-level processes instead of macro-level conditions or immediate micro-dynamics. In summarizing the SM approach, Bosi, della Porta & Malthaner suggest,

[SM] studies look at how oppositional groups and movements often shift between various violent or non-violent forms of action, or use them simultaneously. They examine the choice of doing so not as predetermined by values, goals, or identities, but as emergent in processes of contention and shaped by adapting to changing environments and strategic interactions with their opponents. This perspective, therefore, contextualizes political violence also by embedding militant groups within a broader field of actors involved in the conflict, including police and state agents, counter-movements, audiences, as well as allies or competitor-groups within the same movement, which are embedded in asymmetric power balances that shape the trajectory of processes of political violence (Bosi, della Porta, & Malthaner, 2019, p. 134).

As the quote suggests, the SM approach deeply implicates the category of time. In temporal terms, the SM approach explains violence as the outcome of complex and interdependent sequences of events, in which the relevant causal conditions develop through the course of the sequence itself (Bosi & Malthaner, 2021). These sequences consist of uneven, "eventful" temporalities, in which repeated, primarily nonviolent interactions among different actors produce and change the ideational, relational and institutional conditions for what happens

later in the process (Bosi, 2015; McAdam & Sewell Jr, 2001; McAdam et al., 2001; Sewell Jr, 2005). Going forward, I therefore discuss my interpretation of SM theory as a processual framework for explaining political violence.

Because all interaction happens somewhere, the processual framework also implicates the role of space (Leitner, Sheppard, & Sziarto, 2008). This is achieved through the application of a relational perspective, in which the perceptions, resources and actions of any given actor is determined by their location within wider networks (Crossley, 2016; Diani, 2015). Like the people and organizations that inhabit them, these networks are necessarily located in physical space, whether distant or immediate (Nicholls, 2009). Through their positions in specific spaces, participants in political protest mediate between emergent events and more durable power relations, meanings, experiences, and geographies that exist in their spatial environment (Campana, 2015; Nicholls & Uitermark, 2017; Ó Dochartaigh, 2015; Wolsink, 2006). Locally specific sequences of protest are thereby determined in part by longer, path-dependent processes (Mahoney, 2001; Pierson, 2004). As Bidart, Longo and Mendez puts it, “every process is embedded in a context that is structured by a number of elements. The process in turn acts on the context, generating new elements that help to change it. Thus the relationship between process and context is one of mutual co-construction” (Bidart, Longo, & Mendez, 2013, p. 746; see also Isaac, 1997).⁶

By focusing on contingent, spatially bound processes, the processual framework seriously questions the possibility to explain violent events as the results of general, macro-level conditions, or the sufficiency of explanations that focus on single events. Instead, it shifts the unit of analysis from single events to entire sequences. The processual framework thereby shifts the analytical focus from why an event occurs, to *how* it does so.

In order to allow for theoretical generalization across contexts, the processual framework applies the logic of mechanism-based explanation (P. Hedström & Swedberg, 1998; Machamer, Dardlen, & Craver, 2000; Stinchcombe, 1978; Tilly, 2001). In mechanism-based explanation, the general aim is to identify causal analogies, i.e. the ways in which events “change relations among specified sets of elements in similar ways across contexts”

⁶ Taking this argument the farthest, Massey conceptualizes space as the point of convergence between historical trajectories (Massey, 2005).

(McAdam et al., 2001, p. 25).⁷ While some authors aim to identify and generalize single mechanisms (e.g. Alimi, Bosi, & Demetriou, 2012; Carenzi, 2020; Johnston, 2014; Johnston & Alimi, 2012; Karapın, 2011), others use the mechanism concept as an analytical tool to outline longer, more general sequences such as radicalization, mobilization, institutionalization, escalation, and so on (Alimi et al., 2015; Bosi, 2016a; Collins, 2012; della Porta, 2016b; Horgan, 2008; Malthaner & Lindekilde, 2017; Tarrow, 1989; Wood, 2005). In this thesis, I employ the explanatory logic in the second sense. Hence, when I use the concept of pathways, I refer to analogous combinations of causal mechanisms that lead to similar outcomes in similar ways across contexts.

Through its articulation in the SM literature, the processual framework offers a systematic analytical vocabulary for comparing mechanisms across empirical cases (della Porta & Diani, 2020). In this thesis, I focus specifically on mechanisms related to framing, collective emotions, opportunities, and relations, where:

- Framing refers to the processes through which actors “assign meaning to and interpret relevant conditions in ways that are intended to mobilize potential adherents and constituents, to garner bystander support, and to demobilize antagonists” (Snow & Benford, 1988, p. 198). The framing perspective highlights the socially constructed character of grievances and political protest, and the ways in which collective actors strategically establish specific perceptions of external events in order to activate people for protest (Gamson, 1992; Snow & Benford, 1992, 1988; Snow, Rochford Jr., Worden, & Benford, 1986). In the empirical analysis, I highlight the mechanism of frame extension, which occurs when actors successfully “extend the boundaries of [their] primary framework so as to encompass interests or points of view that are incidental to [their] primary objectives but of considerable salience to potential adherents” (Snow et al., 1986, p. 472). In contexts where overt expressions of racism are not deemed socially legitimate, frame extension allows actors to locate migration-related grievances within more widely shared frames. It is therefore crucial for

⁷ Within the SM literature, the mechanisms-explanation has produced a wide conceptual and methodological debate (see discussions in Alimi et al., 2015; Kriesi et al., 2019; Lichbach, 2008; McAdam & Tarrow, 2011). One part of the debate concerns whether mechanisms are constituted by empirically observable events *and* their outcomes, or whether it is sufficient to identify mechanisms solely by their consequences. In this thesis, I choose the second option, granted that it improves the possibility of making comparisons across multiple and dissimilar cases (cf. Alimi et al., 2015).

understanding the broad mobilization of protesters outside of the radical right. The extent to which an extended frame resonates in a given community, however, is dependent on the wider configuration of emotions, relations and opportunities, as well as on the actions of opponents and competitors (cf. Snow & Benford, 1988).

- Collective emotions refer to the shared sense of hope, anger, shock, elation, desire, and so on, that help people overcome their inhibitions, take risks, and act contrary to everyday norms and routines (Flam & King, 2005; Goodwin, Jasper, & Polletta, 2001; D. B. Gould, 2009; Wood, 2005). Emotional mechanisms are therefore crucially important for understanding the emergence of violence (Collins, 2008; Klusemann, 2009). Emotions can develop rapidly, as in the wake of disruptive events (Jasper & Poulsen, 1995; Snow, Cress, Downey, & Jones, 1998), or gradually through long-term interactions among and between antagonists. In both cases, the elicitation of collective emotions requires the collective construction of “a language for people’s often amorphous, inchoate, nontransparent affective states” (D. B. Gould, 2013, p. 3). As attempts to bridge framing and collective emotions suggest, frames that resonate emotionally are particularly impactful when mobilizing people for high-risk activism (D. B. Gould, 2009). I will focus on this issue in particular as I discuss the moral outrage pathway to violence in chapters 3–4.
- The concept of opportunities refers to the relative availability, effectiveness, costs and benefits of different tactical and strategic choices. In the analysis, I focus specifically on two types of opportunities: political opportunities, or the openness of political institutions to protesters’ claims (McAdam, 1996), and discursive opportunities, or the salience, visibility and perceived legitimacy of a movement’s core issues (Koopmans & Olzak, 2004; Koopmans & Statham, 1999a). While these processes are always related to external conditions, they only gain their meaning through acts of framing (Gamson & Meyer, 1996). Throughout the analyses, I employ both types of opportunities in two ways. On one hand, I look at the mechanism of opportunity attribution, in which an actor perceives opportunities as open for a given strategy. On the other, I look at the reverse mechanism of negative opportunity attribution, in which a given actor perceives opportunities to close. Because different groups interpret opportunities differently, both mechanisms contribute to crucial changes in the relational structure of protest (cf. Alimi et al., 2015).
- Relational mechanisms refer to changes in the relative position of a group or an individual in relation to wider social networks. Relations are crucial for the

explanation of political protest in general, as it impacts on the ways people frame, feel, and assess the opportunities for acting on external grievances, and on their means to do so (Diani, 2013, 2015; R. V. Gould, 1995; H. C. White, 2008). In formal terms, these networks determine how “resources are allocated within a certain collectivity, decisions are taken, collective representations elaborated, and feelings of solidarity and mutual obligation forged” (Diani, 2015, p. 14). In the empirical analyses, I use the language of relational mechanisms to observe general changes in the coordination and structure of protest, and more specifically to denote the activation of a limited set of relational structures, from which violence can emerge. As I will develop further in chapter 3, these mechanisms include the activation of weakly coordinated networks, milieu activation, the privatization of protest, and the formation of specialized cells.

In order to avoid the problem of infinite regress (Andrew Bennett & Checkell, 2015), I limit my empirical inquiry to mechanisms that occur within what Kriesi and colleagues call “policy episodes” (Kriesi, Hutter, & Bojar, 2019). A policy episode starts with the announcement or rumour of a political decision – in these cases a local migration policy or the opening of an accommodation facility – and ends with the decline of protest. Rather than suggest that all cases of racist violence are directly bound to policy processes, however, I use the concept pragmatically as a means to systematize the comparison across sequences. In fact, I argue that one of the defining characteristics of some pathways to violence is exactly their independence from the policy process (see ch. 3, 5, 6 on subcultural violence). As such, the concept of the policy episode allows me to challenge existing explanations in the SM literature without adopting a separate explanatory framework.

The processual framework, and the way I operationalize it in local policy processes, is useful primarily for understanding pathways that play out in relatively limited time periods (Haydu, 2019), and among limited sets of actors. This adherence to meso-level explanation leaves the approach less useful for the explanation of macro-level processes (but see Gillan, 2020; McAdam, 1999; McAdam & Sewell Jr, 2001; Tarrow, 1989; Tilly, 2004), or for explaining the micro-level processes that provide the immediate causes of violence (Collins, 2008, 2020; Nassauer, 2011, 2016). By showing how groups of people respond to macro-level events, i.e. how they collectively construct frames, elicit collective emotions, attribute political opportunities and form or maintain social relations, and by suggesting how these mechanisms impact on micro-level dynamics, however, the SM approach helps mediate between otherwise

distant theoretical and methodological approaches (Bosi, 2012; Bosi & della Porta, 2012; della Porta, 1995; Tilly, 2003). Hence, while the SM approach will not explain the distant or immediate causation of a violent event, it will greatly expand on the relational and processual dynamics that facilitate it (cf. della Porta, 2013).

1.3 SM theory and racist violence

The application of the processual framework has allowed SM researchers and researchers influenced by SM theory to make important contributions to the explanation of political violence. Through the application of the SM approach, different scholars have greatly advanced our understanding of how diverse forms of violence follow from escalating confrontations between security forces and activists (Bosi, 2016b; della Porta, Peterson, & Reiter, 2006; della Porta & Reiter, 1998; Goodwin, 2001; Hafez & Wiktorowicz, 2004), from the creation or redefinition of frames and social identities (Alimi & Johnston, 2016; Tilly, 2003; Viterna, 2016; Wright, 2007), from competitive escalation within social movements (Bosi & Davis, 2017; della Porta, 2016a; della Porta & Tarrow, 1986; Tarrow, 1989), and from the development of collective emotions among activists and bystanders (Johnston, 2014; Wood, 2005). Many works combine different explanations, showing the complex interplay of different sequences of mechanisms across diverse cases of political violence (Alimi et al., 2012, 2015; della Porta, 1995, 2013; Tilly & Tarrow, 2015). However, as I show in this section, processual approaches, and SM theory more generally, are conspicuously absent in research on racist violence.

In recent years, the study of racist activism and electoral politics has benefitted directly from integration with the SM approach (Caiani & della Porta, 2018; Gattinara & Pirro, 2018). Especially in research on the radical right, integration with the SM framework has provided new insights into the operations of social movement organizations and political parties, and the interactions between these groups and their broader environments (Blee, 2002; e.g. Busher, 2016; Caiani & Cisar, 2019; Castelli Gattinara, 2017; Hadj Abdou & Rosenberger, 2019; Klandermans & Mayer, 2005; McVeigh, 2009; Nissen, 2020; Pirro & Gattinara, 2018; Pirro, Pavan, Fagan, & Gazsi, 2021). The SM approach has thereby helped scholars perceive the similarities between racist activism and the activism of more sympathetic movements, promoting a shift away from the narrow focus on the “personalities and psychologies of racist activists,” and onto the “social and political conditions that [enable] a racist movement to flourish” (Blee, 2017b, p. 4).

In the literature on racist violence, however, the SM approach has largely remained absent (but see Caiani & Borri, 2013; Caiani, della Porta, & Wagemann, 2012; Karapın, 2002, 2007, 2011; Wright, 2007). Even when scholars and authors have addressed racist violence within an SM framework, they have typically done so without attention to processual or relational dynamics (Koopmans, 1996; Koopmans & Olzak, 2004; Koopmans et al., 2005; Ravndal, 2017). Instead, as I argued in the beginning of this chapter, the majority of existing studies approach racist violence either through the investigation of macro-level causes, or through the disaggregation of the field into narrower subcategories, each associated with its own theoretical and methodological agenda. Integrating a processual framework into the study of racist violence is therefore important for alleviating the tension between unity and diversity, for drawing more robust, systematic and theoretically informed conclusions, and also for enabling comparison between racist and other categories of political violence.

Integrating a processual framework into the study of racist violence may also benefit the larger literature on political violence. Here, the tension between diversity and unity should be a source of theoretical and methodological innovations. First, because so much of racist violence – and racist protest generally – occurs outside of the protest arena, racist violence forces us to look for causal mechanisms in other places than in public, repeated confrontations between protesters and authorities (Hutter & Kriesi, 2013). Second, the extremely diverse sets of actors that is involved in racist violence underscores the importance of methodological strategies that can capture what happens in very broad and weakly integrated networks. Third, the unity of racist violence, in the face of its internal diversity, forces us to better make sense of the dynamics between public protest and what happens in private settings.

1.4 The Swedish context and its implications for the study of racist violence

Starting from the conceptual vocabulary presented in chapter 1.2, this section presents the context of racist violence as it pertains to Swedish migrant accommodation between 2012 and 2017. In section 1.4.1, I show how the Swedish context, in the specific time period, allows us to trace recurring causal mechanisms across a rapidly changing macro-level context. This increases the generalizability of the findings, and supports my choice of the processual framework. In section 1.4.2, I show how the specific structure of protest against migrant accommodation, and the limited scale of violence, constrains the exhaustiveness of the results.

1.4.1 The macro-context of migrant accommodation and protest, 2012-2017

Between 2012 and 2015, Sweden registered a historically unprecedented number of asylum applications. At the peak in 2015, the Swedish Migration Agency (*Migrationsverket*, MV) registered 126 000 unique applicants, as compared to 29 000 in 2012 (Riksrevisionen, 2016), or to the 1.2 million applicants that were registered in the entire EU the same year (Eurostat, 2016). Owing to various factors at the domestic and EU level, including the EU's migration deal with Turkey and the enforcement of more restrictive border policies across the continent, the number of asylum seekers rapidly declined the following year, stabilizing at about 22 000 unique applicants for 2016 and 2017 (Eurostat, 2018). In a simplified sense, the macro-context of violent and nonviolent protest can therefore be divided into two periods: a “welcoming” period ranging from 2012 to 2015, and a restrictive period that begun in 2016.⁸ Below, I will discuss this process through the lens of the changes that took place in the conditions for dispersal and accommodation of migrants, in the national-level framing of migrants and migration, and in the discursive and political opportunities that facilitated protest against migrant accommodation. At the end of the section, I will also discuss what these factors mean for the generalizability of the thesis' findings.

The Swedish migrant accommodation system, as far as it concerns this thesis, is structured around three main pillars. When newly arrived asylum seekers enter the country, they are expected to register with the MV. During the processing period, they are allowed to stay in independent housing (*Eget boende*, EBO), anywhere in the country. Otherwise, they will be placed in one of the MV's accommodation facilities (see below). If the asylum seekers are unaccompanied minors, the MV allocates them to the social services of a selected municipality. Unaccompanied minors are typically hosted with families, or in residential care units (*Hem för vård och boende*, HVB). When the asylum seekers are granted asylum, they are then allocated to a host municipality. As recently arrived migrants with residence permits, former asylum seekers are expected to find housing of their own, within or outside the allocated municipality (R. Andersson, 2003; Borevi & Myrberg, 2010; Hernes, Nielsen Arendt, Andersson Joonas, & Rose Tronstad, 2019).

⁸ This pattern was not specific to Sweden, but occurred across the Global North. In Lemay's conceptualization, the first half of 2015 can be thought of as a “moment of openness” within a wider discursive and legislative trend toward further restrictions on asylum rights (Lemay & Lemay, 2021).

In the 2012–2017 period, the conditions for accommodating all three categories of migrants, and the political conditions surrounding accommodation issues, all shifted rapidly. In sum, these changes involved increasing crowding and visibility of accommodation facilities, a wider geographic coverage of the migrant allocation system, the closure of opportunities for municipalities to impact on accommodation decisions, and the growing politicization of migration.

At the state-level, the period introduced temporary changes in the MV’s general housing strategy, with consequences for the visibility, density, and location of its accommodation facilities. Since the early 1990s, the MV had been instructed to prioritize housing in single-household apartments or dormitories within conventional rental units (*Lägenhetsboende*, ABE, *Korridorsboende* ABK) instead of offering beds in staffed, large-scale asylum centres. This strategy was meant to cut staff costs, and allow asylum seekers to maintain a degree of personal autonomy throughout the asylum process (Riksrevisionen, 2016, p. 29). The strategy also made housing units less visibly conspicuous, and allowed the MV to procure accommodation without going through local zoning processes. With the rapid increase of asylum seekers, however, the MV changed its strategy to procure an increasing number of large-scale, “provisional accommodation” facilities (*Tillfälligt boende*, ABT) in repurposed hotels, campsites, schools, and so on, mainly through private subcontractors (see table 1.1). In contrast to the rental units, the ABT units were typically large stand-alone complexes that were visible to the wider public (and hence to potential protesters). Further, while the MV maintained direct responsibility for accommodating the asylum seekers, municipal and regional governments often claimed that the sudden allocation of large numbers of refugees put pressure on the provision of education and other social services.

Type of facility	2012	2013	2014	2015
ABE+ABK	20 327 (74.42 %)	24 408 (66.35 %)	28 019 (53.18 %)	33 098 (36.72 %)
ABT	6 988 (25.58 %)	12 380 (33.65 %)	24 666 (46.82 %)	57 037 (63.28 %)
Total	27 315 (100 %)	36 788 (100 %)	52 685 (100 %)	90 135 (100 %)

Table 1.1. Number of beds procured by the MV (yearly), by type of facility (adopted from Riksrevisionen, 2016)

The increase in asylum seekers also impacted on the municipalities’ possibility to house unaccompanied minors and migrants with residence permits. At a general level, these changes were similar to those the MV faced in the same period, as increasing demand and low supply of rental units forced the municipalities to procure new forms of housing, repurpose publically owned buildings, and construct larger module units (Emilsson & Öberg, 2021). In this sense,

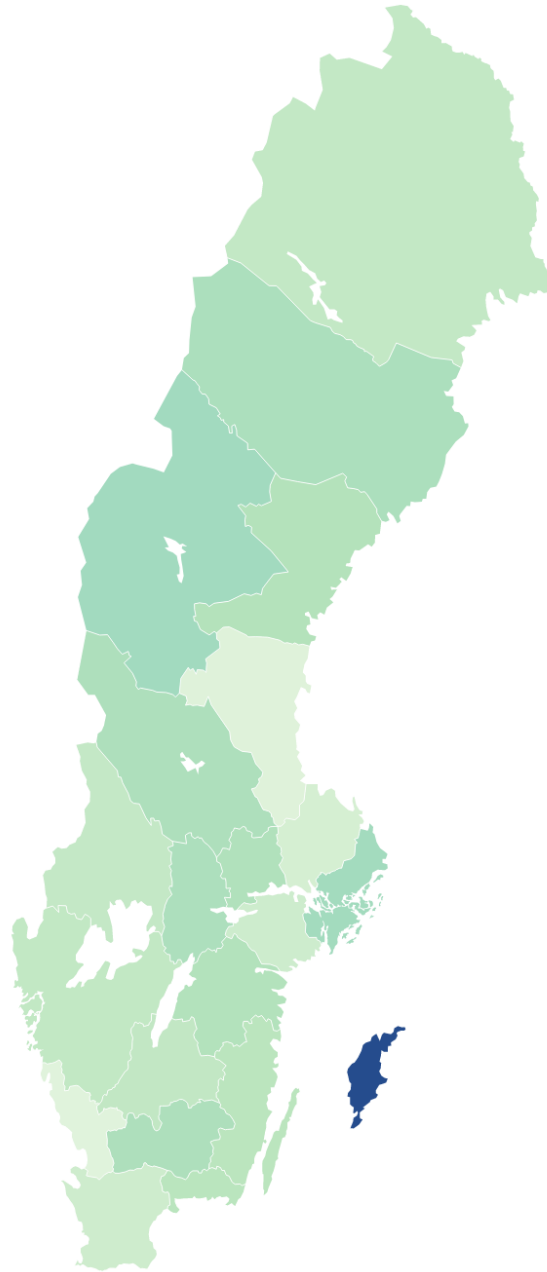
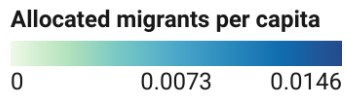
the municipalities also contributed to the trend toward larger and more conspicuous concentrations of migrant accommodation.

The municipalities' opportunities also changed through a general centralization of the system for migrant dispersal. Through the MV's procurement policies and in the absence of any limitations on migrants' movement within the country, the municipalities' possibility to have a direct impact on migrant accommodation was already relatively limited (Robinson, Andersson, & Musterd, 2003; Soininen, 1992). The main arena where the municipalities could affect the allocation of migrants was through yearly negotiations with the MV concerning the accommodation of unaccompanied minors and recently arrived migrants with residence permits. The negotiated system pushed allocations toward peripheral municipalities with declining populations and accessible housing, where the ruling majorities were liberal on migration issues (Bolin, Lidén, & Nyhlén, 2014; Borevi & Myrberg, 2010; Wennström & Öner, 2014). Starting in 2013, the national government reformed the system, allowing the MV to allocate unaccompanied minors, and later all asylum seekers with residence permits (in 2016), to the municipalities without prior negotiation (Prop 2012/13:162; Prop 2015/16:54).⁹

The combination of growing levels of migration and the implementation of a more centralized dispersal system had the immediate effect of spreading migrants across a wider and more diverse set of municipalities and local communities (Osanami Törngren & Emilsson, 2018). As figures 1.3–1.4 show, these changes primarily meant a higher concentration of newly arrived migrants to the more densely populated southern regions. Many of these municipalities were governed by conservative majorities, and had little prior experience of migrant accommodation. On the other hand, the period meant a relatively limited increase in the per capita number of migrants allocated to the sparsely populated regions of Västerbotten, Jämtland and Västernorrland. However, it also meant the closure of formal opportunities for opposing migrant accommodation, both for representatives of the municipalities and for local residents (Emilsson & Öberg, 2021).

⁹ These reforms stood in contrast to international trends toward decentralization (Kaya & Nagel, 2021), which have allowed individual municipalities, and their residents, to demand and introduce policies that are both more restrictive, and more inclusive, than their national governments (Filomeno, 2017; Steil & Vasi, 2014).

Allocated migrants by region, 2012

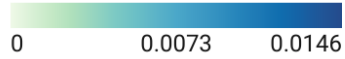


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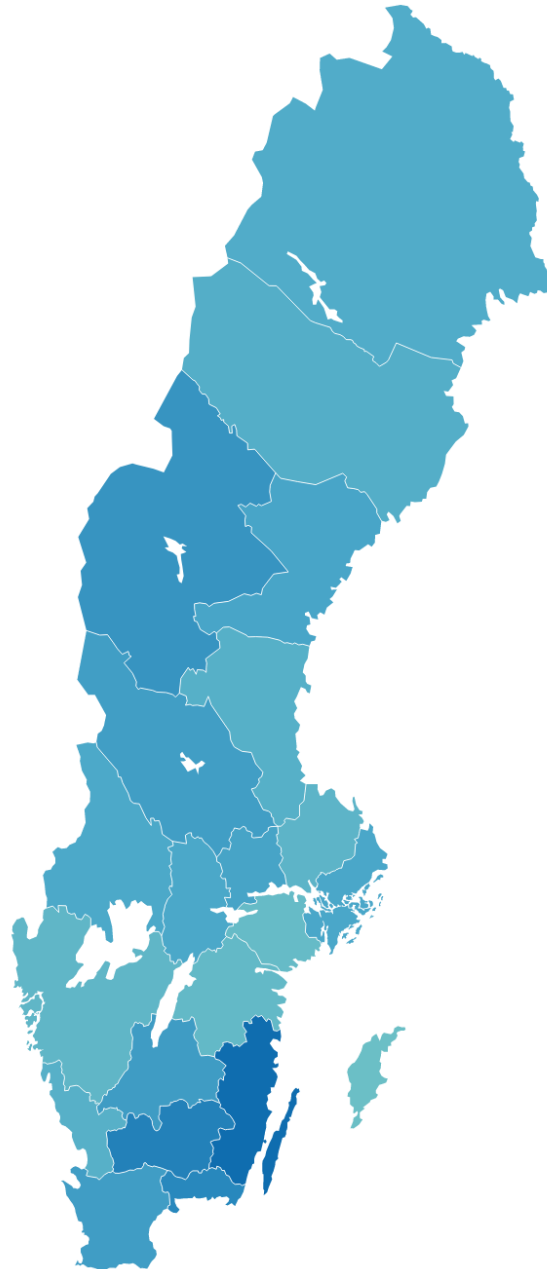
Fig. 1.3. Allocated migrants by region, 2012

Allocated migrants by region, 2017

Allocated migrants per capita



0 0.0073 0.0146



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Fig. 1.4. Allocated migrants by region, 2017

Coinciding with the proliferation of newly arrived migrant communities across the country was the politicization of migration issues. This had consequences both for the framing of migration, and for the opening of discursive opportunities for protesting migrant

accommodation. Up until the fall of 2015, Swedish elites framed migration in relatively accommodating terms. In August 2014, Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeldt (M) urged the Swedish population to “open their hearts” for the refugees, a sentiment repeated a year later by his social democratic successor Stefan Löfven (Scarpa & Schierup, 2018). The welcoming frame shifted rapidly in October 2015. First, social democratic foreign Minister Margot Wallström claimed that high levels of refugee accommodation could lead to the “breakdown” of the Swedish system (Scarpa & Schierup, 2018). The crisis framing rapidly diffused outside of the S government, both on the radical right and among elite actors. Fig. 1.5 reflects this development through the number of unique articles that mentioned the words “refugee crisis” and “system breakdown” in Sweden’s largest national-rotation newspapers *Aftonbladet* and *Dagens nyheter* between 2012 and 2017. On a deeper level, Hovden and colleagues show how the national print media, starting at this time, moved away from a humanitarian frame to an economic and securitized framing of migration (Hovden, Mjelde, & Gripsrud, 2018).

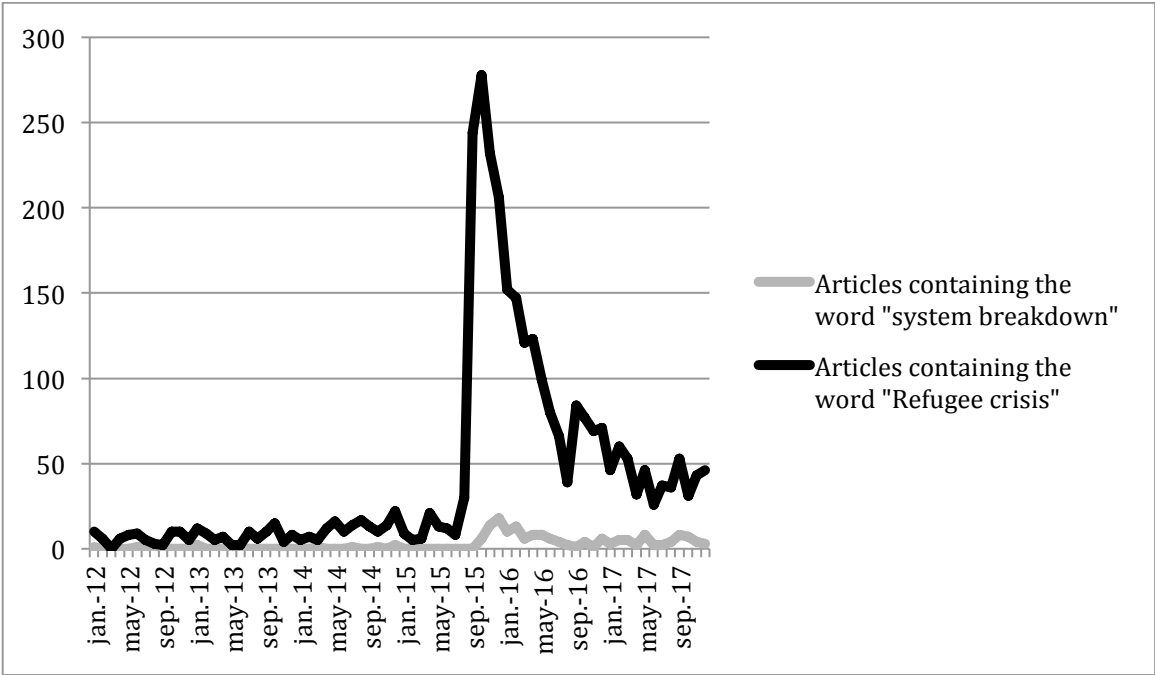


Fig. 1.5. Monthly frequency of articles containing "system breakdown" or "refugee crisis" in Aftonbladet and Dagens nyheter, 2012-2017

The proliferation of elite frames against migration occurred in parallel with similar shifts in the population as a whole. Tracing opinion surveys from the late 1980s onward, Demker notes that migration issues were becoming gradually less politically polarizing up until 2015, as the population as a whole became more positive toward migrant accommodation and cultural

diversity (Demker, 2017). At this time, the low degree of polarization and issue salience attached to migration issues mirrored the still-weak articulation of ethnic cleavages in Swedish society as a whole (Rydgren & van der Meiden, 2019).¹⁰ After 2015, however, the picture changed rapidly. From that point onwards, successive opinion surveys showed increasing polarization on migration issues, and migration issues also became a central distinguishing factor among supporters of different political parties (Demker, 2019). Sweden thereby followed other EU member states in the increasing politicization of migration issues in domestic politics (cf. van der Brug, D'Amato, Ruedin, & Berkhout, 2015), making negative framings of migration increasingly salient and legitimate.

The discursive changes that took place at the end of 2015 held a contradictory relationship to the development of political opportunities. On one hand, the direct legislative corollary of the system breakdown frame was the formulation and passing of a highly restrictive “migration agreement” in November that year. The migration agreement included far-reaching restrictions on the rights of asylum seekers and recently arrived migrants, effectively making Sweden among the most restrictive countries in the EU (Regeringskansliet, 2015). On the other hand, the migration agreement meant that the six participating parties could effectively maintain a local, regional and national cordon sanitaire on the ethnonationalist Sweden Democrats (*Sverigedemokraterna*, SD) (see below).¹¹ While local representatives of the Conservative party (*Moderaterna*, M) in particular expressed concerns to restrict migration (Hagel, 2013), nearly all municipalities did accept migrant allocations before the negotiated system was reformed in 2016 (e.g. Migrationsverket, 2016). Hence, the latter half of the period combined a restrictionist shift in discourse and legislation, without any changes in the opportunities for ethnonationalist and other actors hostile to migration to exercise a direct impact on local or national migration policies.

¹⁰ Resistance to ethnic, racial and national categories in Swedish politics has been addressed from right wing as well as anti-racist standpoints. Among right-wing observers, Ravndal notes, there is the perception that the “Swedish immigration debate has been conducted within a narrow “opinion corridor” policed by left-leaning journalists, intellectuals, and politicians who consistently brand and thus marginalize criticism and scepticism towards immigration as racist or conducive to the spread of racism” (Ravndal, 2018, p. 15). From a completely different standpoint, Wikström & Hübinette argue, the hegemony of “colour-blind antiracism” in Sweden is “threatening to make antiracist politics difficult if not impossible, enabling the covert perpetuation of racism” by “officially, legally, and technically” abolishing racial discrimination from Swedish public discourse (Wikström & Hübinette, 2021, p. 6).

¹¹ In the period, the SD only managed to break the cordon sanitaire in one single municipality (Gävle), where they went into collaboration with the M (Wingborg, 2016). However, the SD could exercise an indirect influence on the policies and strategies of local mainstream parties (Bolin et al., 2014; Wänström, 2018).

The structure and development of the Swedish macro-context, in terms of the extent of grievances and availability of targets, the framing of migration, and the availability of discursive and political opportunities, partially confirms existing theories of racist violence. Clearly, the peak in violent and nonviolent protest coincides with the shift in framing, the opening of discursive opportunities, and the wider proliferation of potential grievances, within a largely closed political opportunity structure at all levels of government¹² This interpretation, however, has two inherent weaknesses. On one hand, it cannot differentiate among the many potentially relevant causes (Törnberg, Wahlström, Ekbrand, & Lundstedt, 2020). On the other, it cannot account for the fact that much violent and nonviolent protest did in fact occur several years before the changes described above. In this sense, identifying recurring pathways across the entire period allows us to see persistent patterns in the causation of violence in spite of changing macro-level conditions. At the same time, the rapid contextual changes that took place in the period also allow us to see how macro-level conditions facilitate some pathways more than others. I will return to this issue in chapter 6.

1.4.2 The diversity of Swedish protest against migrant accommodation

As established in the introduction, racist violence is an incredibly diverse field of study. Therefore, few empirical settings contain every constellation of actors, motives and modus operandi that can plausibly be contained within the concept. As I have already mentioned, the Swedish setting does not allow for the study of pathways to violence in the course of armed conflict, or in contexts where the relevant actors are directly affiliated with the state. Even compared to relatively similar examples of protest against migrant accommodation, however, the Swedish setting limits the exhaustiveness of the study's results. In this section, I will briefly develop this argument with reference to the structure and trajectory of organized racism,¹³ the primarily informal coordination of protest, and the relatively low level of destructiveness in the studied events.

¹² Disregarding differences in conceptualization, various authors argue for some combination of closed opportunities and increasing grievances when explaining e.g. right-wing terrorism and xenophobic violence (Garcia, 2015; Koopmans et al., 2005; Ravndal, 2017).

¹³ I borrow this term from Blee, who uses it to describe "a social milieu in which venomous ideas—about African Americans, Jews, Hispanics, Asians, gay men and lesbians, and others—take shape. Through networks of groups and activists, it channels personal sentiments of hatred into collective racist acts. Organized racism is different from the racism widespread in mainstream white society: it is more focused, self-conscious, and targeted at specific strategic goals" (Blee, 2002, p. 3). By using the concept, I emphasize the difference between

In the studied period, Swedish organized racism could largely be divided between the poles of the ethnonationalist, institutionally oriented SD (Elgenius & Rydgren, 2017), and the race ideological, movement-oriented Party of the Swedes (*Svenskarnas Parti*, SvP) and the Nordic Resistance Movement (*Nordiska motståndsrörelsen*, NMR) (Löow, 2015).¹⁴ Connecting the poles was a wide network consisting of private ties and double organization as well as consociation in media outlets, fringe political parties and think tanks (Lundström & Lundström, 2016). Because of their different orientations, and because of their distinct roles in the empirical cases, I refer to the SD by name, whereas I refer to the extraparliamentary groups by the compound concept of “radical right.”¹⁵ Following della Porta & Rucht (1995), I use the concept of radical right to refer to a diverse “movement family” that relies mainly on protest tactics outside of the political institutions to secure and promote the unequal distribution of resources and rights on grounds of nationality, ethnicity and/or race. As I show below, the dynamic between the SD and the wider radical right contributed to making the milieu of organized racism relatively centralized and moderate throughout the period, as opposed to the subcultural movements found in earlier peaks of racist violence in Sweden, or in contemporary cases from Germany, Russia and the US (Arnold & Markowitz, 2018; Caiani et al., 2012; Shoshan, 2016).

The turn toward moderation, centralization and political normalization has gone furthest in the SD. Starting as a “neo-Nazi movement party” at the intersection of the skinhead subculture and ethnonationalist networks in the late 1980s, the SD has gradually introduced and enforced measures to normalize its membership cadre, shed links to the wider radical right, and make its rhetoric widely palpable (Peterson, 2016). This process has included the ousting of uncomfortable members, the enforcement of uniform bans, and the professionalization of the party’s staff and representatives (Loxbo & Bolin, 2016; Rydgren,

individually held racism and its organized, collective form. Within organized racism, as I show below, is a myriad of groups and organizations with highly variable ideological and pragmatic concerns, and spanning an equally wide variety of forms of association.

¹⁴ Other researchers have labelled the SD a “radical right populist party” (Mudde, 2007; Rydgren, 2007), a “far right hybrid party” (Pirro & Gattinara, 2018), and a “social conservative, radical nationalist” party (Lundström & Lundström, 2016). For the purposes of this thesis, I find it useful to classify the SD specifically in terms of its ideological and strategic relationship to migration, i.e. as a party that systematically makes claims on behalf of an imagined native Swedish ethnic community. For reasons given below, I restrict the concept of “radical right” to groups that act primarily outside of the parliamentary arena.

¹⁵ I thereby bypass the enormous conceptual debate that currently exists on the topic, especially in the literature on political parties (see Mudde, 2007; Rydgren, 2018).

2005). In recent years, the party has also supported measures against “political extremism,” including potential bans against radical right organizations (Peterson, 2019). The tense ties between the SD and the movement, and the SD’s institutional orientation, has created a situation where the party is central for producing and disseminating frames against migration, but relatively marginal in mobilizing for collective protest. The SD thereby differs from other countries, such as Hungary, where the leading nationalist or nativist parties have maintained deeper links to neo-Nazi and other radical right networks (Pirro et al., 2021).

Despite tensions, the SD’s success influenced similar shifts on the wider radical right. Combined with the gradual decline of the skinhead and white power music movements, (Löow, 2015; Teitelbaum, 2017), the beginning of the 2010s saw the virtual centralization of the movement to the SvP and the NMR (Löow, 2015; Mattsson, 2018; Ravndal, 2021; Teitelbaum, 2017). Both groups attempted normalization strategies of their own. These strategies included restrictions on the use of violence, the performance of respectability during public events, and attempts to build support bases through participation in elections and by campaigning for wider local causes (Bjørge & Ravndal, 2020; Löow, 2015; Mattsson & Johansson, 2021).¹⁶ As the following chapters show, the radical right displayed a relatively wide tactical flexibility across cases, as activists adapted to political conditions at the local level. More than is usually admitted in studies of the radical right, the Swedish case thereby points to the role of strategic elaborations in the movement’s decision to use violence (cf. Blee, 2017b).

Aside from organized racism, most protest events that targeted migrant accommodation in the period included no formal organizations. As table 1.2 shows, formal organizations participated in, or took public responsibility for, less than 39 % of these events. These events, as I will detail in chapter 2, span the submission of appeals and letters to the editor,

¹⁶ The fact that the NMR and the SvP emphasized restraint on the use of violence does not mean that the groups had ceased their use of violence altogether. Aside from attacks against migrant accommodation, including minor and major acts of property damage as well as repeated threats against individual politicians, pro refugee activists and migrants, members of the NMR and the SvP were also involved in violent demonstrations, property damage, systematic harassment, and cases of attempted murder against political opponents (Korsell, Axelson, Frisk, & Stier, 2020; Löow, 2015; SÄPO, 2020). Beskow similarly shows that the framing of violence within the NMR, which presents it purely as a means of “self-defence,” is sufficiently broad to legitimize virtually any attack (Beskow, 2018). However, unlike the “cult of violence” that Löow observed in the skinhead movement of the 1990s (Löow, 1993), these high profile events must be understood against the background of a tense but nonetheless real shift of strategy. Hence, while it is possible that the Swedish radical right does maintain a high capacity for violence, the decision to use violence is related to contingent political priorities.

demonstrations and rallies, and physical violence. Instead, roughly 61 % of the cases involved anonymous actors, youth gangs, provisional neighbourhood groups, parents’ groups, and so on and so forth. These had few ideological traits in common, and generally did not frame migration as a problem beyond a specific accommodation facility or policy. They did not necessarily have any ties to the radical right, although some can be considered part of the radical right subculture. Sometimes, as I will describe in chapter 4, these groups were openly hostile toward the radical right and the SD. While it is very possible that some of these cases involved radical right activists operating in anonymity, the Swedish Security Service (*Säkerhetspolisen*, SÄPO) and the Swedish police authority’s joint investigation of the attacks between 2015 and 2016 concluded that most events only involved unorganized locals (NOA & SÄPO, 2015).

Organizer	Events
SD	407 (13.76 %)
Radical right	300 (10.08 %)
Informal actor	1834 (61.61 %)
Other formal organization ¹⁷	436 (14.65 %)
<i>Total</i>	<i>2977 (100 %)</i>

Table 1.2. Proportion of organizational types in protest events targeting migrant accommodation

The very large proportion of informal actors coincides with the distinctly local scale of most protest against migrant accommodation. With the exception of a short-lived national-level campaign for a referendum on migration, which the SD launched in 2015, most protest campaigns against migrant accommodation were only concerned with specifically local policies and events. As I will discuss in the following chapters, however, radical right actors could use local events as a means to make wider claims and increase their organizational capacity. The high degree of informality and the low geographic scale of most sequences of protest largely close off the possibility to observe pathways to violence of the type discussed for international and national protest waves (e.g. Beissinger, 2002; della Porta, 1995; Wright, 2007). At the same time, the local pattern of protest mirrors results from other studies of protest against migrant accommodation, including cases from Italy, Spain and Greece (Andretta & Pavan, 2018), Germany (Karapın, 2007), and Austria (Hadj Abdou & Rosenberger, 2019).

¹⁷ The single most common formal actor, other than the SD and the radical right organizations, was the M. Aside from the Conservative party, the "other formal organization" category primarily includes village associations, local parties, business associations and other actors of specifically local scope.

The Swedish case also involves a relatively limited violent repertoire. This repertoire was mostly small-scale, involved small groups of people, and had a limited level of destructiveness. As mentioned above, the Swedish data do not include any riots, or confrontations stemming from escalated mass protest. Instead, the majority of violent events consisted of lone individuals or small groups that broke windows, assaulted single migrants, or used firebombs against accommodation facilities, usually under cover of darkness. In the majority of the attacks, no one claimed responsibility afterwards. There was no lethal violence in the period. Hence, when I describe the pathways in chapters 3–6 as leading to the same outcome, I do not speak of large-scale collective violence, or lethal violence. At the same time, the analysis that follows might inform the analysis of such outcomes too.

In sum, the range of actors, their interrelations, and their behaviours place some limits on the study's exhaustiveness. To an extent, these factors also impact on the interpretation of causal mechanisms. As to the first point, the centralization and relative moderation of organized racism largely excludes pathways in which violence develops out of larger subcultural milieus, and those where violence emerges out of the dynamics of mass protest events. Further, to the extent that subcultural dynamics matter, they remain firmly local. As to the second point, the strained relationship between informal groups of local residents, the SD, and radical right movement actors puts some limits on relational mechanisms. Granted the SD's opposition to involvement with the NMR and the SvP, the formation of coalitions across organized racism must likely take other paths (e.g. through private relations) than in contexts where the gap is smaller between extraparliamentary and parliamentary racism.

1.5 Summary and disposition

In this chapter, I have presented the central problem of managing the diversity and unity of racist violence. In order to understand how very diverse types of racist violence occur simultaneously, in repeated historical waves, I suggested researchers should pay attention to the different pathways through which nonviolent protest lead to violence. This strategy implies a focus on time and space. In temporal terms, it means focusing on the longer historical sequences through which different groups of people come to frame migration as a grievance, and violence as a meaningful response. By locating these processes within a given space rather than within a given actor or actor type, it is possible to see how the conditions for violence develop in broader and more general interactions among local residents, radical right activists, local politicians, and so on and so forth. By paying attention to time and space, it is

possible to use the diversity of racist violence while avoiding analytical fragmentation as well as the overextension of theoretical arguments across incommensurable instances of violence.

Starting from the argument above, I presented the aim of the thesis as identifying recurring pathways from nonviolent interaction to violence in the course of Swedish migrant accommodation between 2012 and 2017. By pathways, I referred to analogous sequences of events that facilitate the emergence of violence in similar ways across settings. I thereby framed the thesis in the SM approach to political violence, and specifically through a processual framework. To translate these processes into analytically generalizable sequences of mechanisms, I use the SM literature's conceptual apparatus of frames, emotions, opportunities and relations. In doing so, I contribute both to the literature on racist violence, and to the wider understanding of political violence in the SM literature.

In the final section of the chapter, I presented the implications of studying racist violence through the Swedish case. On one hand, I argued that the Swedish case does not exhaust all potential pathways to violence. This problem, however, is to be expected from any case study design. On the other, I raised concerns for the generalizability of the Swedish case. Here, I argued that the rapid changes that took place in the macro-level conditions for migrant accommodation at the time, including its legal framework, its politicization, and its political opportunities, make the Swedish case useful for developing robust accounts of continuities in the observed pathways. At the same time, the specific historical trajectory of Swedish organized racism makes it necessary to discuss how causal mechanisms that occur in the Swedish context would translate in other settings.

In the following chapters, I employ the processual framework in the empirical examination of pathways to violence in Swedish protest against migrant accommodation. Chapter 2 presents the thesis' research design, alongside my reflections on conducting fieldwork, and on the ethical implications of studying violent and nonviolent racist protest. Chapters 3–6 contain the empirical analyses. Chapter 3 combines the analytical framework with initial observations from the empirical data to locate sequences of violent and nonviolent protest in six recurring pathways. Using existing literature on social movements, racist violence and political violence, the chapter then develops the central mechanisms that facilitate the emergence of violence in each of the pathways. Chapters 4 and 5 locate these mechanisms in the course of empirical events, illustrating the argument with a total of eleven case studies. Chapter 4 presents cases from four pathways where violence emerges in the course of nonviolent

protest, while chapter 5 presents two pathways where violence emerges in the absence of nonviolent protest. Chapter 6 uses quantitative data to compare empirical sequences within and across the pathways. The chapter compares the contextual characteristics of the pathways, and locates them in relation to the wider development of migration and protest against migrant accommodation between 2012 and 2017. Chapter 7 summarizes the thesis' main results, and discusses its implications for the literature on racist violence, and for the literature on political violence more broadly. The chapter ends with three suggestions for future research.

2 Research design

The study of racist violence is associated with a number of methodological challenges. At the broadest level, the uneven way in which racist violence is recorded and legally enforced in contemporary Western societies creates problems in accessing and observing valid data on its frequency, distribution and intensity.¹⁸ These issues are exacerbated by the fact that much of what happens does so in non-public settings, among unorganized groups, or in groups that one would not expect to be involved in political violence. The difficulty of locating events and actors from general sources therefore suggests the need for in-depth, qualitative research. At the same time, the stigma, controversy and political awkwardness of protesting migrant accommodation, and the close overlap between private and political networks in many small communities puts social, ethical and practical obstacles in the way of data access, collection, and presentation (Alsmark & Uddman, 1993; Blee, 2006; Bygnes, 2019; Grillo, 2005; Klandermans & Mayer, 2005).

The methodological difficulties reflect and contribute to the tensions and contradictions that I established in chapter 1. On one hand, the difficulty of obtaining systematic data on violent events makes it difficult to reconstruct general patterns. This creates problems for assessing if, how and why different types of violence converge in the same time and space. On the other, the practical difficulties of conducting qualitative research on many types of racist violence limits the capacity for case study designs to go beyond narrow accounts of single actors or events.

In this chapter, I describe my strategy for dealing with these methodological challenges. In section 2.1 I go through the main features of the research design, showing how I have combined protest event analysis and qualitative case studies through means of triangulation.

¹⁸ In the existing literature, police, court and intelligence records are virtually the only sources for quantitative and qualitative analyses of racist violence. Research attempting profile the perpetrators of racist violence shows that the number of identifiable assailants is generally low, and that the quality of information on individual actors is scarce (Bjørge, 1997; Gräfe & Segelke, 2019; Löw, 1995; Neubacher, 1998; Willems et al., 1993; Willems & Steigleder, 2003). Likewise, the quality of official reporting on individual actions is uneven both in quantitative terms and in its level of detail (Benček & Strasheim, 2016; Goodey, 2007). On a more general level, one should not assume that the data that are interesting to prosecutors and officers are the same that interest us as researchers (Bosi & Reiter, 2014). These issues are complicated by the fact that, because consistent hate crime reporting is itself a result of anti-racist mobilization, more voluminous and detailed data might in fact signal the decline rather than the increase of racist hostility (Jenness & Grattet, 2001; McVeigh, Neblett, & Shafiq, 2006; McVeigh, Welch, & Bjarnasson, 2003; Scheuerman, Parris, Faupel, & Werum, 2020)

In section 2.2 I present experiences from my abandoned attempt at conducting fieldwork, and how these experiences have informed my understanding of the empirical cases. In section 2.3 I discuss the ethical implications of studying racist violence, and racist protest more broadly.

2.1 Methods and data

Throughout the thesis, I approach racist violence through the triangulation of various primary and secondary data sources, analysed through a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods.¹⁹ At the level of data, I combine newspaper reporting, court documents, social media sources, interviews, and other systematic and non-systematic sources. At the level of methods, I triangulate in-depth case studies with protest event analysis (PEA). In the following three sections, I present and discuss my application of PEA, the purpose and design of the case studies, and the additional sources that I have used to contextualize the observed events.

2.1.1 Protest event analysis

PEA is widely used in the SM literature to describe and compare patterns of protest behaviour across time and space. Through its various iterations, the core of the PEA method is the systematic coding of protest events from newspapers, police records, movement-produced sources, and other materials, into comparable units (Hutter, 2014; Koopmans & Rucht, 2002). The resulting dataset can then be used to map changes in the magnitude, frequency, type, and composition (and so on) of political protest over time and across contexts. It can also be used to reconstruct sequences of events over time (Kriesi et al., 2019).²⁰ According to Hutter

¹⁹ Triangulation refers to the use of “a combination of methods of investigation, data sources or theoretical frameworks” within a single research project (Ayoub, Wallace, & Zepeda-Millán, 2014, p. 67). In this sense, it is used as a means of verification (Lieberman, 2005; Yeasmin & Rahman, 2012), as a means of filling gaps in unreliable or patchy datasets, and as a method to account for the complexity of studied processes (Bosi & Reiter, 2014). Owing to these characteristics, triangulation has been liberally employed in the SM literature, where systematic archives are uncommon (della Porta, 2014, p. 228), where secondary sources, such as newspapers or state institutions, are likely to report events in unsystematic, biased, or particularistic ways (Davenport, 2009), and where the focus on interactions makes it necessary to incorporate multiple viewpoints (Bosi & Reiter, 2014). For all these reasons, triangulation is central to my research design.

²⁰ In general terms, the PEA method has greatly enhanced the possibility for researchers to analyze the temporality of protest. As Fillieule and Jiménez argue, “by taking account of the temporal dimension, PEA highlights the facts that social movements cannot be reduced to the organizations involved in them and that movements do not exist in isolation from other contemporaneous movements at either the national or international levels. Hence, one must logically develop an analysis in terms of process, rather than thinking in terms of structural determinants” (Fillieule & Jiménez, 2003, p. 258). The development of the PEA methodology

(2014), the PEA method has four advantages: it is unobtrusive, it allows the study of large volumes of “unstructured” data, it is context-sensitive, and it allows SM scholars to make empirical comparisons beyond “a few illustrative cases” (Hutter, 2014, p. 337). It is therefore useful in settings where single cases provide limited quantities of data, and where obtrusive techniques are practically and ethically difficult to apply. For racist violence in particular, the creation of original datasets of violent and nonviolent protest is practically necessary for overcoming the absence or low quality of externally produced datasets, such as hate crime data or data recorded by the police (for similar arguments, see Ravndal, 2016).

I have constructed a PEA dataset that consists of 2977 violent and nonviolent protest events that targeted local migrant accommodation in Sweden between 2012 and 2017. I define relevant protest events as non-routine attempts to obstruct, block, or change the planning, implementation or maintenance of migrant accommodation in Swedish municipalities. The coded events range from the submission of letters to the editor and legal appeals to arson attacks and bombings, provided they target migrants hosted in migrant accommodation facilities, or authorities (or others) that are involved in the migrant accommodation process. It excludes similar actions that target anti-racists, ethnic minorities, and so on, where it is not possible to establish a link to the process of migrant accommodation.²¹

In order to locate and unpack events in the local episodes I have combined three types of sources: 220 local, regional, and national-circulation news media outlets archived in the RETRIEVER database, the websites of the national and regional chapters of the SD, the SvP, the NMR and Nordic Youth (*Nordisk Ungdom*, NU),²² and radical right media outlets Nationell Idag, Avpixlat, and Realisten. While some authors express concerns that multisource designs multiply existing biases (Myers & Schaefer Caniglia, 2004), most justify

is thereby closely associated with the development of the processual framework in the SM literature (e.g. Beissinger, 2002; della Porta, 1995; Kriesi et al., 2019; McAdam, 1999; Tarrow, 1989; Tilly, 1978).

²¹ A specific problem concerns the coding of violent events. Given the anonymous, small-scale character of most attacks (as discussed in section 1.4), there is a high risk of false positives, i.e. events that do not fit the criteria but are coded anyway, as well as false negatives, i.e. events that should be coded but are not. In order to avoid the inclusion of false positives, I have only coded attacks that start on the outside of the facility, target empty facilities, or where it is possible to directly ascertain the attackers’ motives. I deem these criteria sufficient to limit – if not fully avert – the problem. There remains a high risk of false negatives. Because I only include “positive cases” – i.e. cases that involve violence – in the analysis, however, I consider this problem to be of limited impact on the thesis’ conclusions.

²² After the SvP and the NMR, NU was the third most prominent radical right organization in the period. Unlike the others, NU was mainly active in the areas around Stockholm and Gothenburg.

them as being less vulnerable to reporting errors, especially when combining different types of sources (Almeida & Lichbach, 2003; Davenport, 2009; Jenkins & Maher, 2016; but see Koopmans & Rucht, 2002). I find the combination of sources absolutely crucial in a context where most events are unlikely to be reported widely in national newspapers or newswires, and where the quality of information is often very fragmentary. As I will show below, the structure of the final dataset supports this argument.

The coding procedure for the RETRIEVER-data contained two steps. In the first step, I used a generic search string that combined a set of keywords denoting refugee accommodation, with a Boolean AND-term consisting of words referring to protest and forms of protest.²³ The first step resulted in approximately 1000 cases. Throughout the coding, I listed all facilities that occurred in the media reporting (whether protested or not) in a separate document. Upon finishing the first round of coding, I then used the resulting list of 2529 individual facilities to make specified searches in the same database. In this second round, I combined the name of the facility with an AND-term consisting of different words for asylum, migration and refugees.²⁴ While the second round of coding obviously exacerbated reporting biases coming from the first round, it greatly increased the level of detail for each local sequence. In addition to providing further information to the cases coded in the first round, the second round added approximately 1700 unique cases, or nearly 60 % of the total dataset (see table 2.1). Because the purpose of the PEA is to allow the systematic comparison of sequences, rather than static distributions of events, its validity should be assessed mainly according to its accuracy in representing local processes. In this sense, the high number of cases that I added in the second round suggests a considerable improvement of the dataset's precision.

²³ In Swedish, the search string read: (asylb* OR flyktingb* OR HVB*) AND (protest OR oro OR namninsamling OR attack* OR flygblad OR brand OR överklagan OR stoppa OR protest* OR "Tyck till" OR "Insändar*" OR "Insänt" OR "Min mening" OR "Ordet fritt" OR "Fria ord" OR hot OR skadegörelse OR stenkastning OR dödshot OR våld OR "krossade rutor" OR "krossade fönster" OR "fönster krossade" OR "rutor krossade" OR hakkors OR klott* OR Stenkastning OR stenattack OR "kastat sten" OR smällare). The search string is roughly translatable to ("asylum shelter"* OR refugee shelter"* OR HVB*) AND (protest OR discontent OR petition OR attack OR flyer OR fire OR appeal OR stop OR protest* OR opinion OR "letter to the editor" OR "sent-in" OR "my view" OR "the word is free" OR threat OR property destruction OR rock throw OR death threat OR violence OR broken windows OR broken screens OR windows broken OR screens broken OR swastika OR graffiti* OR "rock throwing" OR rock attack OR thrown rocks OR fireworks).

²⁴ In Swedish, the search string read: [name of facility] AND (asyl* OR invandr* OR flykting* OR migrationsverk* OR nyanländ* OR modul*). The AND term translates to (asyl* OR immigr* OR refugee* OR "migration agency*" OR "recently arrived*" OR module*).

For the movement sources, I have manually gone through the websites' news (and comparable) sections in their entirety. Because some of the sources are only available in archived, fragmentary shape, I have added complementary data from anti-racist foundation *Expo*. Unlike the manually coded data, however, the *Expo* data provide considerably less information for each reported event. For instance, it does not allow the separate coding of specific dates, frames, or methods (see *Expo*, 2016, 2018). In total, the movement sources allowed me to add 283 cases, or approximately 9 % of the total dataset.

Table 2.1 summarizes the frequency and proportion of cases from each source type. Because some cases were reported in more than one source, I have only counted the source type with the best quality of information. While this distinction is sometimes arbitrary, e.g. when multiple source types rely on newswires, the differences of proportion are so large as to allow some general conclusions. In particular, it shows the merits of using local or regional-circulation and movement-generated sources. In more than 85 % of cases, the main source was a local or regional-circulation source. Second, 9.22 % of the cases come from movement-generated sources. Only 4.4 % of the events were primarily reported in national-circulation media. This suggests that the addition of local newspapers and movement-produced sources (Almeida & Lichbach, 2003) greatly increases the validity of the dataset (see discussion in McAdam, Sampson, Weffer, & MacIndoe, 2005).

Type of source	Coded events	% of total
Local or regional-circulation media	2563	86.09 %
National-circulation media (incl. newswire)	131	4.4 %
Movement source	283	9.51 %
<i>Total</i>	<i>2977</i>	<i>100 %</i>

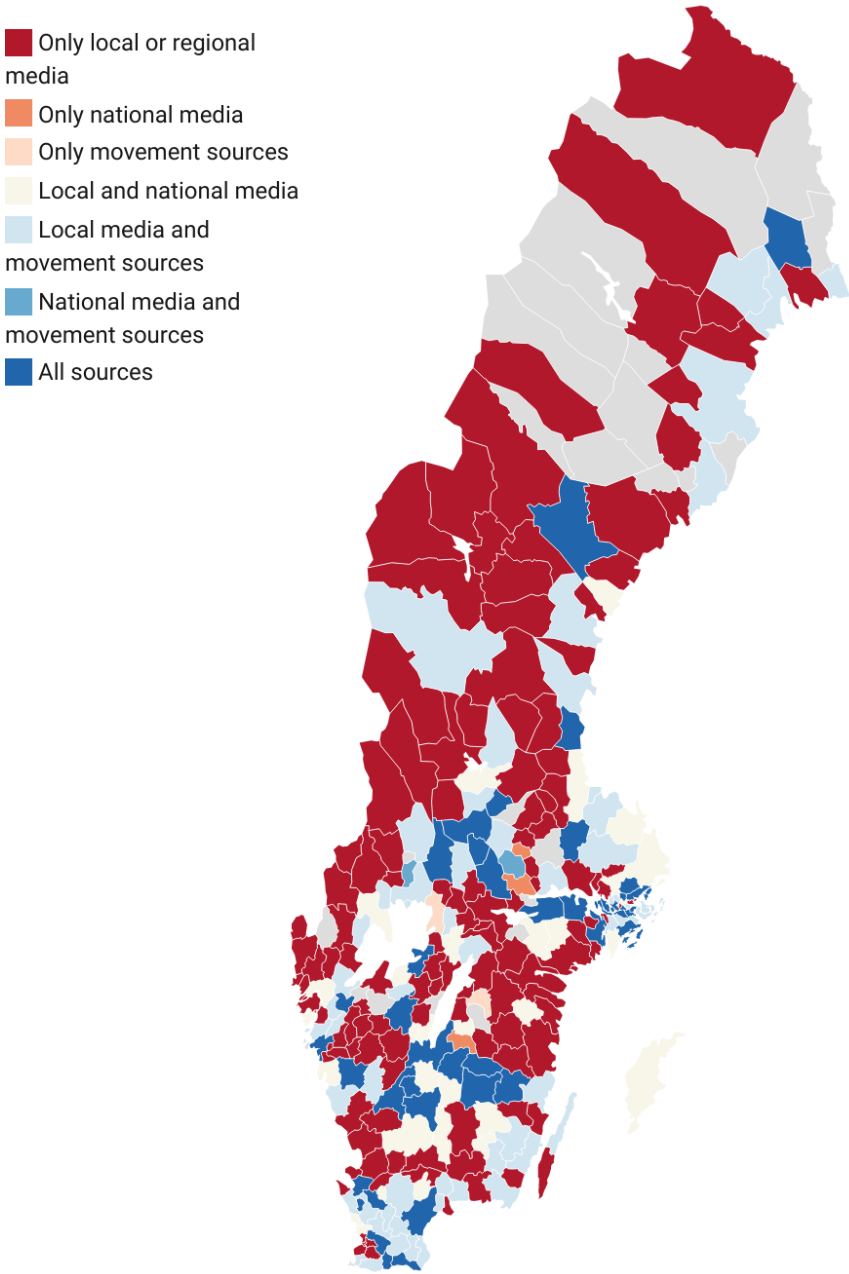
Table 2.1. Events by main source type

The merits of combining sources and coding methods are also visible in the dataset's geographical coverage. Despite the focus on individual facilities, the dataset's geographical coverage is remarkable. Across all sources, the dataset reports events in all 21 administrative regions, in 267 out of 290 municipalities, and in 589 out of 1700 postal areas.²⁵ As fig. 2.1 shows, omitting local media would have considerably skewed the dataset toward the

²⁵ I use Sweden's 1700 official postal area designations as a generic category to capture "local communities." While imperfect, the qualitative case studies suggest that it works reasonably well for identifying and disaggregating processes below the municipal level.

southernmost third of the country, and particularly the areas around Malmö, Stockholm and Gothenburg. In fact, relying solely on national media sources would have made most of the Northern half of the country invisible in the dataset.

Source coverage by municipality



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Fig. 2.1. Source coverage by municipality

In coding the 2977 cases, I have started from six basic codes, each consisting of a number of variables, which I have later expanded or recoded depending on the needs of particular

analyses. The first and second codes concern the date and location of the event. Dates are specified by day, month, and year, whereas the location is specified at the level of region, municipality, and postal area. When relevant, I have included the name of the targeted facility or facilities. The third code contains a qualitative description of the event. The fourth code concerns the type of target. This code includes whether the action targeted property or human(s), whether the target was framed as representative of a policy or as an individual object, what category of migrant was affected (i.e. asylum seeker, unaccompanied minor, or recently arrived refugee), and whether the targeted migrant group was present in the community at the moment of the event. The fifth code captures the actors that carried out the action. In subsequent rounds of recoding, I have used this code to classify whether actions involve coalitions between different organizations, whether the action involves organizations at all, and so on. The sixth code concerns the type of action. The coded actions span three broad categories: violent tactics (direct threats, arson, bombings, assault, other forms of property damage), contentious tactics (propaganda actions, demonstrations, harassment, blockades, petitions), and communicative tactics (letters to the editor, individual and collective correspondence with politicians and authorities, protest during public meetings, and appeals to regional and national courts). The dataset is thereby considerably broader than most standard applications of PEA (see overview in Hutter, 2014), as I have adjusted to the mainly small-scale, non-public combination of tactics that is observed among right wing movements (Hutter & Kriesi, 2013), and in small-scale, locally oriented protest movements more generally (Kriesi & Westholm, 2007; Uba, 2016a). The seventh code, finally, collects information on the sources, including the name and date of the publication(s). Table 2.2 (the following page) summarizes the seven codes and their related variables.

Code	1. Date	2. Location	3. Qualitative description	4. Target	5. Actor	6. Event type	7. Source
Variables	Year, month, weekday	County, municipality, postal code, name of facility/facilities, administrative centre (y/n)	n/a	Type of target 1 (human/property), type of target 2 (facility/policy), migrant category (asylum seeker, recently arrived migrant, unaccompanied minor), inhabited (y/)	Collective actor (y/n), formal organization (y/n), name of actor(s)	<i>Contentious</i> Demonstration Handing out of flyers/posters Petition Formation of social media protest group Symbolic threat and harassment <i>Communicative</i> Appeal Collective correspondence/meeting with politicians Individual correspondence / meeting with politicians Letter to the media Protest at information meeting <i>Violent</i> Arson Assault Bombing Minor property damage <i>Other</i>	Type of source (local/national/movement), source name, source date

Table 2.2. Outline of the PE-dataset

Table 2.3 shows the distribution of events according to the different protest types. As the figure shows, communicative tactics greatly outnumber those in the contentious and violent categories. Among the contentious tactics, the most commonly reported events are those that either weigh toward violence (symbolic threats and harassment) or toward the communicative category (petitions and flyer or poster actions).²⁶ The demonstration, a tactic commonly associated with the escalation of protest into violence, is exceedingly rare. As the table suggests, newspapers and movement sources primarily reported events that did not involve the coordination of large groups of people, or large-scale confrontations between protesters, counter-movements and authorities. At the same time, the table shows the broad diversity of violent and nonviolent tactics that did occur throughout the period.

Protest type	N of events	% of total
<i>Contentious</i>	475	15.96 %
Demonstration	32	1.07 %
Flyers/posters	232	7.79 %
Petition	84	2.82 %
Formation of social media protest group	29	0.97 %
Symbolic threat and harassment	98	3.29 %
<i>Communicative</i>	2103	70.78 %
Appeal	321	10.78 %
Collective correspondence / meeting with politicians and other authorities	252	8.46 %
Individual correspondence with politicians and other authorities	211	7.09 %
Letter to the media	1037	34.83 %
Protest at information meeting	286	9.61 %
<i>Other</i>	7	0.24 %
<i>Violent</i>	387	13.03 %
Arson	68	2.28 %
Assault	25	0.84 %
Bombing	3	0.1 %
Minor property damage	168	5.64 %
Threat	124	4.17 %
<i>Total</i>	2977	100 %

Table 2.3. Distribution of protest types in the PE-dataset

²⁶ Organizing a demonstration clearly does not mean the same thing as signing a petition or writing a local politician. For this reason, and due to issues of data availability, I have coded mass communicative actions, petitions, and multiple threats as single events. Had I counted every single mail threat or petition signature as one unique event, then the communicative and communicative-adjacent tactics would likely increase to incomparable figures. Keeping this strategy in mind, it is particularly notable that contentious actions occur so seldom.

Based on the PEA data, I was able to make a first sorting of events into continuous sequences. I based the construction of the sequences on three criteria. First, the events should target the same facility or policy. This criterion linked the sequences to Kriesi and colleagues' (2019) concept of a "policy episode," as developed in section 1.2. Second, if events occurred in the same place, at approximately the same time, but did *not* target the same facility or policy, I looked at whether there was consistency in the actors involved, or in the framing of the target. Hence, some sequences could have multiple targets, but involve roughly the same actors and frames. Third, if sequences extended very far across time, I looked at all variables to determine whether possible changes in the framing or actor configuration were continuous or discontinuous. In the latter cases, I split the cases into multiple sequences.

By approaching these pathways qualitatively (see below), I could then recode, aggregate, and disaggregate the cases into 85 observable and qualitatively meaningful sequences.²⁷ Sometimes, this meant combining protests against different targets, as long as these protests were meaningfully related through coherent combinations of frames and/or actors. For the most part, however, this process consisted in deselecting cases where insufficient or ambiguous data made it impossible to meaningfully determine the relationship between the attack and any longer sequence of events. I also deselected a number of idiosyncratic cases where the emergence of violence was caused by interpersonal conflicts or other idiosyncratic motives, and where there was no data to suggest that the immediate causes were linked to wider local sequences of protest.

Table 2.4 displays the distribution of protest types by number of events in the selected cases. As compared to the entire dataset, the subsample includes a considerably lower proportion of communicative protest, and, naturally, a higher proportion of violent events.

²⁷ With the exception of the first step, I thereby combine quantitative and qualitative sources in a "convergent" method of triangulation, where the qualitative and quantitative analyses develop side by side (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2018).

Protest type	N of events	% of total
<i>Contentious</i>	92	17.52 %
Demonstration	10	1.90%
Flyers/posters	40	7.62%
Petition	17	3.24%
Formation of social media protest group	8	1.52%
Symbolic threat and harassment	17	3.24%
<i>Communicative</i>	230	43.81%
Appeal	42	8.00%
Collective correspondence / meeting with politicians and other authorities	23	4.38%
Individual correspondence with politicians and other authorities	29	5.52%
Letter to the media	100	19.05%
Protest at information meeting	36	6.86%
<i>Other</i>	4	0.76 %
<i>Violent</i>	199	37.90%
Arson	27	5.14%
Assault	12	2.29%
Bombing	2	0.38%
Minor property damage	93	17.71%
Threat	65	12.38%
<i>Total</i>	525	100 %

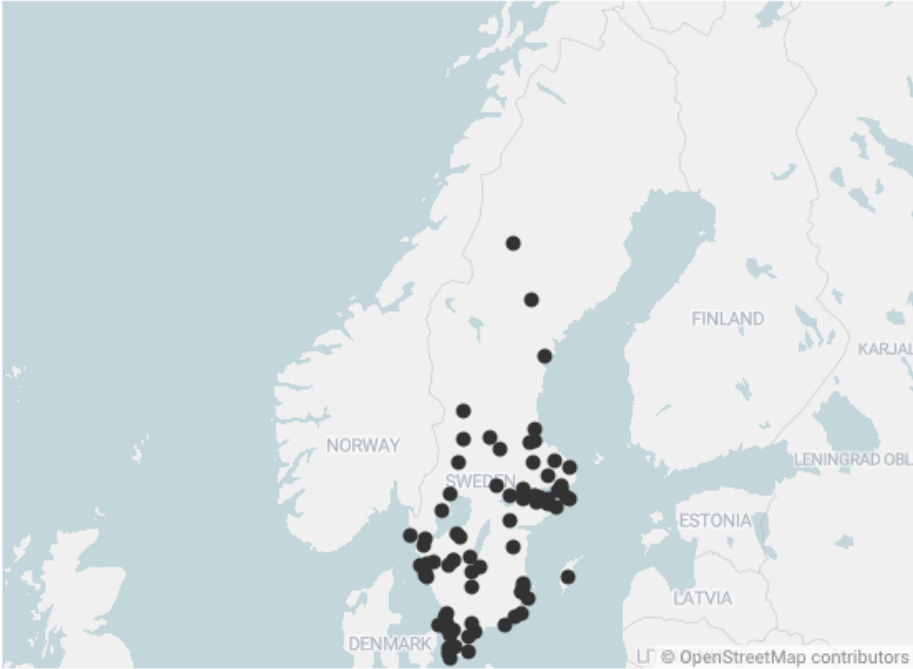
Table 2.4. Distribution of protest types in the case studies

The sequences that make up the case studies occurred in most parts of the country, and across the entire period. However, differences in the quality of available data, as well as some geographic imbalances in the reporting of events, skews the analysis toward the Southern end of the country (see figs. 2.2–2.3). There is no significant between-group variance in electoral support for the SD (at the district²⁸ and municipal level in the 2014 national elections), in the number of radical right activities in the preceding five-year period (see below), or in the number of allocated migrants in 2016.²⁹ There is, however, a significant difference in the average number of migrants allocated in 2012. This difference disappears once I divide the number of allocated migrants by municipal population size. Hence, the significant differences

²⁸ The electoral district is the smallest unit in the Swedish electoral system, encompassing between 1000 and 2000 individual voters. While some districts are considerably larger than some of the communities studied here, it is the most precise measure available for assessing the political makeup of submunicipal units.

²⁹ Unless otherwise noted, I use the Scheffe test to analyse between-group variance throughout the thesis.

between the studied communities and the excluded cases have mostly to do with the size of the municipalities in which these communities are located.



Created with [Datawrapper](#)

Fig. 2.2. Geographical distribution of case studies

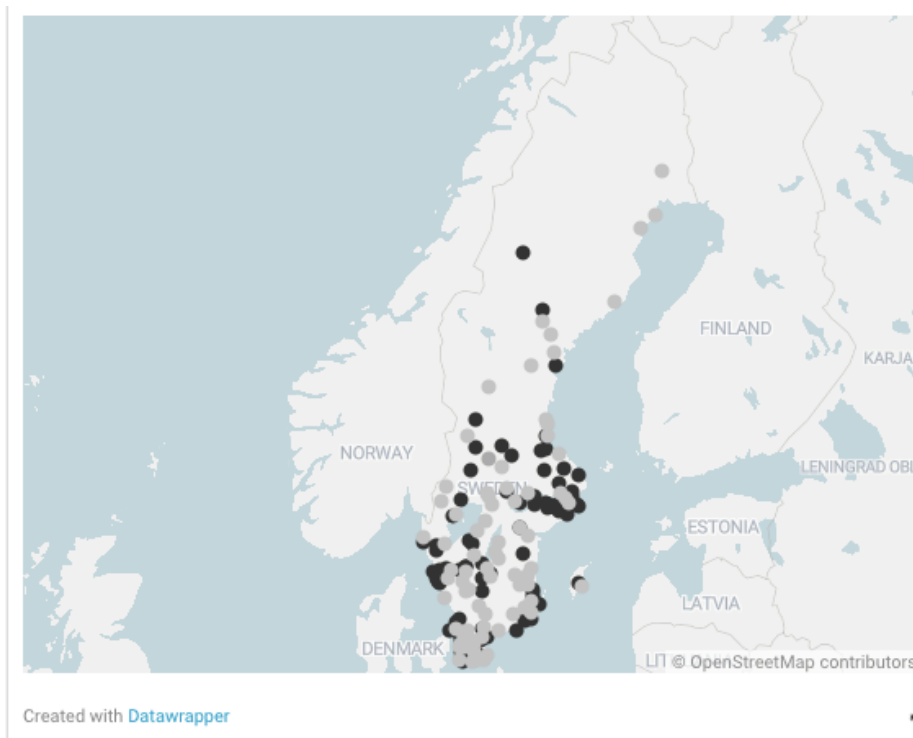


Fig. 2.3. Geographical distribution of case studies (black) and excluded cases (grey)

Organizing the events into longer sequences allows me to observe systematic differences in timing, duration, and intensity. Some sequences include repeated acts of violence, while others feature only one or two attacks. In the next chapter, I will focus primarily on two factors that distinguish the sequences. First, they differ in terms of the ordering of events, as violence occurs before, in parallel with, or after the onset of nonviolent protest. In this sense, the sequences challenge the assumptions of relatively linear, discontinuous shifts between nonviolent and violent protest that are prominent in the SM literature (see section 1.2). Second, they differ in the geographical scale of the participating actors, as sequences involve different combinations of nationally or regionally coordinated radical right actors on one hand, and locally coordinated interest groups and informal groups on the other.

Fig. 2.4 uses PEA data to illustrate the diversity of sequences, and the diversity of relationships between nonviolent and violent protest. These sequences, which I have selected for the purpose of illustration, allow two general observations regarding differences in the times and spaces of racist violence. Temporally, the six sequences differ considerably in the ordering of events (top row). In Fjälkinge, violent events (V) occurred at the very beginning of the sequence, closely coinciding with nonviolent events. In Strängnäs, on the other hand, violent protest only happened after an extended break (signified with an ellipsis: [...]) in the

sequence of nonviolent protest. In Tomelilla, violence occurred without any nonviolent protest whatsoever. Spatially, the sequences differ in the geographical scope of the actors involved (bottom row). In Grums, the majority of events involved the radical right (R). In Fjälkinge, on the other hand, the registered actors were informal groups and individuals (I), local interest organizations (L), and local chapters of mainstream political parties (M). In the former case, the actors responsible for protest were nationally organized activists, who addressed migration as a threat to the Swedish people. In the latter case, the actors were locally based groups that protested migration as a threat to the local community.

Grums	E	A	Ct	C	C	C	V	Ct	Ct	Ct	O	Ct	C																														
	A		R	I	I	I	I	R	R	R		R	I																														
Fjälkinge	E	A	C	V	C	C	C	C	C	C				O																													
	A		I	I	I	I	L	L	M	M																																	
Torslanda	E	A	C	C	C	C	C	Ct	C	C	C	C	C		Ct	C	C	V	O	C	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V	V			
	A		S	M	S	S	S	R	I	R	M	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	R	R				
Strängnäs	E	A	Ct	Ct		C	...	A	V	O	Ct																																
	A		S	R		S			I		I																																
Kortedala	E	A	C	Ct	V																																						
	A		I	I	I																																						
Tomelilla	E		V																																								
	A		I																																								

Events		Actors	
C	Communicative event	I	Informal group
Ct	Contentious event	L	Local interest group
V	Violent event	M	Mainstream party
A	Announcement/other event related to policy/facility	R	Radical right organization
O	Opening of facility/implementation of policy	S	Sweden Democrats
	30-day gap between events		
...	1-year gap between events		

Fig. 2.4. Sequences of nonviolent and violent events in six empirical cases (with legend)

2.1.2 Case studies

Above and beyond the PEA data, I have conducted qualitative case studies of all 85 sequences. Like the PEA, the case studies aim at representing the sequences of events that connect initially nonviolent interactions on migrant accommodation to the emergence of violence. Due to their closer proximity to empirical events, however, case studies are better equipped to identify idiosyncrasies, subjective viewpoints and interactions, and the non-public processes that make public events meaningful (Lieberman, 2005). Where the PEA is widely useful for presenting local sequences from the point of view of public events, the case studies allow me to interpret these sequences, and what goes on between the public events.³⁰

³⁰ The case studies can be interpreted from two directions. On one hand, they provide accounts of a “factual” nature, i.e. what happened where, when, and for whom. On the other hand, they reflect distinct perspectives, i.e. they reflect a variety of situated knowledges. This is a methodological challenge, but it is also the very condition that makes case studies so useful for studying contentious politics, phenomena that by necessity involve conflicting viewpoints. In practice, it makes it possible to analyse the data on two levels, first as an account of events and, at the meta-level, as a constructed narrative of the same events. Whether one emphasizes the one or

Generically, I define a case as a sequence of events in which a group of people makes non-routine attempts to obstruct, block, or change the planning, implementation, or maintenance of migrant accommodation policies or facilities, and where these actions involve the knowing use of physical or psychological violence. Within each case, I am interested in how interactions between these groups and their surroundings affect the creation and maintenance of frames, emotions, opportunities and relations. In Snow & Trom's words, the purpose of the case studies is to "understand and illuminate how the focal actions [...] 'are produced or reproduced and changed by examining their ongoing interaction with other elements within the particular context'" (Snow & Trom, 2002, p. 150)

The case studies combine a wide variety of primary and secondary data, gathered from a combination of systematic and non-systematic sources. In order to systematize the collection and comparison of data across the case studies, I begun by listing a number of materials that were likely to be relevant across all cases. These included newspaper clippings and social media uploads, relevant entries on radical right blogs and websites,³¹ discussions and posts in general-purpose Facebook groups that were tied to the local communities, and minutes from municipal councils and boards. On the basis of the systematic sources, I then collected additional, unsystematic sources that included local propaganda materials, petitions, court and police records, records from the fire authority (in cases of arson), local blogs, and so on and so forth. In four municipalities (see below), I used the same procedure in sampling 61 interviews with a total of 79 interviewees. However, due to ethical concerns (see section 2.2), I have chosen not to cite the interviews in the presentation of the cases.

I organized the data by constructing event chronologies for each of the 85 sequences. The event chronologies reconstruct historical sequences into manageable empirical narratives, outlined by the temporal and spatial limitations established above (cf. Bjørgo, 1997). These narratives include a wide variety of events linked to local migrant accommodation processes, such as public protest events, press statements and policy decisions, the formation of protest

the other is partly a matter of research interest, partly a matter of epistemological convictions. In this project, I approach the issue pragmatically, temporarily bracketing "unsolvable metatheoretical divides" (Sil & Katzenstein, 2010). I thereby accept that single narratives of a particular historical moment may be valid sources of data for "what really happened" and for "how people really perceived things", while at the same time adhering more or less systematically to situated knowledge, genres, moods and plots (Bosi, 2012; Portelli, 1997).³¹ I have manually and systematically gone through avpixlat.info, realisten.se, nordfront.se, svp.se, nordiskungdom.com, asylkaos.wordpress.com, and nationellidag.se, as well as the social media and websites of all relevant local chapters of the SD.

and support groups, informal discussions in public social media channels, and so on and so forth. The analysis is thereby akin to "a moderated version" of process tracing (Nissen, 2020, p. 39). Like process tracing, the analysis of event chronologies involves "the examination of intermediate steps in a process to make inferences about hypotheses on how that process took place and whether and how it generated the outcome of interest" (Andrew Bennett & Checkell, 2015, p. 5). Unlike most process tracing, however, the aim was not primarily to produce "smoking gun" accounts of how a specific event occurred, but to show the meso-level processes that facilitated the emergence of violence in the communities.

2.1.3 Additional sources

In order to contextualize the empirical cases, I have added three additional types of quantitative data. To capture the demographic and social composition of each area, I use a wide variety of statistical data on migration, socioeconomic conditions, and election results. These data, unless otherwise noted, are taken from the official websites of the MV, Statistics Sweden (*Statistiska centralbyrån*, SCB), and from the Swedish Elections Authority (*Valmyndigheten*).³² To better capture the activities of the radical right, I complemented the PEA procedure with a separate coding of all events that did *not* target migrant accommodation, but which were reported either in the mass media, through the movement's own channels, or in the data provided from Expo (see section 2.1.1). These data include 12983 unique events, and span virtually the entire country. Counting only the events that occurred in the case study areas reduces that number to 627. The majority of these events consist in the handing out of flyers or posters, as seen in table 2.5. The only type of event not included in the main dataset is the organization of street patrols (e.g. Soldiers of Odin).

Type of event	Frequency	Percentage (of total)
Demonstration	5	0.8 %
Flyers/posters	590	94.10 %
Minor property damage	6	0.96 %
Symbolic threat and harassment	23	3.67 %
Vigilantism / street patrol	3	0.48 %
<i>Total</i>	<i>627</i>	<i>100 %</i>

Table 2.5. Event types, other radical right events

³² migrationsverket.se; scb.se; val.se

In order to locate protest against migrant accommodation within longer histories of local mobilization, I have coded an additional dataset of protest events in approximately half of the communities that are included among the case studies.³³ In this second round of coding, which only included the RETRIEVER database, I coded all protest events that were reported in the relevant communities (defined at the level of the postal area), in the five years that preceded the onset of protest against migrant accommodation.³⁴ In other words, the data covers events from 2007 to 2012 if the relevant sequence began in 2012, from 2008 to 2013 if the relevant sequence began in 2013, and so on and so forth.

By limiting the scope of the comparison to the preceding five-year period I balanced concerns for historical depth with pragmatic concerns for project economy. Granted that the effect of prior events on the availability of frames, emotions, opportunities and networks is likely to fade over time, it is defensible to use a relatively narrow time frame for a general comparison. As I show in the case studies, participants in the case studies seldom included local events outside of the five-year limit when framing their opposition to migration or to the local authorities. Further, because the causal effect of events is likely to change over time, combining causes on different temporal scales, and in very different temporal proximity to the studied outcome, makes the analytical procedure extremely complex (cf. Abbott, 2001) That being said, it is plausible that older events have a wider, if less visible, influence on the structuring of past protest. As Haydu notes, these longer temporalities have often remained outside of the purview of most studies of social movements and political protest, and should be included in future research (Haydu, 2019; see also McAdam & Sewell Jr, 2001).

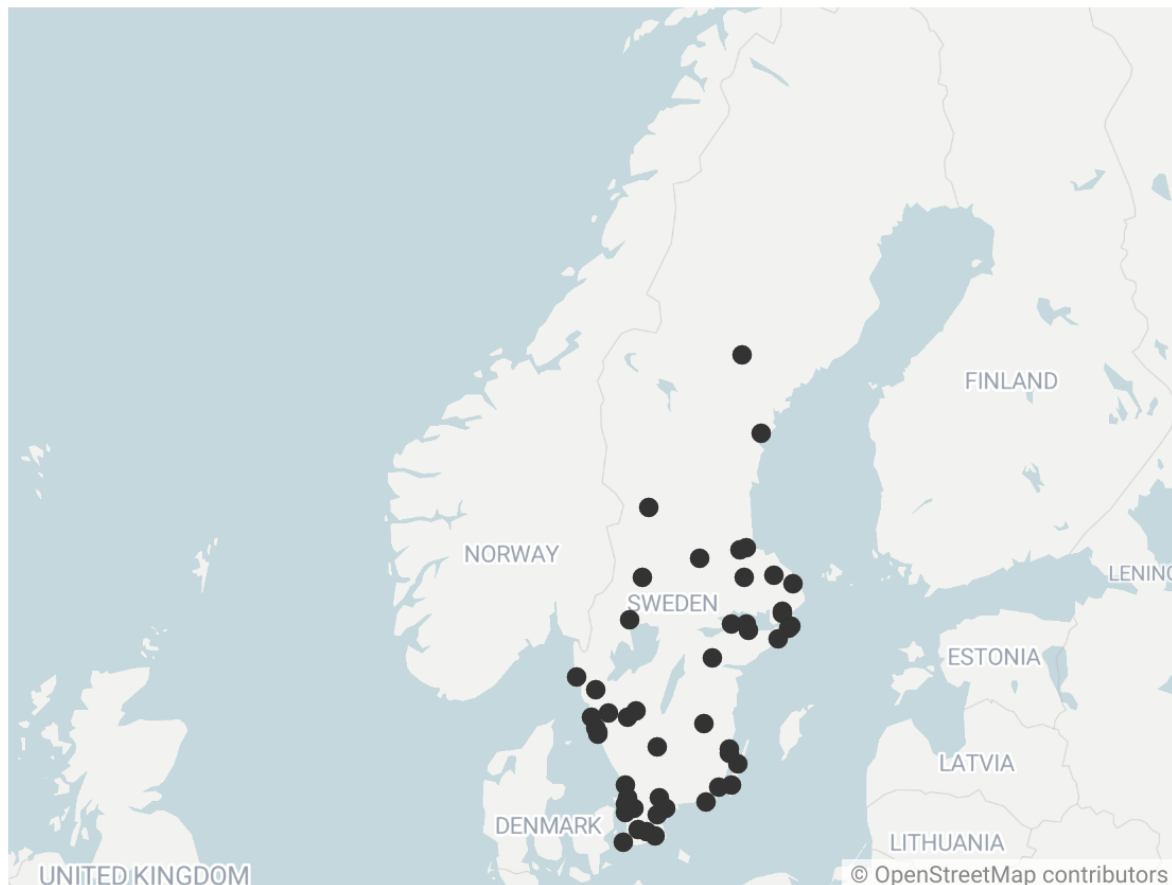
During coding, I focused on the issue – or framing – of protest (e.g. welfare/anti-austerity, anti-racist, anti-siting), the types of organizations that were involved, and the protest tactics that they used. With the exception of the issues, which are naturally more diverse, I used the same coding template as in the main dataset. In order not to inflate the data with low-threshold events (e.g. letters to the editor), I have organized the events into sequences,

³³ Initially, I conducted a randomized sample from the quantitative dataset, in which I aimed to capture 50 % of the cases in each type of pathway (see ch. 3). Following a series of recoding procedures, as chapter 6 shows, the final distribution is not as even as originally intended. However, I find the resulting imbalance to be analytically manageable.

³⁴ I used the search string [name of town] AND (Protest* OR namningsamling* OR Demonstr* OR manifestat* OR Strejk*). The latter half of the search string can be translated to (Protest* OR “petition*” OR Demonstr* OR manifest* OR strike*).

following the same procedure as described in section 2.1.1. Hence, what I count in chapter 6 is not the number of individual events, but the numbers of sequences of protest events that involve a given actor, make use of a given tactic, or take a given target, in each case study location.

Locations of cases with additional PE-data



Created with Datawrapper

Fig. 2.5. Locations of cases with additional PE-data

Following the recoding procedure described in section 2.1.1, the additional dataset covers 50 out of 85 case study locations. As shown in fig. 2.5 (above), the 50 areas that I included in the sample are relatively evenly distributed across the country. There are no significant differences in between-group variance for the strength of local SD support (as measured by 2014 national election results at the district level), or in the number of allocated refugees in 2012, 2014, or 2016. However, there is a significant between-group variance in the number of radical right events five years prior to the beginning of the sequence. The latter difference,

however, is due to two cases, both from Stockholm, which greatly inflate the mean for locations outside the subsample. Once I remove the outliers, there is no significant difference between the groups.

2.2 Reflections on fieldwork

Throughout the research process, I moved between two methodological approaches. Originally, I employed data from the PEA to single out a narrow number of communities where I would conduct in-depth fieldwork. By applying this mode of “nested” analysis, I expected to combine the scope and low cost of quantitative methods with the analytical depth and nuance of considerably more time-intensive case studies (Lieberman, 2005, p. 436). However, due to difficulties encountered in the field, I ultimately extended the case studies to the 85 cases, shifting the main mode of data collection away from fieldwork and onto the less time-intensive analysis of documents. Here, I will briefly reflect on the fieldwork part of the research process, and why I shifted from fieldwork to a less direct approach.

Starting in March 2019, I conducted between one and two months of fieldwork in four selected municipalities.³⁵ Throughout the fieldwork period, I conducted 61 interviews with a total of 79 interviewees. The interviewees included people who had protested migrant accommodation, members of the municipal councils and relevant authorities, anti-racist or refugee solidarity activists, staff at accommodation facilities, recently arrived migrants, and journalists. In the interviews, I asked interviewees to recollect what they did during the relevant period, whether they experienced conflicts, whether they cooperated with other groups, and so on and so forth.

While the interviews were important for gaining a broad, multivocal understanding of events in the studied municipalities (cf. Thompson, 2000), two problems diminished their usefulness for the thesis. First, the informal, heterogeneous character of the networks that opposed migration in the various communities, and their involvement in internal and external conflict,

³⁵ In sampling cases for fieldwork, I started from two initial observations. First, anticipating that time would be an important dimension in the analysis, I differentiated between cases on the *duration* of the pathway. Through the course of the analysis, I later came to shift this dimension into the temporal relationship between nonviolent and violent protest. Second, I distinguished between cases according to whether protest was organized primarily by the radical right, or by neighbourhood groups. This later grew into the distinction between localist and nationalist orientations. Checking for the availability of preliminary data and aiming for geographic variation, I selected four municipalities.

made it difficult both to “find the field” (Blee, 2009), and to gain access to relevant interviewees. Whereas identifying interviewees by formal title was easy enough, identifying unorganized individuals who were involved in protest turned out to be very difficult.³⁶ On multiple occasions, I was told not to “open up old wounds” when asking interviewees to refer to their friends, neighbours, and so on.³⁷ Even among organizations that I knew had taken positions on the issue (e.g. through media reporting), some plainly claimed that they had “nothing to do with it.” Multiple interviewees that were publically associated with opposition to migration and migrant accommodation cancelled their interviews, often on very short notice. While I attempted to get in touch with radical right activists, I did not receive any responses. Taken together, these factors skewed the interview data toward actors that were not directly associated with local protest, or who represented only the most moderate flank of these protests. While such interviewees were also crucial for understanding local dynamics, I could hardly use them as a valid source for understanding the processes as a whole (cf. Blee & Taylor, 2002).

Second, the interviews’ sensitive character alerted me to serious ethical concerns. On one hand, many interviewees would refuse to participate unless I could guarantee their anonymity. This applied to private individuals as well as to people in public functions. This was problematic in itself, granted that the value of many of my interviews came exactly from the interviewees’ association with unique and easily identified positions (e.g. political mandates). However, the problem was exacerbated by the close overlaps between private and political networks, as the quotes about “opening old wounds” suggest. This meant that whatever measures I took to make the interviewees anonymous in relation to a general audience, would likely be in vain in relation to the local audiences to whom the conflicts were most relevant. In this sense, albeit at a very different scale, the case of racist violence presents many of the same challenges as research in other “conflict environments” (Malthaner, 2014; Wood, 2005).

³⁶ Bygnes relates similar experiences from researching migrant accommodation in Norwegian localities. Where I solved the issue by adding other types of data, Bygnes decided on an ethnographic approach, striking up small talk with locals on the bus, at the hairdresser, and so on (Bygnes, 2017). Segers, on her part, succeeded in recruiting interviewees through extensive ethnographic fieldwork in a single Rotterdam neighbourhood (Segers, 2019).

³⁷ My experiences are very similar to those reported by Alsmark and Uddman in their presentation of a research project on a 1989 petition against migration in the Swedish municipality of Sjöbo (Alsmark & Uddman, 1993).

The difficulty of locating the field, of gaining access, and the ethical concerns surrounding anonymity made the interviewees problematic as the main source for the qualitative case studies. Already in the field, I therefore started to abandon the intense case study design in favour of a considerably broader, less intensive, qualitative comparison of all 85 sequences.³⁸ This decision was hastened with the onset of the Covid-19 Pandemic at the beginning of 2020.

Owing to ethical difficulties, and to the low coverage of the empirical cases, I have chosen to exclude the interview data from the presentation of the empirical cases. This does not mean that the fieldwork did not contribute to the final analysis. However, the ways in which fieldwork contributed were largely unexpected. In particular, my experience of conducting fieldwork in the four municipalities was what made me aware of the relational and ideational characteristics that I later emphasize in the case studies. Without the social discomfort that I experienced in locating and accessing the field, and without encountering some of the people involved in protest, I would not have perceived the great importance of the overlap between protest identities and private networks. Further, it is unlikely that I would have understood the social frictions and private risks that complement racist protest in local communities if I had not visited the affected communities, if I had not heard people talk about their neighbours and friends, and if I had not failed so miserably in gaining access. Finally, without speaking to a variety of local actors, I would not have understood the way in which highly different understandings of migrant accommodation are extended through many of the same frames – e.g. local pride, the maintenance of local life, and wider local grievances – across a wide variety of protesters, refugee solidarity activists, and local authorities. Embedding myself within these communities thereby greatly helped me understand the ambiguity of local reactions to migration, and the powerful implications of frame extension in the competition between anti-racist actors and those who protest migration into their communities (see also Bygnes, 2017, 2019; Segers, 2019).

³⁸ Above and beyond the difficulties related to fieldwork, this decision was at once necessitated and made possible by the general scarcity of data. On one hand, the gaps that existed in nearly all cases made it necessary to stitch together theoretically formulated pathways from multiple empirical cases. On the other, the scarcity of data actually enabled the immense data collection procedure necessitated by the large number of cases. Due to the gaps in the data for each case, and due to the relatively short duration of most pathways, it was possible to manage a large number of cases without becoming overburdened by the mass of data. Regardless, the data collection and analysis procedure turned out to be extremely time consuming, especially when combined with the protest event analysis.

2.3 The ethics of studying racist violence

My fieldwork experiences notwithstanding, racist violence undoubtedly represents one of the more unappealing areas of research in the SM literature. Studying organized and unorganized racism is frequently presented as dangerous, frightening, or plainly “disgusting” (Blee, 1998, 2006; Shoshan, 2016). Due to the wide social, normative and ideological distance between racist activists and most SM researchers, the relationship between researcher and research subject, and the normative justifications for research, often differs prominently from the more common study of left-wing and other “sympathetic” movements (Blee, 2017b). Beyond the practical difficulties mentioned above, these differences necessitate some reflections on the ethical implications of studying racist violence, and of studying racist activism more generally.

The first ethical consideration concerns the reciprocity between the researcher and the subjects of research. While most authors do not go as far as proclaiming the usefulness of research a moral imperative (but see Chesters, 2012; Croteau, 2004; Flacks, 2004; Milan, 2014), there remains a prominent sense that SM research should, in some sense, be useful to the studied groups (Gillan & Pickerill, 2012). As multiple scholars of right wing movements have repeated, however, this position makes it politically and practically uncomfortable – if not impossible – to study groups that we disagree with (Blee, 2006; Creek, 2012; but see Teitelbaum, 2017).

Some authors respond to this challenge by adopting a policy- or counter-movement oriented stance. In this vein, Ravndal justifies his study of right-wing terrorism as a means to help “countering [this problem] without compromising core liberal democratic principles such as freedom of expression or political freedom” (Ravndal, 2017, p. 2). Others collaborate directly with anti-racist groups in data collection and analysis (e.g. Benček & Strasheim, 2016). Generally, I find both positions understandable but untenable. Direct identification with a movement’s opponents is likely to erode trust, and risks foreclosing opportunities for future research. In a wider sense, framing the project in support of state authorities risks obscuring the fact that state authorities in fact perpetrate or support vastly more violence onto ethnic, national or racial others than small groups of locals, youths or radical right wing activists ever will.

In my role as a social scientist, I find it most useful to study racist violence as an example of more widely recurring sociological patterns.³⁹ As I hope to show throughout the thesis, my explanation of racist violence relies as much on an understanding of neighbourhood dynamics, local histories and everyday forms of racism as it does on ideologically committed “extremism.” As such, it connects to issues such as political violence, conflict escalation, local relations, and social movements more broadly. To the extent that these findings are relevant to anti-racist practices, then I am happy to contribute.

By approaching the radical right and other types of racism on neutral terms, however, it is possible that researchers lend unwanted exposure and legitimacy to groups that we do not want to see strengthened (Blee, 1998; Irvine, 2006). These arguments are important to take into account. However, they are severely dulled by the diffusion of online communication and the wide resurgence of international and national racist environments. While it is possible that social scientists could perform the work of gatekeepers in the media and political landscape of the 1990s, this is a less relevant concern in a period where the radical right and other forms of organized racism are so much more accessible and publically visible.

Finally, it is possible that research might “teach” committed racists how to better conduct protest campaigns. I find this argument to be implausible on epistemological as well as on empirical grounds. As Flacks argues, the contemporary program of SM studies is ultimately devoted to post facto explanation, whereas movement activists “are by definition engaged in efforts to anticipate the future” (Flacks, 2004, p. 9).⁴⁰ While the analysis can hopefully say something about how something *has* happened, it says little to nothing about how the same process might have developed differently, had a given actor made some other choice along the way. This is especially true when we take the processual framework into account, as any observed pathway to violence changes the relevant conditions for subsequent events (Sewell Jr, 2005).⁴¹

³⁹ For the classic formulation of this argument in sociology, see (Weber, 1949).

⁴⁰ Indeed, researchers often report activists’ reluctance to engage with SM scholarship, which they report to be irrelevant, trivial, or even politically suspect (Flacks, 2004; Milan, 2014; Ryan, 2004).

⁴¹ This argument obviously does not extend to the section of the SM literature that adopts participatory action research methods (e.g. Dawson & Sinwell, 2012; Langdon & Larweh, 2015; Reitan & Gibson, 2012).

2.4 Summary

This chapter has described the thesis' research design, my experiences in the field, and the wider ethical implications of studying racist violence. In the first half of the chapter, I described the methodological difficulties that are associated with researching racist violence, and the methodological choices I have made in response. I introduced the section with some general reflections on studying racist violence. I specifically highlighted the poor standard of systematized reporting of racist violence, and the ethical and practical difficulties of “finding” and studying the field in qualitative approaches. In the following subsections, I suggested the triangulation of quantitative (PEA) and qualitative methods and data as a means to solve some of the difficulties that are associated with each method. In relation to the discussion in chapter 1, this combination of different scales of analysis also helps bridge the tension between unity and diversity in research on racist violence.

In the second half of the section, I reflected on my experiences of conducting (and abandoning) fieldwork, and on the ethical implications of racist violence. First, I described how difficulties in the field led me to adopt a more systematic, larger-scale mode of medium-N comparison, as opposed to the small-n fieldwork I had originally planned. Through these experiences, however, I was able to better understand the weakly coordinated character of racist protest, and the close and tense relationship between protest and interpersonal relations. Second, I discussed the ethical implications of studying racist violence. Here, I argued that expectations of reciprocity in the SM literature should not be applied to studies of racism. Rather than advocating a strong anti-racist or counter-extremist position, however, I argued that researchers should take a dispassionate approach. While this approach might make the researcher an unwilling accomplice to the diffusion of racist protest, I argued that the great expansion of the radical right and organized racism in later years has made this risk virtually superfluous.

3 The times and spaces of racist violence

3.1 Introduction

In order to solve the tension between unity and diversity in racist violence, it is necessary to locate its wider causes within the dynamics between the different expressions of nonviolent and violent racism that exist in the same in time and space. In chapter 1, I showed the merits of approaching racist violence as containing a number of pathways to similar outcomes, specifically through the use of a processual approach to political violence. This approach interprets violence as an outcome of mostly nonviolent activities going on between protesters, authorities and third parties. It thereby locates the emergence of violence in time and space.

In this chapter, I use the processual framework to develop a typology of six recurring pathways to violence. As mentioned in chapter 2, I develop the six pathways on the basis of two recurring differences in the patterning of violent and nonviolent protest. On one hand, I distinguish between cases based on the order, or temporal sequence, between violent and nonviolent events. On the other hand, I distinguish between cases on the basis of their spatial orientation, or the scale of the networks and frames that participants employ in coordinating protest. Within each combination, I argue, is a recurring set of causal mechanisms that relate to the framing of migration, the elicitation of collective emotions, the attribution of political opportunities, and the configuration of social networks.

The chapter consists of three parts. In the first part, I discuss differences among temporal sequences. In the second part, I discuss differences in the spatial orientation of protest. In the third part, I combine the sequences and orientations into a typology of six pathways, each of which combines at least two causal mechanisms. In chapters 4–6, I expand the discussion of the six pathways by showing how similar sequences of causal mechanisms develop through the course of different sequences of events, and under different macro-level conditions.

3.2 The times of racist violence

The temporal sequence between violent and nonviolent protest is central to the processual framework, as it allows authors to locate violent events “within broader political processes,

relational fields, and repertoires of action” (Bosi, Demetriou, & Malthaner, 2014, p. 2).⁴² Around this general argument, authors have developed a wide and widely theorized conceptual framework, highlighting the timing, duration, intensity and “eventfulness” of different sequences of nonviolent and violent interaction (see overview in Gillan & Edwards, 2020). Across the literature on temporality in political violence, however, the very order of events in the sequence between violent and nonviolent protest has largely been left uncommented. In recent literature reviews on the temporality of political violence, the fact that temporal sequences differ is either left unacknowledged (Bosi et al., 2014; Bosi & Malthaner, 2021) or described without attention to its analytical consequences (Bosi et al., 2019).

Building on the empirical data and on the existing literature, I suggest three distinct sequences in the relationship between violent and nonviolent protest. Elaborated below, I refer to these as the continuous, discontinuous, and independent sequences.⁴³ In each sequence, I present two alternative mechanisms that both, facilitate the emergence of violence. In section 3.3, I show how the distinction between the mechanisms is mediated through the establishment of localist and nationalist orientations to protest.

3.2.1 Continuous sequences

In continuous sequences, “violence may not mark a new and separate phase of contention, but proceeds in parallel with [nonviolent protest]” (Bosi et al., 2019, p. 133). In these sequences, violence does not follow from the escalation of nonviolent protest. Instead, both types develop simultaneously. This situation forces us to specify the mechanisms that allows such a wide range of tactics to occur at the same time, in the same places. In this section, I specify two causal mechanisms: the activation of weakly coordinated networks and milieu activation.

⁴² It is also central to and to the SM approach’s polemic against other strands of research. When della Porta (1995) explains political violence as “an outcome of the interaction between social movements and their opponents,” she does so in direct opposition to terrorism studies and its tendency to “emphasize the discontinuities between ‘normal’ political behavior and deviant political behavior” (della Porta, 1995, p. 5). Similarly, when Tilly suggests, “[any] study which treats violent events alone deals with the product of two different sets of determinants: (1) the determinants of collective action in general, whether it produces violence or not; (2) the determinants of violent outcomes to collective action,” (Tilly, 1978, p. 182) he does so as part of a polemic against “Durkheimian” approaches that see violence as analytically separate from “normal” political processes (see also Tilly, 1977).

⁴³ While these categories resonate with a broad range of empirical studies, they are obviously not exhaustive. Instead, they should primarily be read as tools for the current analysis.

The former is associated with the development of the localist orientation, and the latter is associated with the nationalist orientation.

In the first mechanism, violence emerges through the activation of weakly coordinated networks. In these cases, protest consists of a wide variety of actors, coordinated only by a common target or a common sense of collective identity. Because different groups have different preferences and strategies, and because different groups perceive differently of their political and discursive opportunities, protest is likely to develop in a diverse pattern with violence occurring “on the margins of widespread small-scale and generally non-violent interaction” (Tilly, 2003, p. 15). Hence, through the activation of weakly coordinated networks, protest immediately develops in a mode where no particular actor can establish a coherent strategy, or channel protest into the institutional arena.

In the second mechanism, violence develops through the activation of a supportive milieu around the radical right.⁴⁴ This milieu, which consists of the movement’s sympathizers, subcultural youths, and so on, forms what Lööw calls “the borderlands between the organized and the unorganized” (Lööw, 2017). These milieus are crucial for understanding the dynamic between radical right wing activists and unorganized bystanders. In these milieus, activists influence the framing of migration, highlight potential targets, and help justify violence through private interactions and the organization of publically visible protest events. The unorganized participants, in turn, carry out most of the violence (Bjørge, 1997; Gräfe & Segelke, 2019; Lööw, 1995; Neubacher, 1998).⁴⁵

The differences between the two mechanisms highlight the heterogeneous role of coordination in the development of political protest. As Ray shows, the degree of coordination that a given actor can exercise greatly influences the coherence of tactics and

⁴⁴ The concept of milieu is widely used in the literature on political violence to refer to the diverse networks of support relations that exist around armed groups and violent social movement organizations. As such, the concept is attached to numerous conceptual debates, which I do not attend to here (but see Malthaner & Waldmann, 2014; Waldmann, 2010; Waldmann, Sirseloudi, & Malthaner, 2010).

⁴⁵ The presence of the radical right also produces violence in the course of collective action events. In extensive conflicts, these confrontations develop out of long series of testing among police, nationalists and anti-racists (Karapın, 2011; Koopmans, 1997). However, the development of protest violence also depends on the long-term strategic development within the radical right, and between the radical right and their adversaries, including anti-racist protesters and the police. These longer histories translate into formal and informal patterns of protest policing and counter-movement tactics (e.g. Jämte, 2013; Wahlström, 2010). They also inform the use of violence directly, e.g. through different tactical preferences within radical right groups, and through the enforcement of different strategies with regard to violence.

frames in a given setting (Ray, 1998). In the first pattern, the activation of diverse and weakly coordinated networks means that no single actor can establish this type of dominance. This makes for a widely diverse combination of tactics, in which occasional violence occurs simultaneously with nonviolent protest. As Snow and Moss show, this pattern is also visible when comparing different degrees of coordination within social movement organizations (Snow & Moss, 2014). In the second pattern, radical right activists manage to establish a degree of coordination in a more limited setting. In the latter situation, the continuity between violent and nonviolent protest is ensured through the complementary relationship between radical right activists, who use both violent and nonviolent tactics, and a mostly violent milieu.

3.2.2 Discontinuous sequences

In discontinuous sequences, violence emerges through a shift in the structure of protest. The pattern of protest thereby proceeds from a predominantly nonviolent phase, into a phase where violent protest is a prominent part of the participants' combinations of tactics. The discontinuous sequences force us to ask what it is within these settings that causes protest to shift from nonviolent to violent tactics. In this section, I detail two distinct mechanisms, each of which leads to the same outcome. First, I introduce the mechanism of privatization to show how violence develops through the fragmentation of protest into private networks. This mechanism is associated with the localist orientation. Second, I revisit the mechanism of milieu activation. Like in the continuous sequence, milieu activation is associated with the radical right and the nationalist orientation. Unlike in the section on continuous sequences, however, these mechanisms both develop through broader shifts in the attribution of opportunities and the wider relational structure of protest.

The privatization mechanism combines changes in the relational structure and framing of protest. In relational terms, the networks that are involved in protest shift into non-public, everyday settings, abandoning public protest. Through the overlap between political and private experiences, the framing of grievances also changes from wider political issues into personal frustrations and interpersonal conflict. Protest thereby shifts into a form that is similar to what Scott calls an "infrapolitical" logic, as participants use violence as a means of expressing collective identities and political grievances, but do so outside of any sustained attempt at political protest (Scott, 2012). Accordingly, violence does not emerge from the

rhythm of the political process, but from the dynamics of everyday interactions and interpersonal conflict.⁴⁶

In the second mechanism, the turn toward violence occurs through the activation of violent milieus. As described above, this indicates a shift in the relational structure of protest, as radical right activists manage to gain influence among a smaller set of sympathizers.⁴⁷ Unlike in the continuous pathways, however, milieu activation occurs after an initial period of nonviolent protest, in which the radical right is marginalized in the wider structure of protest.

Privatization and milieu activation, in the discontinuous sequence, both occur after a shift in the prior pattern of protest. This shift, which transforms protest from a mainly nonviolent to a predominantly violent mode, occurs through two interrelated mechanisms among moderate protesters. First, moderate protesters – whether local interest groups, informal groups, the SD, and so on – interpret political opportunities as closed. Second, all or parts of the moderate actors demobilize, shifting the balance of influence and the degree of coordination within the case as a whole. When this process contributes to the privatization pattern, it does so through the weakening and fragmentation of pre-existing networks into private settings. When protest develops into milieu activation, it does so through the growing influence of the radical right.

3.2.3 Independent sequences

Racist violence, unlike most other forms of political violence, does not emerge only or even primarily in the course of widespread political protest. The continuous and discontinuous sequences therefore cannot account for all empirically observed cases. Instead, a considerable

⁴⁶ The privatization mechanism is also conceptually similar to the "latent" or "abeyance" structures that authors use to describe the non-public networks, scenes, and subcultures in which movements maintain collective identities and commitment between protest waves (Leach & Haunss, 2009; Melucci, 1991; Taylor, 1989; Taylor & Whittier, 1992). However, where the latter concepts present the period of abeyance as a temporary retreat from public protest, the privatization mechanism concerns a more definitive abandonment or absence of public protest.

⁴⁷ In the literature on political violence, I find two other mechanisms in the discontinuous pathway, each of which leads to a distinct violent outcome. On one hand, violence can emerge through the crystallization of violent cells. This argument is especially common in studies of protest waves (Alimi et al., 2012, 2015; della Porta, 1995, 2013; della Porta & Tarrow, 1986; Drevon, 2015; Haines, 1984; Malthaner, 2015; Malthaner & Lindekilde, 2017; McCauley & Moskalenko, 2014; Tarrow, 1989). On the other hand, shifts in the structure of protest may institutionalize the use of violence on a wide scale, either through the crystallization of multiple warring parties (as in the turn from mobilization to civil war) (della Porta, Hidde Donker, Hall, Poljarevic, & Ritter, 2017), or where challengers manage to seize control of the state (Beissinger, 2002). In these cases as well, the different relational mechanisms occur in response to changes in political opportunities.

portion of racist violence develops out of small-group interactions and seemingly “spontaneous” confrontations (Blee, 2017b). In other words, racist violence often occurs in the absence of public, nonviolent protest. I refer to these cases as independent sequences. Independent sequences develop either through the immediate activation of the privatization mechanism, or through violent specialization. The privatization mechanism is associated with the localist orientation, while the specialization mechanism, owing to its relationship to the radical right, is associated with the nationalist orientation.

Where no actor is able to channel grievances into public protest, it sometimes leads to the immediate triggering of the privatization mechanism. As described in the section above, the privatization of protest facilitates a relational structure in which frames against migrant accommodation overlap with personal grievances and frustrations. The temporality of violence is therefore extremely unpredictable, as the occurrence of attacks is entirely disassociated from the policy process, or from sequences of nonviolent protest. Frame extension thereby politicizes interpersonal conflicts with individual migrants into causes of systematic patterns of racist violence (DS 1998:35.; see also Hopkins, 2010), and makes racist violence a salient element of small-group dynamics and leisure activities (Bjørge, 1997).

The privatization of protest is closely related to the availability of supportive environments. As multiple studies of racially motivated youth violence show, these events often occur in contexts where the presence of migrants is framed in distinctly negative terms among groups that surround the assailants (Bjørge, 1997; Löow, 1995; Wigerfelt & Wigerfelt, 2001, 2003). Similarly, research on lone actor violence consistently points to the role of long-term interactions between assailants and their wider supportive environment, even when that environment does not take part in protest activities (Berntzen & Sandberg, 2014; Gill et al., 2014; Horgan, 2008; Lindekilde, Malthaner, & O’Connor, 2019; Lindekilde, O’Connor, & Schuurman, 2019; Schuurman et al., 2017). Hence, just like the channelling of protest into private networks is dependent on the absence of actors that would otherwise channel protest into other directions, it is also dependent on a supportive environment.

The second mechanism, specialization, occurs when smaller groups of activists crystallize into coherent cells of violent specialists. In this mechanism, the turn toward violence is linked to intramovement processes, e.g. strategic differences, repression, or the attribution of closed opportunities (della Porta, 2013; Kaplan, Löow, & Malkki, 2014; Lindekilde, Malthaner, et al., 2019). Unlike in the privatization mechanism, where violence occurs out of private

interactions and unexpected confrontations, specialization sees violence emerging out of processes of premeditation, reflecting the commitment and greater organizational capacity of its participants.

3.3 The spaces of racist violence

Like time, spatial categories make up an incredibly diverse area of social scientific research. Speaking only of social movements, space is relevant to the understanding of physical geographies, different scales and scopes of action, different emotional and symbolic attachments, and different relations of proximity among protesters, their adversaries, and their surroundings (Leitner et al., 2008). These various meanings are visible and shifting through the course of protest, as activists make claims on territories, establish local support networks, or shift the scale of their claims and networks (Burton, 1978; Carenzi, 2020; Lomax, 2015; Malthaner, 2011; Nicholls, 2009; Nicholls & Uitermark, 2017; Ó Dochartaigh & Bosi, 2010; Tarrow, 2005). In the literature on racist violence, however, discussions of space are typically limited to methodological choices, and specifically to decisions concerning the level of analysis.

In this section, I discuss the role of space through Gould's concept of *orientation* (R. V. Gould, 1995). Gould identifies orientations as the combination of identities and networks that structure solidarities, frame grievances, and motivate people into action. As Gould shows in his comparison of the Parisian insurgencies of 1848 and 1871, this concept has a distinctly spatial component. In 1848, the insurgents identified with the national – or even international – working class, based their claims around general, class-based demands and organized along class lines. In 1871, insurgents mobilized on the basis of geographical proximity, organizing along lines of neighbourhoods and urban areas rather than social classes, and framing their grievances as threats to the Parisian community.

Gould's analysis points to the broadly recurring distinction between localism and cosmopolitanism in political processes.⁴⁸ In the current case, in order to avoid unnecessary

⁴⁸ The distinction between local and wider spatial orientations has a long history in the study of politics. Robert Merton, in particular, used similar categories to describe the political participation of different individuals. "The localite", Merton says, "largely confines his interests to his community. [The local community] is essentially his world. Devoting little thought or energy to the Great Society, he is preoccupied with local problems, to the virtual exclusion of the national and international scene" (Merton, 1968, p. 448). By contrast, the cosmopolitan,

and contradictory ideological connotations, I change “cosmopolitan” to “nationalist.” In the localist orientation, people mobilize on the basis of geographic proximity, framing their actions through the lens of “the small world” of the street, the neighbourhood, the community, or the municipality. In the nationalist orientation, on the other hand, participants mobilize on the basis of organizational or ideological ties, and frame local events as examples of wider grievances.

In the following pages, I will detail the puzzles and causal mechanisms affiliated with the localist and nationalist orientations. In doing so, I knowingly exclude any discussion of how a particular orientation comes into being, and under what conditions. In chapters 4 or 5, I approach the former issue by showing how the establishment of a given orientation is determined by the actions and relative positions of different actors. In chapter 6, I approach the latter issue by looking at how different orientations follow different patterns of prior protest, prior radical right wing activism, and different degrees of legitimacy for the negative framing of migration. In this sense, the establishment of any given orientation is ultimately determined by causes located at the macro-, meso-, and micro-level.

3.3.1 The localist orientation

As anyone who has attempted to mobilize local protest knows, the diversity of organizational and ideological profiles that exists in any local community makes collective action difficult. As Nicholls notes, “Cohabitation in the same location does not by necessity produce distinctive political dispositions or solidarities. It is often the case that a person’s sense of political community is more clearly shaped by her or his relations with others living on the other side of the world than those living next door” (Nicholls, 2009, p. 80). Even when adverse events affect entire communities, as SM research shows, people are more likely to be mobilized on the grounds of pre-existing social and organizational ties than by physical

“has some interest in [the local community] and must of course maintain a minimum of relations with the community as he, too, exerts influence there. But he is also oriented significantly to the world outside of [the local community], and regards himself as an integral part of that world. He resides in [the local community] but lives in the Great Society” (ibid.). Merton and his colleagues showed how cosmopolitans and localites differed in their interpretation of external events (e.g. the impact of the war) and in their structures of social relations. Localites tended to interpret external events through their implications for local conditions, and they maintained most of their social relations within the local community. Cosmopolitans, on the other hand, interpreted external events through the lens of their wider national or international impact, and mingled with small numbers of other local residents. Cosmopolitans were also more likely to be involved in voluntary organizations, and specifically specialist organizations, denoting their selectivity in social contacts (Merton, 1968, p. 452f).

proximity to the cause of grievance (McAdam, 1988; Saunders, Grasso, Olcese, Rainsford, & Rootes, 2012; Useem, 1980; Wahlström & Wennerhag, 2014). This should be particularly true in the case of racist protest, which has few direct supporters, where the participants risk social stigma, and where the responsible movements are very weakly integrated in the protest arena.

To solve the puzzle of localist protest, it is necessary to look at the mechanism of frame extension. As mentioned in chapter 1, frame extension “[extends] the boundaries of its primary framework so as to encompass interests or points of view that are incidental to its primary objectives but of considerable salience to potential adherents” (Snow et al., 1986, p. 472). By paying attention to frame extension, it is possible to understand how an actor, or a composite of several actors, frame migrant accommodation in a way that makes it appear legitimate and allows it to better resonate across groups with widely different ideological commitments and interests.⁴⁹

When frame extension is successful, it draws together experiences or fears of migrant accommodation with a wider set of locally salient issues. In the cases presented in the coming chapters, I will show how frame extension allows actors that are directly hostile to migration to develop unexpected relations with local interest organizations, undecided neighbours, and even refugee solidarity groups. Sometimes, these extensions create negative framings of migration even in the absence of radical right groups, the SD, or others committed to negative framings of migration. Across the three temporal sequences, frame extension is therefore central for the activation of weakly coordinated networks, and for the maintenance of grievances after the privatization of protest. The mechanism of frame extension thereby

⁴⁹ In order to understand how frame extension becomes successful, it is important to look at two other factors. First, if there are no pre-existing frames that can resonate with migrant accommodation (or any other issue), then it is unlikely that frame extension will be successful (Jasper & Poulsen, 1995; Snow & Benford, 1988). This points to the importance of past patterns of protest, as well as more general features of the relationship between the local community and the local authorities. I will discuss these issues further in chapter 6. Second, successful frame extension ultimately depends on the actions of local actors. Here, influential and credible actors can make an enormous difference by supporting or rejecting attempts at framing migrant accommodation as a threat to wider local interests. As multiple studies show, prestigious groups and individuals may play a decisive role in how local communities mobilize vis-à-vis migrants (Bygnes, 2019; Drangslund, Ellingsen, Hidle, & Karlsen, 2010; Whyte, Larsen, & Fog Olwig, 2018). As Whyte and colleagues show, even a single influential individual can decisively influence whether the community frames migrant accommodation as a positive or negative event (Whyte et al., 2018).

highlights the link between the localist orientation and the relational mechanisms detailed in the previous section.

3.3.2 The nationalist orientation

In the nationalist orientation, protest develops through or in the milieus that surround the radical right. In relation to the three temporal sequences, the nationalist orientation thereby develops through the mechanisms of milieu activation and violent specialization. Unlike the localist orientation, this means that protest develops out of networks that are already relatively unified around a coherent framing and strategic concept. Of course, as many authors have shown, the radical right is far from a unitary actor. In fact, it is riddled with ideological divides, factional and organizational struggles, and interpersonal conflict (Blee, 2017b; Busher & Morrison, 2018; Caiani et al., 2012). For our purposes, however, the relative ideological and organizational affinity that exists among members of the radical right is sufficient to make its capacity for collective action much less puzzling than for participants in the localist orientation. Instead, the nationalist orientation forces us to answer how radical right activists come to select a specific target out of the infinitude of potential targets in a given national – or even international – setting.

To understand the puzzle of the nationalist orientation, it is necessary to note the interchangeable character of local settings. Because the framing that defines the nationalist orientation is located above the level of specific local communities, any local instance of migrant accommodation is likely to be perceived only as an example of wider political issues, or as a moment to express more general grievances (Hadj Abdou & Rosenberger, 2019). Because actors are mobilized on the basis of geographically diverse ideological and organizational networks, further, activists may choose to protest wherever it best serves such wider goals. As Karapin observes in his study of skinhead violence in Germany, “if the closest asylum shelter or foreign workers’ housing did not present favorable conditions for an attack, right-wing youths could attack foreigners in a neighboring town or county where police were more passive or adult residents more supportive” (Karapin, 2007, p. 200).

As the quote from Karapin shows, the central mechanism in the nationalist orientation is the attribution of opportunity. However, because local migrant accommodation is mainly used as a tool to address wider grievances, the political opportunities that exist in a given setting should be relatively unimportant, aside from demobilizing locally oriented actors (as in the

discontinuous pathways). Instead, as Koopmans & Olzak have suggested, the radical right is unlikely to use violence unless activists assume it will be visible, salient, and perceived as legitimate, i.e. where it assumes to find discursive opportunities (Koopmans & Olzak, 2004; see also Koopmans & Statham, 1999b; Ravndal, 2017).

Through the lens of discursive opportunities, we should expect the radical right to mobilize in locations where migrant accommodation and events related to migrant accommodation resonate with the movement’s frames, or where incipient local protest signals opportunities for the radical right to gain legitimacy and visibility, increase its membership, or otherwise add to its organizational capacity. As I show in the empirical cases, the radical right often mobilizes in response to migrant criminality, and especially to reports of sexual violence, or in response to policies that appear to favour migrants at the cost of natives. Closed political opportunities, while not directly relevant in itself, might also be taken into account as a factor for the opening of discursive opportunities, as frustrations with the lack of government responses might make local protesters appear more accommodating for the radical right (Karapın, 2007).

3.4 Six pathways to violence

The discussions of the temporal sequences and the spatial orientations already take us some way in understanding the diversity of pathways to violence. As those sections showed, understanding the emergence of violence necessitates looking at different degrees of coordination, the elicitation of emotions, the framing of migrant accommodation, and the attribution of political and discursive opportunities. In this section, I will combine the arguments from the sections above into six hypothetical pathways to violence, each consisting of a distinct sequence of mechanisms (summarized in table 3.1). Drawing on the empirical cases and the literature on social movements, political violence, and racist violence, I expand on how each combination of mechanisms emerges in its corresponding pathway.

	Localist orientation	Nationalist orientation
Continuous temporality	<i>Moral outrage (Activation of weakly coordinated networks + frame extension)</i>	<i>Nationalist opportunism (Milieu activation + attribution of discursive opportunity)</i>
Discontinuous temporality	<i>Violence through demobilization (Demobilization + negative attribution of opportunity) + (frame extension + privatization)</i>	<i>Escalation (Demobilization + negative attribution of opportunity) + (milieu activation + attribution of discursive opportunity)</i>
Independent temporality	<i>Subcultural violence (Privatization + frame extension)</i>	<i>Autonomous cell violence (Specialization + attribution of</i>

		<i>discursive opportunity</i>
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Table 3.1. The six pathways and their main mechanisms

3.4.1 Moral outrage

The first pathway is located at the intersection of the localist orientation and the continuous sequence. It thereby combines successful frame extension with the activation of weakly coordinated networks. In order to capture this combination of mechanisms, I use the concept of moral outrage (Crockett, 2017; Erickson Nepstad & Smith, 2001; Jasper & Poulsen, 1995; Lemonik Arthur, 2013), or the process through which “an event or situation raises such a sense of outrage in people that they become inclined toward political action, even in the absence of a network of contacts” (Jasper & Poulsen, 1995, p. 498). Through the impact of emotional responses, and their grounding in widely shared normative and moral categories, the moral outrage pathway thereby explains both the successful extension of the negative framing of migration, and the wide activation of weakly coordinated networks.

While moral outrage is powerful for mobilizing new participants and for facilitating diverse protest tactics, it is not very sustainable across time. Because emotions are so important, participants are likely to grow disillusioned as the initial shock and/or enthusiasm fades (Walsh, 1981). At this point, participants will lose interest, disagree over ends and means, and possibly form or join more enduring relational forms. On one hand, smaller groups might crystallize out of the initially diverse environment, producing radical milieus or groups of violent specialists (e.g. della Porta, 1995, 2013). On the other, more coordinated, better-resourced groups might join the protests, attracted by the signalling of discursive opportunities. However, as Piven & Cloward were early to note, this means that initially unpredictable, unruly, and diverse sets of frames and tactics are likely to be transformed into more predictable, narrower, and less disruptive, forms (Piven & Cloward, 1979).

As any other pathway, outbreaks of moral outrage are ultimately dependent on sequences of interaction among different sets of actors. This means that moral outrage should not be perceived as something that happens as a “natural reaction” to external events, but as a willing or unwilling outcome of local and wider processes. As I will show in chapter 4, these processes involve mass media reporting, local rumour, and municipal communication strategies. Notably, these forms are similar in the sense that they all involve decentralized interaction, which cannot be linked to any given political actor. As such, the mode of communication that sets up the pathway prefaces the pathway that will eventually emerge.

3.4.2 Nationalist opportunism

The second pathway occupies the intersection between the nationalist orientation and the continuous sequence. This pathway combines the radical right's attribution of discursive opportunities with milieu activation. I refer to this as the *nationalist opportunism* pathway.

The attribution of discursive opportunities denotes the assessment that a given course of action will be visible, publically salient and perceived as legitimate among a target audience. The nationalist opportunism pathway is therefore most likely to develop in locations where “shocking” external events resonate with the radical right's frames. These involve reports of immigrant criminality (particularly sexual violence), and examples of “unequal” resource distribution (e.g. the allocation of public housing to migrants). In the absence of these events, it is very unlikely that radical right actors will mobilize widely and openly in a given community.

The nationalist opportunism pathway leads to violence through the interaction between the radical right and a wider milieu of sympathizers. Whereas radical right activists carry out some violence, they also impact on the emergence of violence by pointing toward potential targets, influencing the framing of migrant accommodation, and justifying the use of violence. The nationalist opportunism pathway therefore does not assume that the perpetrators are directly affiliated with the radical right, even though the radical right is always present in its surroundings (Bjørgero, 1997; Löow, 1995, 2017).

3.4.3 Demobilization

The demobilization pathway combines a localist orientation with a discontinuous temporality. It thereby consists of two distinct phases. It then develops into a dual pattern of privatization and frame extension.

In the first phase, nonviolent protest develops through the activation of relatively coordinated networks. This phase involves the successful extension of negative framings of migration and migrant accommodation into wider local grievances. However, it does not lead to the weakly coordinated networks observed in moral outrage. As a consequence, moderate actors, and groups with more coherent strategies, can influence the course of protest more directly than in weakly coordinated networks, avoiding the risk of violence.

The second phase in the demobilization pathway begins with the decline of public protest. This process consists of the dual mechanisms of negative opportunity attribution and demobilization. Protesters reframe opportunities as closed, owing to misunderstandings, unfulfilled expectations, or simply the passage of the implementation process. The reframing of political opportunities coincides with a shift in emotional mood, as hope gives way to a sense of failure, disillusionment and disunity (cf. Belghazi & Moudden, 2016).

Demobilization initiates the privatization of protest. This process includes a shift in the mode of frame extension, as migrant accommodation is linked to personal grievances and interpersonal conflict, rather than wider political or moral grievances, and a shift in the relational structure of protest, as the remaining protesters retreat into fragmented, non-public networks. The privatization mechanism thereby severs the temporal and causal link between violent protest and the policy process. For this reason, violent events often appear to occur “randomly” out of the dynamics of escalated private interactions and interpersonal conflict.

3.4.4 Escalation

The escalation pathway combines the discontinuous sequence with the nationalist orientation.⁵⁰ It thereby combines the mechanisms of discursive opportunity attribution and milieu activation, following the demobilization of moderate protesters.

In the first phase of the escalation pathway, radical right actors attribute discursive opportunities, and mobilize, alongside other, more influential actors. The relational pattern that emerges at the onset of protest makes the radical right a relatively peripheral actor, outflanked through the presence of more resourced, legitimate or locally credible groups. The presence of the radical right is therefore not immediately sufficient to produce the type of milieu that is observed in nationalist opportunism.

The shift toward violence occurs through a change in the framing of political opportunities, and the parallel process of demobilization. This happens through three simultaneous and

⁵⁰ In the SM literature, the concept of *escalation*, or the process through which the combination of tactics in a given episode shifts into increasingly violent forms (della Porta, 2008). Unlike many other cases of escalation in the literature, however, the pathways observed in the empirical literature remain at a relatively low level of destructiveness. Therefore, it is particularly important to remember that I use the concept by means of causal analogy rather than substantial similarity.

mutually reinforcing events. First, the lack of results, the proceeding of the implementation period, and similar processes suggest to participants that change is increasingly unlikely. This negative signalling of political opportunities contributes to the demobilization of moderate actors. At the same time, they do not signal the closure of opportunities for the radical right, whose nationalist orientation and more far-reaching goals makes local political opportunities relatively irrelevant. On the contrary, the closure of political opportunities, and the declining influence of moderate groups, may even signal the opening of discursive opportunities for radical right actors, as both processes increase the potential visibility and legitimacy of radical right frames. Finally, the persistence and growing visibility of the radical right signals risks for moderate actors that do not want to be associated with organized racism or political extremism. Together, these mechanisms contribute to the demobilization of moderate actors, and to the opening of wider spaces for the radical right. In the absence of moderate competitors, this allows the radical right to mobilize support (and violence) from within its sympathetic milieu.

Beyond the specific mechanisms, the shift between the first and second phases distinguishes the escalation pathway from the demobilization pathway. In the latter, violence emerges out of private settings following the decline of protest. In the escalation pathway, on the other hand, demobilization does not extend to the radical right. Owing to different assessments of political opportunity, the radical right can therefore maintain a relative continuity of protest, going into the milieu activation mechanism. As I return to in chapter 6, this means that the escalation pathway does not exhibit the same gaps in public activities as the demobilization pathway does.

3.4.5 Subcultural violence

The fifth pathway is located at the intersection of the independent sequence and the localist pathway. It thereby involves cases where localist frames are not channelled into public protest, but where it is immediately privatized within small-group settings. I refer to these as cases of the subcultural pathway.⁵¹

⁵¹ I use this concept with two disclaimers. First, I do not adopt the considerable theoretical elaboration that the concept of subculture has received in cultural studies (e.g. Andy Bennett, 2011; Fine & Kleinman, 1979; Hebdige, 1979; Jensen, 2018). Second, I expand the concept outside of its common – and historically specific –

In the subcultural pathway, the framing of migrant accommodation extends to personal grievances. As research on racially motivated youth violence shows, assailants use violence not only as a means of political protest, but equally as a way of expressing personal frustrations, of asserting their identities, and for establishing their belonging to particular groups (Bjørge, 1997; Willems, Eckert, Würtz, & Steinmetz, 1993). Within their small-group settings, and in their interactions with the wider community, these groups extend the framing of migrant accommodation to encompass personal grievances related to their position in the labour market, in housing, in education, and to their anticipations for the future. The frame extension can also encompass the experience of local space, as assailants find the presence of migrants to “pollute” their home environments (cf. Shoshan, 2016). While articulated specifically in smaller groups, these frames are supported within the assailants’ wider environment.

The full severing of the link between the political process and protest makes the pattern of subcultural violence extremely unpredictable. As in the demobilization pathway, violence does not emerge from events within any policy process or sequence of protests, but from the dynamics of private interactions and interpersonal conflict. As I show in chapter 5, these dynamics often develop in the course of drinking or during other leisure activities. The ensuing pattern is therefore punctuated and erratic, as I will show in chapter 6. It also means that the explanation of violence needs to pay closer attention to the dynamics of micro-level situations.

The emergence of violence in everyday and leisure settings should also tell us something more general about the emotional mechanisms that are involved in racist violence. Rather than consisting solely of negative emotions, the existing literature and my empirical cases frequently point to contradictory combinations of negative emotions, such as rage or fear, and positive emotions such as elation and belonging. While these elements are especially important for the understanding of the subcultural pathway, in which participants use violence

application to the skinhead movement. As Teitelbaum argues, the skinhead movement has declined considerably in the past decades, owing to changes in the radical right cultural landscape, the increasing influence of radical right political parties, and generational effects (Teitelbaum, 2017). Further, the radical right universe now consists of a considerably wider range of informal settings, ranging from the old neo-Nazi subcultures to nationalist and alt-right social media, and, at the local level, to entirely private friend- and kinship relations (Ranstorp & Ahlin, 2020; Törnberg & Wahlström, 2018).

in part as a means of personal and collective expression, it should also make us vary not to assume that all racist violence is driven primarily by anger (Blee, 2017a).

3.4.6 Autonomous cell violence

The sixth pathway combines the independent sequence with the nationalist orientation. It includes cases where violence emerges from a combination of violent specialization and the attribution of discursive opportunities. In the empirical data, the one case that corresponds to this combination of mechanisms adheres to what I call the autonomous cell pathway.

Unlike the other pathways, the autonomous cell pathway does not take its name from a theoretical concept, but from a specific political strategy. Kaplan defines the autonomous cell strategy as “a kind of lone wolf operation in which an individual, or a very small, highly cohesive group, engage in acts of anti-state violence independent of any movement, leader or network of support” (Kaplan, 1997, p. 80).⁵² The autonomous cell strategy emerged among US white supremacists in the late 1970s, and has since been adopted by radical right organizations and individual activists across Europe and beyond (Gardell, 2017; Hemmingby & Bjørge, 2016; Koehler, 2017). More recently, it has been promoted by Al-Qaida and IS (Fredholm, 2017).

In the generic sense, the autonomous cell pathway can occur in a wide range of empirical scenarios. The crystallization of autonomous cells is often an outcome of protracted and polarized protest waves (Campana, 2015; della Porta, 1995; della Porta & Tarrow, 1986). In cases where a movement is steadily losing resources, and where police repression is intensive, the decision to “go underground” can also be used as a means of avoiding detection (della Porta, 2013). As Kaplan notes with some sarcasm, however, it is “often a mark of despair [rather] than a revolutionary strategy” (Kaplan, 1997, p. 80).

In this context, I use the concept of autonomous cells solely to refer to events in which radical right activists form violent cells in the absence of wider nonviolent protest. Through the creation of an autonomous cell, participants help each other sustain their motivation and

⁵² In this section, I use the related concepts of “autonomous cells,” “leaderless resistance,” and “lone actor terrorism” synonymously. Among these, I find “autonomous cell violence” to be the most encompassing, since it incorporates the general logic of lone actor violence and leaderless resistance.

justification for violence over extended periods of time. The cell structure also allows activists to use tactics that would not be accepted by their organizational leadership, or by the movement's primary audience. This way, as I show in chapter 5, the autonomous cell pathway is closely related to disputes within the radical right (see also Lindekilde, Malthaner, et al., 2019).

Within the cell, participants can pool resources, share labour, and increase their capacity for different violent methods. The autonomous cell strategy thereby greatly aids the use of premeditated violence, as opposed to the relatively spontaneous, circumstantial use of violence reported in the other five pathways. Therefore, the selection of targets follows similar attributions of legitimacy, visibility and salience as in the nationalist opportunism and escalation pathways (Berntzen & Sandberg, 2014; Gill et al., 2014; Horgan, 2008; Lindekilde, O'Connor, et al., 2019).

3.5 Summary

In this chapter, I have combined impressions from the empirical data with existing research on political violence, social movements, and racist violence to elaborate six hypothetical pathways from nonviolent to violent protest. The distinction between the six pathways rests on the observation of recurring differences in the time and space of political violence, namely the temporal sequence of nonviolent and violent protest, and the spatial orientation of frames and relations.

Temporal sequence refers to the continuity or discontinuity between the emergence of violent events and longer episodes of mainly nonviolent contention. It contains three distinct types: continuous sequences, where violence emerges in the midst of nonviolent protest, discontinuous sequences where violence emerges through a shift in the mode of nonviolent protest, and independent sequences where violence emerges in the absence of nonviolent protest. Each of these sequences is associated with two causal mechanisms, corresponding to each of the spatial orientations. In continuous pathways, violence emerges through the activation of weakly coordinated networks, or through the activation of milieus between the radical right and its local sympathizers. In discontinuous pathways, violence emerges either through the privatization of protest into non-public, fragmented networks, or through milieu activation. Both mechanisms, however, are triggered by the demobilization of moderate actors, owing to the closure of political opportunities. In independent pathways, violence

emerges either through the immediate privatization of grievances, or through the formation of specialized violent cells.

Spatial orientation refers to the scale of the frames and networks that are most relevant for mobilization. In the localist orientation, participants protest immigration as a threat to local life, local markets, and everyday routines, and form groups on the basis of geographical proximity. In the nationalist orientation, participants, particularly from the organized radical right, protest local issues as examples of wider grievances. In the localist orientation, where mobilization cuts across organizational and ideological divides, it is necessary to ask how people come to participate at all. In the nationalist orientation, on the other hand, the presence of an ideologically integrated, geographically mobile and centrally organized radical right forces one to ask how assailants come to focus on one specific target or area rather than any other. In the former case, I highlight the mechanism of frame extension, and hence how local actors manage to incorporate negative framings of migration within more widely resonant grievances. In the latter case, I suggest that we should look at the attribution of discursive opportunities, and at how radical right wing activists come to see specific local contexts as especially likely to make their actions visible, salient and legitimate.

On the basis of the temporal and spatial categories, I have developed a six-part typology of pathways to violence:

- *Moral outrage* combines frame extension and the activation of weakly coordinated networks through the impact of morally shocking events. In this setting, protest develops rapidly across wide sections of the local community. Violence can therefore occur on the margins of mostly nonviolent protest.
- *Nationalist opportunism* combines the attribution of discursive opportunities with milieu activation. In the absence of competing groups, radical right activists and local sympathizers thereby combine to form smaller milieus dominated by radical right frames and strategies. Whereas the radical right is not necessarily responsible for the use of violence, it contributes by introducing antagonistic frames, justifying violence, and specifying potential targets.
- In *demobilization*, violence emerges only after a shift in the relational structure of protest. In the first, nonviolent phase, protest develops out of relatively coherent, coordinated local networks, in which the framing of migration is extended to more widely resonant grievances. In the second phase, owing to the closure of opportunities,

protest shifts into private networks. Through the mechanism of privatization, protesters extend the framing of migration into personal grievances and experiences. Violent protest then emerges from the setting and rhythm of everyday interactions.

- In *escalation*, violence emerges from interactions between the radical right and its supportive milieu. In the first phase of the escalation pathway, the radical right attributes discursive opportunities and mobilizes alongside other, more influential or legitimate groups. Only after the closure of opportunities and the demobilization of moderate actors is it possible for a more radical milieu to emerge around the radical right and its sympathizers. Violence then emerges from the interplay between the radical right and the wider, unorganized milieu.
- In the *subcultural* pathway, violence emerges “spontaneously” from within small, informal groups. In the absence of public protest, and in the presence of supportive environments, the subcultural pathway begins with the immediate privatization of grievances. In these privatized settings, participants extend the framing of migrant accommodation to encompass personal and everyday frustrations and grievances. The use of violence therefore follows the rhythm of private interactions and interpersonal conflict in the course of everyday and leisure activities.
- In the *autonomous cell* pathway, violence emerges from small, strongly organized groups of radical right activists. The pathway combines the specialization mechanism with the attribution of discursive opportunities. Through the formation of autonomous cells, activists attempt to build organizational strength, to intensify conflicts, or to settle intra-movement disputes. The specialization mechanism is thereby related to intra-movement processes. Whereas the basic frames, emotions and assessments of opportunity are maintained and reproduced through the construction of the cell itself, choices of targets ultimately depend on the way in which the local context signals discursive opportunities for violence.

4 Continuous and discontinuous pathways to violence

The processual framework allows us to explain single instances of racist violence as the outcome of dynamics between different actors within broader, violent and nonviolent, series of interaction. In chapter 3, I developed a typology of six pathways to violence, focusing on the elaboration of their constituent causal mechanisms. In this and the following chapter, I use paired case studies to look at the broader, internally varied dynamics within which these mechanisms occur. In this chapter, I present data from eight local case studies in which violence emerged continuously or discontinuously with nonviolent protests.⁵³ In the next chapter, I extend the presentation to cases where violence emerged in the absence of nonviolent protest.

The depiction of the four pathways follows the order that was established in chapter 3. The chapter begins with two cases of the moral outrage pathway (Ivö and Bällsta), followed by two cases of nationalist opportunism (Lerkil and Gotland). The second half of the chapter presents cases from the demobilization pathway (Tollarp, Brämhult) and cases of escalation (Lilleby, Mönsterås).

4.1 Moral outrage

Moral outrage combines frame extension and the activation of weakly coordinated networks, through the wide diffusion of moral responses to external events. In the following pages, I will detail this process in two very different cases: Ivö and Bällsta. In Ivö, a small island community on the coast of the Scania region, moral outrage begun and ended in the span of about one week, and in the absence of physical confrontations. Protest happened solely through letters and calls to the local newspaper, to local politicians, to the village association, and to the commercial actors that the protesters found responsible for migrant accommodation. The violent tactics that participants used throughout the sequence never

⁵³ In selecting cases for empirical illustration, I have balanced variation and precision. On one hand, I have chosen to juxtapose cases that are as different as possible within the framework of a given pathway. Hence, I have attempted to include cases of different duration and intensity, involving different types of actors, and ending in different qualities of violence. It should thereby be possible to read the chapter as a series of paired comparisons, which allows me to draw out the range of different but analogous sequences (Tarrow, 2010). Behind the presentation, however, is a structured comparison of a significantly larger number of empirical cases (see ch. 2, 6). On the other hand, the reality of the empirical data has forced me to weigh in the availability of precise data in the selection for the narratives. Even among the cases selected for this chapter, however, there are significant differences in the level of detail that the data allow for each case.

exceeded the scale of repeated death threats. In Bällsta, a suburban area outside of Stockholm, nonviolent and violent protest occurred continuously over the course of months, and combined death threats with minor and major acts of property destruction.

Despite their differences, Ivö and Bällsta both display similar dynamics. In both cases, protest began with the broad activation of local networks through third-party communication (the local newspaper and the municipal government). Through frame extension, the issue of migrant accommodation linked up to broader and more resonant themes of centre-periphery relations, loyalty, and trust. Violence then emerged as part of a considerably wider, internally diverse combination of tactics. Notably, both sequences ended or begun to decline at the moment when formal organizations (including the radical right) attempted to channel the protests into more coherent forms.

4.1.1 Ivö

Ivö is a rural island community of upwards 100 inhabitants, connected by ferry to the mainland municipality of Kristianstad. The village, like its surrounding area, is sparsely populated around agricultural land and a protected nature reserve. In the national elections of 2014, close to 30 % of the electoral district encompassing Ivö and its neighbouring communities voted for the SD.

The events in Ivö concerned Kalmar-based hotel entrepreneur Svenska Semesterhem's (SSH) intention to rent the island's commercial campsite as an ABT for the accommodation of upwards 2000 asylum seekers. SSH's application to the MV was filed on June 1, and it was publically announced in an article in the local newspaper on June 3. In an interview made in conjunction with the announcement, the chairman of the municipal board expressed doubts about the feasibility and propriety of the project, as it would be difficult to fit such a large number of immigrants in such a small space (Stenrosen, 2016a). In response to inquiries from concerned patrons, the campsite owners claimed that they had not been included in the discussions between the MV and SSH, and that it was not likely that they would rent out the site for asylum accommodation (Alfredsson, 2016). Only one week later, however, the local newspaper reported that the campsite owners had accepted an offer of nine million SEK from SSH, and that the parties had been in contact since April (Stenrosen, 2016b).

The suggestion that the campsite owners had been lying about their intentions triggered a rapid diffusion of protest among community members, expatriates and occasional guests. In the days that followed, protesters published numerous letters to the editor in the newspaper, contributed to discussions on social media, and sent the campsite owners large volumes of verbal and written correspondence (e.g. Abrahamsson Nilsson, 2016; Bekymrad Ivöbo, 2016; Född Ivöbo alltid Ivöbo, 2016; Hansén, 2016; Rutberg, 2016). Among the calls and e-mails received between June 3 and June 14 were threats that the campsite owners judged so serious as to force the cancellation of that month's public events, including a popular midsummer's eve celebration. This decision was publically announced on the campsite's Facebook page on June 15 (Ivö Camping, 2016-06-15).

After the threats had been made public, and after pressures from local residents – through the village association – the chairman of the municipal board revealed that the municipality would reach out to the SMA and the national government in order to stop the facility from opening (Stenrosen, 2016c). From this point, public protest – violent and nonviolent – ceased altogether. Instead, through the mobilization of the municipal government, protest against migrant accommodation was channelled into institutional, non-public deliberation. At the same time, the framing shifted to narrowly target the MV's conduct vis-à-vis the municipalities. The rapid decline of violence thereby coincided with a shift among local networks, as protest moved from informal and mostly individual correspondences – some of them involving threats – to institutional deliberation among formal actors.

During the phase of public protest, the relational structure of protest in Ivö was distinctly local and informal. Across various media, protesters presented themselves as residents, as neighbours, as expatriates, and so on. Among the approximately 500 commenters and other participants reacting to the newspaper stories, at least 86 % claimed to live in or on the border of the affected municipality. By contrast, the initial phase of the sequence included no publically visible organizations, local or otherwise. The village association did not make any public statements before June 16, when they approached the Social Democrats (*Socialdemokraterna*, S) to set up a meeting with the MV. The S, likewise, did not act before being pressured by the village association. While two members of the SD participated in the discussions, they did so without identifying as party members. Accordingly, the local party chapter did not mention or comment on the events either on their website or through their social media channels. Radical right organizations were not involved at all, and the story

remained unreported on radical right media and blogs until the end of July, two weeks after local protest had already ceased.

The framing that emerged through the protests extended from opposition to migrant accommodation as such, into a broader criticism of immoral business practices, a concern for the “sanctity” of the local community, and the incongruity between migrant accommodation and rural life.⁵⁴ I will briefly describe each of these frames below.

First, protesters framed the campsite managers as greedy, dishonest, and personally disloyal to the local community. More than simple greed, protesters thereby framed the campsite managers’ actions as acts of betrayal. The moral denunciation was first established by the local newspaper, and later repeated throughout the data. Residents claimed that the owner “lied to them and then he claims they do not understand. It is all about money” (Rutberg, 2016). This frame provided the moral impetus for protest, and powerfully shifted the focus from migration itself onto the behaviour of those perceived as responsible for migrant accommodation. Notably, the violent events that did occur targeted only those actors that were singled out as moral antagonists.

Second, protesters framed migrant accommodation as a threat to the sanctity of the local community. This framing rested on specific frames of local quality of life, and specifically the contradictory perception of the island as a “holy place” (Rutberg, 2016). On one hand, residents depicted the island as underdeveloped, and island life as considerably more difficult and inconvenient than life on the mainland. On the other, they perceived their choice to stay on the island, or to visit the island, as a sacrifice made valid by its unique natural beauty, stillness, and sanctity. By allowing the MV and SSH to open a facility on the island, the campsite owners risked the island’s unique, “holy” qualities while increasing the pressure on an already underdeveloped infrastructure.

The framing of the island as a holy place also allowed participants to frame their criticism of migrant accommodation on the grounds of migrant solidarity. Since staying on the island

⁵⁴ Throughout the period, various contributors frame the events in generic, nationalist frames. As in most other cases, migration is *also* framed as a threat to the national economy, to physical security, and as part of the replacement of the native Swedish population. Importantly, however, these frames never become as resonant or as coherent as the incongruity frame. The Ivö case thereby suggests how, in a very brief period of time, protesters compete over the establishment of a localist or nationalist orientation.

involved such a sense of sacrifice, participants claimed, it was unethical to place migrants there against their will. Whereas the residents saw the beauties of island life, they expected the migrants to feel alone, abandoned and frustrated. This argument is similar to what Hubbard describes as an “incongruity” frame (Hubbard, 2005). The incongruity frame allows participants to avoid accusations of racism by presenting accommodation as equally, if not more, undesirable for migrants. As Hubbard describes it, the incongruity frame is based on a racialized imaginary of rural life, where “white” rurality is juxtaposed against “diverse” urbanity. Wolsink, in response, warns against dismissing the incongruity frame as veiled racism, noting how rural opposition to migration can grow out of real experiences of disinvestment and geographic inequality (Wolsink, 2006). Whatever the case, the combination of frames focusing on morality, the sacredness of the community, and the incongruity between (white) rurality and (diverse) urbanity shows how participants extended the framing of migrant accommodation in a sense that made the issue palpable to a considerably wider public.

When the village association and the S joined the protests, the publically visible framing shifted dramatically. Instead of the diverse, morally charged discussions developing around the incongruity frame, the S shifted the scale of protest to target the MV’s lack of transparency and lack of responsiveness to local conditions.

The involvement of the S caused changes in the frames, emotions and relations that had facilitated violence in the first days of protest. It is also likely that it affected the participants’ attribution of political opportunities. As the first few days of protest show, protesters mainly targeted the campsite owners directly, appealing to personal relations and moral standards. However, they also addressed the village association, which had enduring contacts to the municipality’s political leadership, and the S directly. Once the S responded, local residents could thereby expect their claims to be channelled to the MV directly.

4.1.2 Bällsta

Bällsta is a residential area in Vallentuna, an affluent municipality located on the Northern end of the Stockholm metropolitan area. The majority of the residents are homeowners, and in the 2014 national elections, roughly 38 % of the electoral district voted for the M. In contrast to Ivö, just over 8 % voted in support for the SD. Like most conservative municipalities in the Stockholm area, Vallentuna had long accepted a low but consistent yearly rate of migrants.

However, migrant accommodation had usually been solved through outsourcing to other municipalities or, in the case of unaccompanied minors, through placement in private homes.

In the winter and spring of 2012, the municipality of Vallentuna accepted an increase in its accommodation of unaccompanied minors. When it became clear that the municipality would not be able to find private homes for all the migrants, the social council, through the publically owned Vår ljus AB, procured a house in Bällsta to open an HVB for six to nine youths. The contract was signed in the middle of February, with the intention of opening the facility on April 25. On February 28, the municipality sent letters to nearby residents, in which they explained the outlines of the plan. At about the same time, construction began on the house (Wilson, 2012a).

The initial announcement of the plan met no publically visible opposition. The turning point, instead, came after a second round of announcements in the second week of March. On March 6, the plans were announced broadly in one of the local newspapers. By the end of that week, a Facebook group had been started to protest the facility, and the social council had received repeated letters and calls from neighbours concerned with falling property values, increasing crime levels, and the municipal government's lack of transparency (Wahlquist, 2012a). The chairman of the social council was targeted personally with insults and threats in a series of nightly phone calls (Wahlquist, 2012b). As in Ivö, concerned residents also turned to the homeowners' association in order to set up a meeting with the municipal authorities. While the homeowners' association was positive to migrant accommodation, they conceded to the neighbours' demands, organizing a public meeting with the municipal authorities on March 25 (Warberg, 2012).

On March 12, construction workers discovered that the building site had been spray painted and pelted with eggs. Two days later, someone drilled a hole into the front door, put a hose through the hole, and filled the ground floor with water. The latter attack caused considerable material damages, and delayed the facility's opening by several weeks. The following weekend, the construction site was attacked with eggs once again (Wahlquist, 2012a).

Following the attacks, the events in Bällsta came to national attention. On one hand, the attacks were reported across mainstream news channels, including most of the national-circulation newspapers. On the other, radical right organizations widely reported and praised the attacks. On social media, individual representatives of NU and the SD spinoff party the

National Democrats (*Nationaldemokraterna*, ND), some of them living in the area, applauded the protests as signs of resistance, disseminated links to the protest group, and published multiple blog and newspaper posts about the protests (e.g. Forsén, 2012). However, the protests were not universally supported among organized racists. The SD denounced the attacks, and derided conservative-voting protesters for caring more about property values than about Swedish migration policy as a whole (Sverigedemokraterna Vallentuna, 2012).

Attending the information meeting on March 25 were representatives from the national media, as well as members of the SD, the ND and NU (Vergara, 2012). Before and after the meeting, the SD and the ND both handed out propaganda materials in the surrounding area. Reports from the meeting were also published on multiple radical right platforms, including the SvP-affiliated Realisten.se, and the ND's *Nationell idag* (Forsén, 2012; Ström, 2012a). As in their previous correspondences, participants at the meeting expressed fears of falling property values and increasing crime, and dissatisfaction with what they perceived to be a disregard for democratic procedure in the opening of the facility (Hökerberg, 2012b). In the aftermath of the meeting, participants also expressed fears that the facility would threaten local security by attracting "right wing extremists" (Hökerberg, 2012a). Already at this point, frame extension thereby allowed the contradictory combination of negative framings of migrant accommodation and counter-extremism.⁵⁵

The introduction of the radical right coincided with the growing influence of anti-racist actors. From the onset of national media reporting, in fact, the local framing of migrant accommodation gradually shifted from a focus on the migrants and the responsible authorities, to a focus on the threat of racist violence. At the end of the pathway, the balance of local frames had shifted to be in solidarity with the migrants, and not the other way around. Just as the residents of Ivö described migrant accommodation as incongruous with rural life, anti-racists in Bällsta presented racism as incongruous with suburban normality, signified by the fear of falling property values. When the migrants arrived, the community presented a

⁵⁵ It is important to note that the events in Bällsta reveal the connections between extended localist frames and overt racism. Clearly, the fear of falling property values, fear of neighbourhood insecurity, and so on, are all deeply indebted to racist understandings. What is important, however, is how racist understandings only gained traction once extended into more resonant forms. That racist frames alone could not sustain broad, uncoordinated protest is clear when we look at the disintegrating impact of the radical right. Despite the fact that the radical right's framing of migration generally agreed with the more outright racist framing offered by the locals, their presence did not contribute to an opening for more coordinated racism. Instead, the radical right was perceived as another risk to the residents.

range of welcoming initiatives. Minor acts of property damage, including eggs and paint, continued with diminishing frequency throughout the end of March (Wilson, 2012b). By the end of April, the protests ended completely.

While public protest ceased, local blogs, social media and anecdotal accounts suggest that discontent was still widespread in the neighbourhood (Vallentunabloggen, 2012). As Hirvonen mentions, in an eye-witness account from the area, individual locals harassed staff and inhabitants with racial slurs throughout the facility's existence (Hirvonen, 2013). What is notable in this development, however, is the way in which the shift in the relational structure and the growing salience of anti-racist frames marginalized protest, turning it into something akin to the privatized pattern observed in the demobilization and subcultural pathways.

The sequence from announcement, through violent and nonviolent protest, to demobilization and anti-racist mobilization, occurred over the course of roughly two months. In this process, we see a similar combination of frame extension, activation of weakly coordinated networks, and collective emotion as encountered in Ivö. Through frame extension, grievances related to migrant accommodation linked up to more widely resonant issues concerning private morality and perceptions of neighbourhood sanctity. These wider frames spanned perceptions of neighbourhood decline (e.g. increasing criminality and extremist violence), falling property values, and moral perceptions that local politicians had "sold out" their voters in order to profit off of migrant accommodation. Frame extension coincided with the mobilization of a diverse set of protesters through local rumour, media reporting and social media.

In the first few weeks of protest, opposition to migrant accommodation played out largely in three ways: through the spread of rumours in online and offline networks, through nightly attacks, and through threatening and non-threatening correspondence with local authorities. These actions, judging from the available evidence, occurred through the activation of weakly coordinated networks, which did not manage to make any collective claims beyond the demand for a meeting on March 25. As in Ivö, formal organizations, mainstream or radical right, did not participate, even though individual residents attempted to mobilize the village association.

By the end of March, when the protests had already received national media attention, the relational setting shifted dramatically. On one hand, the village association coordinated local protest, opening channels to the municipal authorities. On the other, various radical right

activists joined the protests, largely taking over the space for nonviolent protest. However, the presence of the radical right did not contribute to milieu activation, but to a split in the local community over concerns of racism and extremism. Likewise, the initially intense use of property damage petered out into only a few nightly attacks.

As in Ivö, the decline of protest co-occurred with the mobilization of radical right groups⁵⁶ and the opening of new channels of access, specifically the brokerage between the village association and the responsible authorities. While it is difficult to find direct evidence of the sort, I find it plausible that the opening of new channels of influence, and thus the successful resolution of *some* of the participants' goals, furthered the impact that the other mechanisms had already had on the structure of protest. By opening channels of access, whatever the consequences, the village association and the local authorities suggested that they were responsive, and that they cared about democratic procedures. This should have been enough to appease some participants, particularly those who did not perceive migrant accommodation as the central issue.

4.2 Nationalist opportunism

In nationalist opportunism, violence emerges from the borderlands between nationalist organizations, primarily the radical right, and a wider milieu of sympathetic local actors. The process thereby combines the attribution of discursive opportunities with milieu activation. In this section, I illustrate the pathway through empirical narratives from Lerkil and Gotland. In Lerkil, nationalist opportunism developed in response to the rapid opening of a temporary migrant accommodation facility that residents feared would interfere with opportunities for local schooling. On Gotland, nationalist opportunism developed in response to a suspected gang rape, allegedly involving a group of migrant men. In Lerkil, the radical right actors came mainly from within the local community, whereas the case on Gotland mobilized local and regional chapters of the NMR.

On different scales and with different intensities, the two cases developed through similar dynamics. First, external events signalled discursive opportunities for the radical right to

⁵⁶ A plausible interpretation of the radical right's participation, judging from the activists' timing and statements on social media, is that the protests presented the opening of discursive opportunities. As the continuation of the sequence showed, however, this would have been a wrongful assessment. In either case, it suggests the potential overlaps and shifts between different types of pathways.

“capture dissent” (as the activists in Lerkil put it). These were events that were immediately controversial in the local communities, and which coincided with pre-existing frames on the radical right. Second, the presence of these groups allowed the activation of milieus spanning the borderlands between the radical right and its unorganized sympathizers. In both cases, violence emerged in the aftermath of radical right protest events. In both cases, we thereby see violence developing through a dynamic between the organized and the unorganized.

4.2.1 Lerkil

Lerkil is a community of approximately 500 residents, located ten kilometres outside of the urban centre of Kungsbacka. Most residents of Lerkil are homeowners who commute into the centre or the neighbouring municipalities. In the 2014 national elections, the electoral district voted strongly in favour of the M. The vote for the SD was slightly below the national result, but similar to the party’s result in the municipality as a whole. Like most of the municipality, Lerkil had no recent experience of migrant accommodation. Before the events described here, the area had no recently reported radical right activity.

In October 2015, the MV and the County administrative boards urged all Swedish municipalities to find temporary “evacuation” housing for asylum seekers awaiting registration and placement in the MV’s asylum centres. Kungsbacka’s municipal government quickly identified three options, among which were 70 beds in a disused school building in Lerkil. The announcement was published in the local newspaper on October 10, with an information meeting slated for October 15.

The announcement on October 10 caused two responses in the local community. First, the parents’ association expressed fears that the opening of migrant accommodation would further delay the school’s reopening. In doing so, the parents displayed how the framing of migrant accommodation intersects with local histories. In 2013, the municipality decided that the school had to be rebuilt entirely, following repeated findings of mould in the building’s structure. The school closed, and the parents were given the assertion that new facilities would be in place in 2016. In 2014, the opening date was moved to 2017. In early 2015, as the municipal council was warned that the project was going over budget, the reopening date was pushed back to 2018. Throughout the process, the parents’ association lobbied the municipal government, criticizing what they saw as a lack of competence and respect for the community. Upon announcing that the opening date would be pushed back to 2018,

responsible politicians and civil servants received numerous calls and e-mails from disappointed parents and other residents (Alm, 2015). In their public communication, the parents' association described the protracted reconstruction as a waste of public money (Furulids föräldraförening, 2016).

The parents' summarized their concerns regarding the evacuation facility in a protest letter submitted to the municipality on October 12. In the letter, the parents expressed their fears that the opening of migrant accommodation on the site, for however limited a time, would risk further delaying the school's reopening. In addition, they claimed the municipal authorities were treating local residents, their children and their children's schooling "like weeds." By constantly delaying the school's reopening, the municipal authorities forced the children to travel long distances, weakened the parents' ability to monitor their children's education, and risked driving young parents away from the area. They also expressed the suspicion that the municipality wilfully neglected public schools in order to benefit private education firms (Furulids föräldraförening, 2015).

Second, a newly formed radical right group called No to Asylum Centres in Kungsbacka (*Nej till asylboenden i Kungsbacka*, NAK) identified the events as an opportunity to mobilize opposition against national and municipal migration policies. Like the issue of the school itself, this group reflected the continuity between protest against migrant accommodation and prior events. At the core of the group were two former members of the local SD chapter, both of whom had held mandates on the municipal council. In 2012, one of the group's founders was ousted from the SD after criticizing the party leadership in anti-Semitic terms. As part of the SD, and after their ousting, the group had previously attempted to mobilize opposition to migration accommodation in other parts of the municipality (Julén, 2016). Throughout the period and beyond, the members frequently contributed to radical right media, and in 2018, the group was transformed into a campaign vehicle for identitarian party Alternative for Sweden (*Nej till asylboenden i Kungsbacka*, 2015c, 2018).

Throughout its existence, NAK mobilized locally as a means to address wider threats. In an interview with the local newspaper, the group's leader described its strategy as "acting locally" in opposition to national migration policy (Julén, 2016). Even in the group's launching statement, it was formed to "capture the discontent that currently exists in Lerkil" (*Nej till asylboenden i Kungsbacka*, 2015a). Before and after the events in Lerkil, members of the group demonstrated this strategy in practice, participating and handing out propaganda at

numerous information meetings and other collective events concerning the opening of accommodation facilities in other parts of the municipality (Nej till asylboenden i Kungsbacka, 2015c).

The way in which NAK used local events is visible throughout its early propaganda activities. In one of its first Facebook posts, the group shared the parents' association's letter (Nej till asylboenden i Kungsbacka, 2015b), and in a subsequent letter to the local newspaper, they attacked the local authorities for overstepping their mandates by "changing the neighbourhood so dramatically" (Nej till asylboenden i Kungsbacka, 2015d). In this and other statements, however, the members located these local frames within a nationalist orientation. The continuity between localist and nationalist frames is clearly visible in an unpublished letter to the editor, submitted a few days after the announcement of the facility:

The politicians are running over the people – again!

In the past days, we have become painfully aware that the municipality of Kungsbacka is providing out 170 beds for so-called refugees, beyond the allocations we already have. At least 100 of these will be located in our part of the municipality, as parts of Furulidsskolan are turned into a refugee centre.

What mandate do the politicians have for doing this? When were the residents in general, and the residents of Vallda specifically, asked whether they want to have their neighbourhood changed so dramatically?

This past Wednesday, the municipality called an "information meeting" about the situation. The meeting was supposed to be held already the next day and was poorly announced, which excluded many of the critical voices that would otherwise have participated. To go out with deficient information about such an important meeting, and with only one day's notice, is beneath all criticism. The only reasonable explanation is that the issue was decided in advance, and that they would use any means to avoid critical voices from taking over the meeting and (god forbid) getting the people with them against the municipal elite. As we all know, democracy is not at all as fun for the power holders when the people holds the "wrong" opinion.

When we stood on the municipal council and warned that the Swedes [sic] might one day become a minority in their own country, many established politicians laughed at us.

Now, one has to ask what will be left of our Sweden in only a few decades? With the advance of 1500 people per day, Sweden has achieved an absolutely unreasonable situation (Nej till asylboenden i Kungsbacka, 2015d).

The diversity of local reactions converged in space at the information meeting on October 14. At that meeting were participants from NAK, from the parents' association, as well as multiple residents, some of which were positive to migrant accommodation. At the meeting, the municipal representatives clarified that the evacuation home would not impact on the school's reopening. As a consequence, the parents' association withdrew their criticism. Despite these clarifications, a number of participants, unknown to outside observers, attempted to agitate against the migrants. According to one participant, the increasingly "hateful" atmosphere led more neutral or migrant-supportive groups to leave the meeting (Haraldsson, 2015).

At around the time of the meeting, the NMR reported their first local activities since December the year before. On October 16, NMR activists put up stickers around a central high school. On October 17, activists organized a public rally outside the municipality's conference centre. While these activities did not immediately address immigration, their timing is noteworthy.

In the middle of the night between October 17 and October 18, someone set fire to the school, destroying half of the rooms intended for the transit home. As a consequence, the municipal government cancelled the plans, and continued to look for housing in other areas. While the police determined that the fire was a case of arson, they were not able to identify any suspects (Julén, 2015a). After the fire, the municipality retracted its plans for the facility, and the school received its final reopening date in early December. However, on three more occasions, in 2016 and 2017, similar decisions to open facilities in the area led to analogous sequences of radical right propaganda (involving NAK) and subsequent arson attacks (Alm, 2016; "Misstänkt attentat mot flyktingbostad," 2017). Immediately after the fire, public officials also reported that harassment and intimidation of public employees and politicians over migration issues intensified across the municipality (Bratt Lejring, 2015). From October 2015 onwards, the NMR maintained a steady presence in the municipality as a whole,

conducting propaganda activities in the area around Lerkil on multiple occasions throughout 2016 and 2017.⁵⁷

The sequence of events that led up to the emergence of violence combined the attribution of discursive opportunities with the activation of a milieu that spanned the organized radical right and its unorganized supporters. The difference between the limited milieu and the wide and diverse networks encountered in moral outrage is visible in two ways. First, throughout the process, the NAK-controlled Facebook page remained one of the only locations where protesters were openly criticizing the plans. Among the initial participants on the group's Facebook page, many were either former members of the ND, or former or current members of the SD. However, many were also unorganized locals, living in the direct vicinity of the school. Second, despite the fact that the Facebook page was specifically constructed to capture local discontent, a large part of the actual comments consisted of anti-racist reactions. At later points, NAK's public events also drew counter-protests from local anti-racists. In fact, in an interview with the local newspaper, a founding member of a local antiracist group claimed that her decision to mobilize politically came from receiving one of NAK's flyers (Julén, 2015b). Unlike in the cases from Ivö and Bällsta, the events in Lerkil cannot plausibly be described as wide local reactions. Instead, the protests must be understood with reference to a relatively limited group of locals, forming a concentric milieu around the radical right.

4.2.2 Gotland

Gotland, located on the island of the same name, is a mostly rural, sparsely populated municipality of approximately 60 000 inhabitants. While the island is a popular tourist destination, it is historically working class, owing to a number of major industrial plants and

⁵⁷ It is important to note that we do not know the assailants' identities. While NAK was clearly involved in mobilizing opposition to the facility, they immediately denounced the attack on their social media as damaging for "sober, democratic migrant critical opinion in the community" (Nej till asylboenden i Kungsbacka, 2015e). Likewise, while activists from the NMR were obviously present in the municipality on the day of the first fire, there is nothing in their public statements, or in the location of the events, to suggest their involvement in the attack (but see Tamas, 2016). Instead, what available information tells us is that through the course of a few days, radical right activists managed to form a geographically diverse milieu around their opposition to migrant accommodation. In this diverse environment, radical right activists as well as their supporters could find justifications for violence. When violent protest occurred – regardless of the assailant – it came out of this borderland between the organized radical right and its unorganized, supportive, but ultimately uncoordinated milieu. As far as the available evidence suggests, the establishment of the radical right in the area owed to the identification of discursive opportunities at the intersection of migrant accommodation and longer histories of local conflict.

ports. Accordingly, the island as a whole tends to vote in favour of the S, who gained 32.2 % in the 2014 national elections. The SD performed worse than in the country as a whole, gaining only 8.2 % of the island's vote. The NMR had a mobilized activist base on the island, reporting numerous propaganda actions throughout 2015 and 2016.

Unlike the other cases reported in this chapter, violent and nonviolent protest on Gotland did not revolve around any specific facility. Instead, violence occurred in the context of a municipal-level protest campaign driven by radical right actors in reaction to a case of sexual violence. For this reason, the attacks did not only target migrants and their homes, but police, a prosecutor, and anti-racist protesters.

The events on Gotland began on October 2, 2016, when a disabled woman reported being raped by multiple unknown men after visiting a restaurant in the urban centre of Visby. One day later, the police apprehended six men, suspected for involvement in the case. The case was closely reported in local news media, as well as on the radical right's various media outlets (e.g. Albinsson, 2016a). Across radical right media, authors claimed that the assailants were asylum seekers, and that the rape had occurred at a migrant accommodation facility (Albinsson, 2016b). Soon, alleged information about the assailants' names and places of residence spread across radical right media and beyond (Klint Langland & Stahle, 2019).

On October 5, all of the suspects were released from custody due to a lack of evidence (Klint Langland & Stahle, 2019). Their release was immediately met with hostile reactions across the island. The radical right was central to initiating and coordinating these events. In the morning following the acquittal, a local NMR activist kept watch outside one of the men's home. When three of the suspects appeared at the house, the activist confronted them with racist insults and threats. The confrontation was filmed and later posted on the NMR's website (Nordfront, 2016a). The same day, the Facebook group "medborgargarde Gotland" (approx. "Vigilantes Gotland"), which a former SD-member had started at the beginning of the year, called for a demonstration in central Visby (Albinsson, 2016b). The demonstration mobilized around 100 people for a vigil that moved from the police station to the building where the rape happened (Klint Langland & Stahle, 2019).

The networks that were involved in the vigil, and on the Facebook group, combined radical right activists and unorganized groups with a broader focus on security and crime prevention. According to local media, some of the 800 participants in the group "incited violence against

lawyers, police and journalists” affiliated with the case (K. Hedström, 2016). Even before the events in October, discussions in the group had centred on the link between migration and sexual violence, as participants felt threatened by the nightly presence of unaccompanied minors in central Visby (Albinsson, 2016b). Between the NMR, the national radical right, and the diversity of the vigilante group, the events in Visby thereby activated a sympathetic milieu in which radical right frames could circulate.

On the night of the demonstration, multiple attacks occurred across the island. These events mirrored the composition of the milieu between the radical right and its unorganized sympathizers. First, three young men arrived outside of a home for asylum seekers in Slite, a community on the island’s east coast. Heavily inebriated, they yelled for the residents to come out and fight, but failed to get a reaction. Before leaving the premises, they broke at least one of the building’s windows. At about the same time, two members of the NMR arrived at the prosecutor’s home, and put up cordons and threatening propaganda. The NMR members then repeated the action outside the courthouse and outside the home of one of the suspects. The head of the police was also targeted with threats and harassment (Klint Langland & Stahle, 2019).

In the following days, events concerning the rape were recounted daily across radical right blogs and websites (Asylkaos.se, 2016a; Caesar, 2016; Fria Tider, 2016). On October 9, NMR activists from the mainland convened in Visby for a public rally. On October 7, Jan Sjunnesson, a well-known media figure close to the SD, launched a fundraiser for the rape victim. On October 15, Sjunnesson took the ferry to Gotland, followed by a media crew, documenting his gift of 140 000 SEK (approx. 14000 EUR) to the woman’s family (Sjunnesson, 2016). The same events also mobilized left wing and anti-racist groups in opposition to the radical right’s exploitation of the rape (TT, 2016a). This way, radical right mobilization polarized the conflict between a loosely coordinated network organized around the NMR, local social media groups, and others sharing the racist framing of sexual violence, on one hand, and anti-racists on the other. While no participants publically described the events in terms of discursive opportunities, the massive mobilization to the island, and the

resonance between the event, radical right frames, and more widely circulating anti-rape frames overwhelmingly suggests that this was the case.⁵⁸

Anti-racist groups mobilized for a counter-demonstration on October 16. Immediately after announcing the demonstration, however, representatives of the Church of Sweden, the Green Party and the Feminist party received death threats from unknown assailants (TT, 2016a). On the day of the demonstration, the NMR staged a separate rally in Visby. During the demonstration, NMR activists assaulted a passing anti-racist protester (Sveds, 2016). After the second weekend, however, the radical right activists left the island, and protest declined again (Klint Langland & Stahle, 2019).

The case from Gotland shows how, in a brief period of time, discursive opportunities can assemble and sustain intensely violent milieus around the radical right. On a larger scale than in Lerkil, this milieu consisted of a variety of radical right activists, including some overlaps between the SD, and their wider range of supporters. This is seen both in reports from the few cases of nonviolent protest, and from the profiles of the various assailants. In part, the rapid development of this environment can be accounted for by the existence of pre-existing networks among right wing sympathizers, as exemplified by the vigilante group. From this base, activists could then quickly drum up support for overtly racist frames, in which migrant men were depicted as threats to Swedish women and, by extension, to the Swedish nation.

The case from Gotland highlights the specific role of sexual violence as a potential point of contact between the radical right and more mainstream forms of nationalism. As Wobbe notes, women's bodies are constructed as "the signifiers of communities not only symbolically and discursively but also with their bodies [...]. They thus represent the boundary between 'us' and 'the Other'" (Wobbe, 1995, p. 90). This powerful cultural construct is central to nationalist and radical right ideology, but resonates far more broadly in conceptions of nationhood, ethnicity and race (Yuval-Davis, 1997). Only in the studied period, sensationalized reports of rape produced wide, diverse and often violent mobilization in Germany, in the UK, and elsewhere (Frey, 2020; Gardell, 2019; Sanyal, 2019, Chapter 6).

⁵⁸ In making this assumption, I risk repeating the circular logic that Goodwin and Jasper observe in opportunity-based models more broadly (Goodwin & Jasper, 1999). While I agree with these authors that *ex post facto* arguments risks making any marginally successful action appear as if it was guided by political or discursive opportunities, the current case very clearly suggests that activists were aware of the extraordinary conditions for protest.

In the vocabulary of this thesis, reports of sexual violence should therefore provide especially powerful discursive opportunities for the radical right to gain visibility, legitimacy and support among its target audience.

4.3 Demobilization

In the demobilization pathway, violence emerges after the decline of localist protest. It thereby combines frame extension and privatization in the wake of negative opportunity attribution and demobilization. In chapter 3, I suggested that demobilization develops through two phases. In the first phase, frame extension activates narrow local networks, which manage to establish a relatively coherent strategic line in opposing migrant accommodation. Following the closure of political opportunities and the demobilization of the initial network, protest is fragmented and privatized. In this second phase, the negative framing of migrant accommodation is integrated in private, everyday interactions, and the logic of frame extension shifts to encompass issues of personal insecurity and fear. In the second phase, the emergence of violence follows not from the temporality of protest, or from the temporality of the policy process, but from the rhythms of private interactions and interpersonal conflict.

I demonstrate this pattern through two case studies. In both cases – Tollarp and Ljungskile – intermittent violence occurs in the months following a failed attempt at opposing migrant accommodation through appeals, petitions, and other non-confrontational tactics. The sequences in Tollarp and Ljungskile differ in their duration, in their intensity, and in the degree of destructiveness once violence occurs. In Tollarp, a group of teenagers attacked the yet non-operational facility for unaccompanied minors with a Molotov cocktail, following nearly four months of intermittent protest. In Ljungskile, the assailants conducted repeated acts of minor property damage – including racist graffiti – against a planned facility for asylum seekers throughout the summer of 2016.

Regardless of differences in the patterning of violence, the cases developed through similar dynamics. First, the announcement of new accommodation facilities triggered protest among relatively coherent networks of local protesters. In Tollarp, the immediate neighbours of the planned facility corresponded with the municipal authorities, contacted the local newspaper, and attempted a petition against the plans. In Ljungskile, a group of parents to children at the neighbouring preschool similarly combined various communicative and contentious tactics. In both cases, the participants soon demobilized, and protest moved into closed social media

groups and otherwise private settings. Protest then re-emerged as intermittent acts of violence. While the available data does not allow for the detailed representation of micro-processes (for these, see chapter 5), the meso-level processes that can be observed in the two cases suggest the development of a privatized mode of violence.

4.3.1 Tollarp

Tollarp is a town of approximately 4000 inhabitants located in the rural periphery of the Kristianstad municipality. Once a minor logistic and industrial hub, the town has recently been undergoing a process of structural transformation. In the 2014 national and municipal elections, the electoral district gave the SD more than twice the support of the national aggregate.

The number of unaccompanied minors that the MV allocated to Kristianstad increased rapidly over the course of 2015. The municipal authorities responded by expanding its HVB capacity widely, procuring or constructing housing outside of the urban centre. In doing so, they compiled a list of “extremely segregated” communities, including Tollarp. These areas, most of them located in the municipality’s rural peripheries, had previously been exempt from migrant accommodation, and would therefore be prioritized in future projects. Later in the fall, the municipal authorities commissioned the construction of module homes on an empty lot in one of the town’s residential areas. Because of the recent series of arson attacks against migrant housing across the country, the municipality decided not to inform the neighbours about the project.⁵⁹

The way in which the plans were revealed instantly set the tone for the remaining events. In the first week of December, a neighbour to the construction site walked onto the premises, entered the site manager’s office, and stole a copy of the blueprints. Realizing that the construction site was meant to become a home for migrant youths, the neighbour, alongside 20 other residents, formulated a protest letter to the municipal government. In the letter, the authors claimed, “the municipality has set aside legal principles. It is very discomfoting, and

⁵⁹ This strategy was very common in the wake of the many arson attacks that occurred in October 2015. In many locations, the secrecy surrounding migrant accommodation formed its own field of protest. The SD in particular exploited this strategy to extend the framing of migrant accommodation into a wider framing of democratic malpractice. On many occasions, local SD chapters leaked confidential plans for new accommodation facilities on their websites and social media. Some of these facilities were later attacked (see description in Tamas, 2016).

many homeowners in Tollarp feel that they have been run over [by the municipality]. This manner of secrecy is not dignified” (Maunula, 2015).

As the protest letter suggested, the initial framing of migrant accommodation extended into wider issues of democratic malpractice. This framing was repeated in the local Facebook group, where participants discussed the municipality’s lack of respect for democratic procedure as part of a wider power imbalance between the urban centre and the rural dwellings (Tollarp.nu, 2015). In comments on the newspaper’s Facebook page, reactions mainly revolved around the municipality’s lack of respect for the local population, and the project’s legal status (Kristianstadsbladet, 2015). Through the latter topic, discussions also centred on the possibility of stopping the plans through legal appeals. Later in December, however, repeated discussions concluded that the residents’ did not have the legal capacity to follow through with this strategy (Tollarp.nu, 2015).

In response to the residents’ demands, the municipality organized an information meeting on December 16. According to newspaper reports, 100 persons attended the meeting. Unlike the lecture format of most information meetings held during the period, the event was designed as an open house, where participants could mingle and ask questions to individual representatives of the municipality. In social media discussions and in letters to the editor after the meeting, some participants argued that the decentralized format was a way for the authorities to avoid facing the protesters. According to one attendee, it felt like “being run over for a second time” (Haraldsson, 2015). The municipality’s failure to inform and deliberate with the residents was even taken up by opponents to other accommodation facilities, in other parts of the municipality (L. Johansson, 2015). On the other hand, the village association’s representative was happy with the meeting, expressing support for the accommodation project. At the meeting, participants were also informed that final construction would begin in early January, and the facility was expected to open in March.

The events in mid-December each contributed to the negative attribution of political opportunities among broad sections of the local community. First, participants expressed their frustrations with an unaccountable, “arrogant” municipality, following what some perceived to be a disappointing information meeting. Second, those who had put their hopes to legal strategies realized that these were not available. Third, the village association took sides with the municipal authorities. As I will return to below, the negative attribution of political

opportunities was visible in the shifting framing among discussants in the local Facebook group, and in the participants' wider behaviour.

The attribution of negative opportunities coincided with the decline of publically visible protest. At the same time, discussion threads on social media continued, and participants created multiple closed social media groups (inaccessible at the moment of data collection) revolving around the facility. As discussions continued, however, two changes were visible. First, the number of individual commenters decreased. This left a considerably smaller group of active participants, nearly all of them residents of the town. An overview of the individual profiles and their mode of interaction suggest that many were family members or otherwise had intimate personal ties. Second, this fragmentation of protest corresponded with a shift in the framing and emotional tone of interactions, as the remaining participants increasingly discussed migration as a threat to personal, rather than local, security.⁶⁰ While this frame had been visible from the start, it had only been a marginal element in the wider discussions. Aside from the different understanding of migration, it also differed in its attribution of political opportunities, as participants did not appear to see any hope for protest:

A: Those who know me can probably understand how worried I am right now...

B: Oh I understand you! A 100 %!

A: Yes, and I will have this 100 meters from our doorstep... I'm almost bloody crying.

B: I understand your fear, I hope you will find a new house now, so you can move further away from it [...] We will just have to pray to a higher power that there will be a really long blizzard that puts the construction work on pause for a few months, or a couple of weeks with a lot of rain because it is hard to build on flooded grounds. I hope something puts a stop to this, so you at least have the time to move away from there (Tollarp.nu, 2015).

⁶⁰ To a large extent, the framing in the second phase focused on the relationship between migration and sexual violence and patriarchal behaviours. As a commenter on the February petition put it, "I DON'T want my 12-year old DAUGHTER to go to school with 18-22 year-old MEN who claim to be 16-17 years old. Because these MEN have been raised since they were breast-fed that women have no value and that their ONLY purpose is to birth MEN and make sure that the MAN has everything he needs. They also believe that the day a girl gets her PERIOD is the same day they become WOMEN and it's the prophet Allah's way of saying that this woman is READY for MARRIAGE and giving birth to CHILDREN. I had my period in fifth grade, 11 YEARS OLD!!!!!" (Skrivunder.com, 2016, capitalization in the original)

The sole indication of protest in the second period was a petition launched from one of the closed Facebook groups in early February. The petition, which was signed by 255 individual signees, provides a more precise way of assessing the structure of protest at this point. First, by controlling the names and stated places of residence in the petition against the record in the Swedish Tax Agency's national register, I find that the vast majority of the signees lived in the town at the time. Second, the low number of signees, 255 in a town of more than fifteen times that amount, suggest the slight resonance of the protesters' claims (Skrivunder.com, 2016).

Continued discussions throughout December, January and February underscored the privatized relational structure. In the local Facebook group, the group was criticized for giving the community a bad name, and anti-racists reminded other locals of the community's post-war history of migrant accommodation. Local organizations maintained a neutral stance. Neither was there any active participation by radical right organizations, or by organized racism in general. The SD, despite its strong local support base and the presence of several local representatives in the area, did not mention the events in their public channels. Likewise, the NMR did not report any activities in the area in the months surrounding the events. Hence, the groups that remained committed to protest should be considered marginal, both in relation to local networks and to organized racism.

Early in the evening on February 28, a group of youths attacked the yet unopened facility with a Molotov cocktail. The police apprehended the teenagers, but none were sentenced for the attack (Sörenson, 2016). In the absence of court records, and without access to the identities of the attackers, the immediate context of the attack therefore remains inaccessible to outside research. However, it is notable that the attack occurs in daylight, through the participation of multiple youths, and without any perceivable relationship to policy or protest events. As this case shows, the demobilization pathway thereby locates the patterning of violence in the rhythm of private interactions rather than in public protest.

4.3.2 Ljungskile

Ljungskile is a town of just under 4000 inhabitants, located in the municipality of Uddevalla. The electoral districts are divided equally between the S and the M. In the 2014 national elections, the SD performed slightly below the national result. The NMR maintained a high level of activity throughout 2015 and 2016.

In the summer of 2015, the owners and proprietors of the Ljungskile Tourist Hotel announced their retirement, and their plans to sell the property. The buyer was a retired municipal politician, previously associated with a local populist party. The new owner, whose profile issues on the municipal council involved opposition to asylum accommodation, claimed he would keep the hotel in its original function. On February 5, the local newspaper revealed that he had signed a contract with Norwegian company Hero AB, who would use the hotel to host around 20 unaccompanied minors allocated from the municipality of Gothenburg. The new facility was planned for opening later in the spring (Hvittfelt, 2016a). However, due to the decline in migration rates across 2016, the opening was delayed multiple times. In the fall, the municipality of Gothenburg cancelled its contract with Hero. In November, the fate of the hotel was widely reported in national mainstream and radical right media, when investigative journalists revealed the profits the hotel owner had made by renting empty rooms to Hero and – indirectly – to the municipality of Gothenburg (e.g. Hvittfelt, 2016d).

The news of the hotel immediately provoked reactions among a narrow group of nearby residents. In this case, this group consisted of parents whose children went to a preschool that was located close to the hotel. The parents extended the framing of migrant accommodation into wider concerns for their children’s security, combining the fear of “traumatized, psychotic migrants” with the fear of extremist violence through confrontations between radical right and antifascist activists.

The parents confronted the threat of migrant accommodation through a variety of mainly communicative tactics. Through the local Facebook group, they continuously informed the wider community of the progression of the protests. This way, the group reported that they had inquired into the legality of the project, corresponding with the Health and Social Care Inspectorate. They also collected signatures for a petition against the plans, and urged residents to get in touch with the local and national authorities (“Jag har idag varit i kontakt med...,” 2016). The local newspaper reported that “Worried parents” had been making repeated phone calls to responsible civil servants in the municipality of Gothenburg. In response, the municipality promised to organize a public information meeting closer to the facility’s opening (Hvittfelt, 2016b). Due to the repeated delays, however, the meeting never happened.

The parents’ framing did not resonate widely outside of their own networks. Judging from online discussions, most other negative reactions to the announcement focused on the

entrepreneur's greed, or on the dissonance between the renter's history of populist policies, and his current embrace of migrant accommodation. For the most part, however, discussions of the plans centred on nostalgic depictions of the hotel in its prime. The parents also received plenty of negative comments from other residents, who saw the petition and the parents' other actions as expressions of veiled racism. After the first week, only 285 users had signed the petition, and at least half of these were either anonymous or signed by people from other regions ("Nej till flyktingboende mitt i Ljungskile," 2016).⁶¹

On February 18, the protesters created a separate, closed Facebook group for discussing the plans for the hotel. 129 individual users joined the group ("Flyktingboende på turisten?," 2016). Because the group was, and is, private, it is not possible to observe the further development of the discussions. However, it is notable that the number of members was considerably lower than the petition signees. From this point on there were no further signs of public protest. As in Tollarp, the development toward a privatized relational mode (it is impossible to determine the shift in framing) coincided with the observation that the targeted facility could not be challenged on legal grounds.

On April 6, a few weeks before the hotel was supposed to open, the building was targeted with racist graffiti for the first time (NYHETERsto, 2016). In the second week of May, the opening was delayed until July 1 (Hvittfelt, 2016c). In July, the building was targeted with graffiti two more times (Norlin Persson, 2016). On one occasion, the police was able to apprehend two teenagers, between 14 and 18 years old (Norlin Persson, 2016). In September, following the rapid decline of new migrant allocations, the municipality of Gothenburg cancelled its contract with Hero (P4 Väst, 2016).⁶²

Throughout the spring and summer, the hotel was rarely mentioned on radical right blogs or in radical right news media (but see Asylkaos.se, 2016b). Likewise no organizations reported

⁶¹ Based on comments and screenshots posted in the Facebook discussion threads ("Jag har idag varit i kontakt med...", 2016). The original petition is not available (as of 2021-06-08).

⁶² Importantly, there are no indications that the parents were responsible for this shift in tactics, just as there is nothing to indicate that the attackers in Tollarp participated in the increasingly private discussions on social media. Neither is there anything to suggest that the NMR, despite a generally high level of activity in the municipality, was involved in any of the violent actions. In fact, the group reported fewer activities in April and July than in any other months that same year. However, all cases present sequences in which initial protest facilitates the emergence of violence by establishing the threat of migration, and justifications for violence, within everyday relations.

activities targeting the facility, or in Ljungskile as a whole, before the cancellation of the contract with Gothenburg. Only in November was the hotel discussed at length on the radical right, following the cancellation of the contract and the national media coverage of the renter's profits. At that point, however, the framing focused entirely on the immorality of "asylum entrepreneurs," and on Swedish asylum policy's alleged disregard for taxpayers' money, (e.g. Nordfront, 2016b). As the conflict shifted focus, it thereby moved from a predominantly localist orientation, revolving around the parents' perceived loss of security, to a nationalist orientation revolving around taxpayers' interests and the practice of migrant accommodation in general. These protests, however, did not generate any visible protest in the community.

On a smaller scale than in Tollarp, the available evidence shows how the case from Ljungskile shifts from a trajectory of narrow protest, organized by a clearly defined group of locals, into a privatized relational setting. In the end, the use of violence did not coincide with public protest or with events within the policy process, but occurred "randomly" through the rhythm of private interactions.

4.4 Escalation

The escalation pathway develops through two distinct phases of mobilization, in which nonviolent protest shifts into predominantly violent protest through changes in the relational structure of protest. In the first phase, it combines the broad attribution of opportunities, with the mobilization of a varied but relatively coordinated network in which moderate formal organizations have a strong influence on the coordination of protest. As protest continues, political opportunities close, and moderate organizations begin to demobilize, the balance of influence shifts toward the remaining radical right. Violence then emerges through the activation of a milieu between the radical right and its unorganized sympathizers.

Below, I show how escalation may develop in two very different ways. In Lilleby, violence emerged from one of the longest, most intense, and most violent protest campaigns observed in the entire dataset. Reacting to the temporary accommodation of at most 200 recently arrived migrants at a campsite on the periphery of Gothenburg, the M, the SD, the NMR, and a range of locals protested through petitions, letters to the editor, appeals, and, later, arson, bombings, and acts of assault. In Mönsterås, on the other hand, the opening of an accommodation centre for unaccompanied minors in the former library produced a stop-and-

start pattern of protest by the S, the SD, and, later, the SvP, in which successive frames and relational patterns ultimately led to a series of anonymous and increasingly violent protest events.

4.4.1 Lilleby

Lilleby is a community of approximately 1000 inhabitants, located on Gothenburg's Northern coast. The community is formally and geographically incorporated in Torslanda, a dwelling of 25 000 inhabitants. Large industrial and logistics centres dominate economic life in Lilleby and the surrounding area. In the 2014 national elections, the electoral district voted predominantly in favour of the M at above 40 %. The M performed twice as well in the district as it did on the national level. The SD attained 12.2 % of the vote, i.e. 0.6 percentage units below the party's national performance.

Gothenburg was among the municipalities most affected by the centralization of the Swedish migrant dispersal system (see ch. 1). To be able to manage a 56 % increase in allocations between 2015 and 2016, the local government decided to construct temporary housing modules in a large number of areas within and outside the municipal centre. The plans produced widespread protest, driven by the M, the SD, and various informal networks across the municipality. For the entire period, the PEA data include 107 events in Gothenburg alone, making it by far the most active municipality in the dataset. In part due to the zoning and building procedure, in part due to the extent of protest, the intended modules could not be finished until the end of the year at earliest (Edberg, 2016).

As the year went on, the failure to open most of the planned facilities increased the pressure on the municipal accommodation infrastructure. On August 24, the Gothenburg buildings council announced its intention to open a temporary accommodation facility for 200 recently arrived refugees at a privately owned campsite in Lilleby. The buildings council passed the plans at a meeting on August 29, and the camp was meant to open on October 1. Before the opening, neighbours were given three weeks to appeal the decision and the concomitant changes to the building permit (Olsson, 2016).

The Lilleby campsite quickly became the focal point for groups previously mobilized in opposition to migrant accommodation in other parts of the municipality. Before the plans were passed in the buildings council, the M and the SD both announced their intended

opposition. On the day of the announcement, the M's leader published an op-ed in *Göteborgs-posten* (Wannholt, 2016). The SD, on their part, submitted multiple letters to the editor, sent an open letter to the municipal board, and submitted a motion to the municipal council (Fogelklou, Hansson, & Levinsson, 2016a, 2016b; Pettersson, 2016a). On open and closed social media, posts about the plans gained hundreds of comments. On *Göteborgs-posten*'s page, the first post about the facility drew more than 500 individual reactions (*Göteborgs-posten*, 2016).

Starting from the end of August, “worried residents” called and sent emails to Gothenburg’s property director, Martin Öbo. Öbo described some of the correspondences as “pure threats” (Larsson & Björk, 2016). Likewise, residents urged the M leader Hampus Magnusson to contest the plans (Isaksson, 2016). At the building site, neighbours repeatedly posed critical and worried questions to construction workers and other staff (Jansson & Forsgren, 2016a).

The initial framing of immigration to Lilleby linked up to wider issues of municipal and national policy. The M and the SD both framed the project as a thoughtless waste of taxpayer money. By investing in “a trailer park ghetto,” they argued, the municipality risked the welfare of homeless people, students, and other groups affected by the municipality’s housing crisis. The plans also risked turning “idyllic” Lilleby into a hotspot for social problems (e.g. Isaksson, 2016). Instead, the M and the SD suggested the municipal government should refuse accommodating any more refugees, asking the MV for a “refugee pause” (Fogelklou et al., 2016a; Olsson, 2016). The first phase of the protests thereby adhered to a localist orientation, as local actors framed migration as a threat to local interests, in Lilleby and in Gothenburg more broadly. As in Ivö and Bällsta, the M, the SD and others drew on the incongruity frame, juxtaposing Lilleby’s natural beauty with the imagined “ghetto” of the campsite.

On September 3, the NMR handed out 4000 flyers in Lilleby and the surrounding area. In the flyer, which was specially made for the protests in Lilleby, the NMR combined localist and nationalist frames, targeting the campsite owners personally, and suggesting that the presence of migrants would drastically increase the risk of theft and sexual violence in the area (Nordiska Motståndsrörelsen, 2016). In an accompanying post on the organization’s website,

the activists urged residents and others to submit appeals and to join any of the local Facebook groups where the plans were being protested (Nordfront, 2016c).⁶³

In the weeks before the opening of the facility, newspaper reports revealed an increasingly harsh and violent rhetoric in discussions of the plans in some of the area's largest Facebook groups. While some users claimed discussions of violence were made in jest, others perceived them as threats. In one comment thread, consisting of at least 100 individual replies, participants discussed setting the buildings on fire, and urged those interested to meet up at the campsite. The discussions produced several reports to the police, and the moderators soon removed the most hostile threads (Jansson & Forsgren, 2016b). However, racist rhetoric tying into the NMR's description of migration as a threat to physical security also occurred in other settings. At the information meeting on September 20, one participant claimed, "I won't let my daughter go jogging outside of the campsite," mirroring a widespread association between the sense of physical (and sexual) security and infringements on the use of the local environment (Pettersson, 2016b).

At the same time as frictions occurred on social media, the moderates gradually diminished their participation. Already after the meeting on the buildings council in late August, where the plans were formalized, the M had taken a more passive position on the issue. Instead, informal groups and the NMR were increasingly visible in the protests.

On September 29, an unknown assailant set fire to one of the campsite's housing units. The fire did not spread, and the attack did not affect the facility's opening schedule. On October 1, the first refugees moved into the trailers. In the local Facebook group, fights broke out when individual participants celebrated the attack (Björk & Jansson, 2016).

The attack, the harshening rhetoric, and the opening of the facility, contributed to the demobilization of the moderate actors. By the end of September, the M and the SD both neglected the facility in their public communication. Notably, however, neither organization stopped protesting the municipality's accommodation policy more generally. The M continued pressuring the municipal governments in op-eds and other public statements,

⁶³ The fact that the strongly centralized NMR developed locally specific propaganda for the protests in Lilleby is striking. As far as my data show, this only happened on two other occasions. Once in Ludvika, and another time in Trollbäcken, a community in the southern part of the Stockholm metropolitan area. Notably, these are all areas with very high levels of NMR activity overall.

whereas the SD joined protests against another accommodation facility some kilometres from the facility in Lilleby (Björk, 2016). Hence, the events in September did not make the moderate actors demobilize on a general level, but led them to shift their mobilization to other arenas. The NMR, meanwhile, remained active in the area. Between the NMR and local residents was the activation of a milieu consisting of radical right activists and their unorganized sympathizers.

The shift in the relational structure was mirrored in a rapid change in the combination of tactics, away from nonviolent, communicative protest to different degrees of violence. Between October and January, the campsite was the target of at least five attacks. On November 11, a lone man, heavily inebriated, knocked on the refugees' doors, claiming that any Muslim staying in Torslanda would be killed (Torslanda tidningen, 2016). One day later, a group of "drunken youths" attempted to force the fence surrounding the camp. On unknown dates, outsiders threw rocks at the housing units, and someone attempted to sabotage the campsite's water supply (TT, 2016b). In the beginning of January, a group of neo-Nazis made a failed attempt to set off a spike bomb in the campsite. In the days before the failed bombing, the police apprehended the attackers when driving around the camp carrying knives and a severed pig's head. I will discuss these events in detail in the section on the autonomous cell pathway in chapter 5.

As the account above shows, the shift from nonviolent to violent protest occurred through changes in the relational structure of protest, mediated by apparent changes in the attribution of political opportunity. In the first phase, widely available discursive opportunities mobilized a large group of actors. In this initial process of mobilization, the sequence was dominated by the M and, to some extent, the SD, mirroring past patterns of protest against migrant accommodation in the municipality. While the NMR was present, it was only a marginal actor. As the opening of the facility was passed on the municipal council, and as the framing of migrant accommodation became increasingly hostile, political and discursive opportunities closed for the moderate actors. As a consequence of their demobilization, the NMR could expand its activities in the area, contributing to the further development of a local radical milieu. From within this milieu emerged an intense campaign of violence, which involved sabotage, drunken harassment and bombings.

4.4.2 Mönsterås

Mönsterås is a town of 5000 inhabitants, located in the municipality of the same name. Together, the urban centre's two electoral districts predominantly support the S. In the 2014 national elections, SD received between 14 and 16.8 per cent of the vote, making the community slightly more supportive than the country as a whole. Before the studied period, Mönsterås had a relatively low rate of migrant accommodation in the urban centre as well as in the surrounding villages. As compared to Lilleby, the events in Mönsterås are sparse, relatively small-scale, and involve only a limited group of actors. It thereby shows the range of contexts and empirical patterns where the escalation pathway is useful for explaining racist violence. It also displays the range of frames that different actors apply to migrant accommodation, and how frame extension often fails to resonate among the protesters' target audiences.

In early February 2012, the municipal government prepared to accept 12 unaccompanied minors, all boys, from the MV. At the municipal council meeting on February 28, the SD, and one independent council member, was the only party that did not vote in favour of the decision. On April 2, the municipal council decided that the migrants would be hosted in a temporary HVB in the town's former library. The municipality expected the facility to be ready eleven months later, by March 1, 2013 (Bergquist Andersson, 2012b).

At the time of the decision, the social democratic opposition publically opposed the municipal government's accommodation strategy. Suggesting that the library was needed for other activities, particularly for the town's cultural associations, party representatives suggested overturning the decision and placing the migrants somewhere else instead (Bergquist Andersson, 2012a; Cederbom, 2012a). The S' argument also found some support in letters to the editor and in online discussions at the time, which agreed that the accommodation of migrants in the library risked "setting aside the town's historical and cultural values" (Barometern, 2012). The SD, on the other hand, provided no rationale for their opposition. The first attempt to protest migrant accommodation did not, however, gain any long-term traction, and the discussions petered out after a few days.

In May, the SD made a different attempt to extend the framing of migrant accommodation into wider issues. In letters to the editor, on social media, and in interviews with the local newspaper, the SD focused specifically on the decision to accept only boys to the facility. In

doing so, they combined two frames. On one hand, they framed the municipality's accommodation strategy as unfair to women, and, as such, in disagreement with the municipality's equality standards. On the other, they bridged this frame with a framing of migrant boys and the migrant population at large as carriers of patriarchal culture. By only accepting boys, the municipality was allegedly adjusting to patriarchal cultures, thereby endangering Swedish norms (M. Johansson, 2012). After the SD's statements were reproduced in the media, other residents contacted the municipality with the same arguments (Borefur, 2012). Like the S' initial protest, however, the SD's first attempt to oppose the facility did not resonate among the wider local population.

In August, representatives of the SD made their second attempt to protest migrant accommodation.⁶⁴ This time, members of the party collected signatures in an effort to gain a local referendum on asylum accommodation altogether. In its public statements, the party specifically targeted the plans for the library (Cederbom, 2012c). After the first few weeks, the petition had received "hundreds" of signatures. However, the rate dropped quickly, and by December, the party had only been able to collect 500 of the required 1059 signatures. According to a local SD representative, the party had lost focus on the petition after the initial run (Cederbom, 2012e). In practice, then, the party did not actively pursue the referendum after the beginning of the fall. The petition was also widely criticized in the local community, most visibly in a joint statement signed by the other parties on the municipal council (Cederbom, 2012d).

As the narrative shows, the sequence of protest in Mönsterås developed through a pattern of successive, punctuated efforts by moderate groups, ranging from the centre-left to the SD, to protest the plans for hosting unaccompanied minors in the library. In this process, neither the S' attempt to frame the facility as a threat to cultural associations, the SD's initial "anti-patriarchal" framing, nor the SD's attempt to extend the protests to the threat of migrant accommodation in general, succeeded in producing frame resonance or practical results. As a consequence, each of the three attempts led only to short series of public statements and limited expressions of public support. Judging from public statements, and from the visible

⁶⁴ As revealed in an interview in early September, however, the party did not sanction the petition. Instead, it should be considered an informal initiative by SD members and their wider social networks.

sequence of events, the failure of each attempt ultimately appears to have produced a shift in the attribution of political opportunities in both organizations, most importantly the SD.

In parallel with the sequence of failed mobilization attempts, the SvP was becoming established in the community. In May, an independent representative elected to the municipal council on an SD mandate went public with his decision to join the SvP. This made Mönsterås one of a handful of Swedish municipalities where the SvP was represented in an elected body. The SD's national and regional party leadership publically urged the politician to leave his mandate (Cederbom, 2012b). Second, while the national leadership admonished the SvP representative, he remained in collaboration with the local SD chapter. This was something the SD leadership found to be "unacceptable" (Bergquist Andersson, 2012c). At the same time, the SvP also increased its street presence through numerous propaganda activities, mainly including the spread of posters and stickers.

Toward the end of the year, the SvP was the most visible group protesting migrant accommodation in the community. This development coincided with an intensification of minor- and more major-scale attacks against the library. In the beginning of October, the SvP put up large numbers of stickers on the entry to the former library, covering the doors and windows in an act of minor property damage (Östran, 2013). Later that same month, someone painted swastikas on the outside of the building (Barometern, 2013). In January, the former library was briefly discussed in the regional, SvP-affiliated Facebook site "Nej till asylboenden i Småland" (No to asylum facilities in Småland) ("Nej till asylboenden i Småland," 2012). In the middle of January, someone shot fireworks through one of the library's windows (Nyheterna, 2013). On the night of April 20, someone broke six windows, just over a week before the facility's delayed opening date (Oskarshamns-tidningen, 2013). The same night, an anonymous group celebrated Adolf Hitler's birthday by raising a Swastika flag outside the Mönsterås town hall. It is very likely, however, that the activity was coordinated by the NMR (Nordfront, 2013). Between these events, the SvP also conducted numerous "ordinary" propaganda actions across the town and its surroundings.

While it is not possible to follow the events at the same level of detail as in Lilleby, the pathway to violence in Mönsterås repeats the pattern of a relational shift away from moderate to radical organizations, mediated by the closure of political opportunities for moderate groups. At the same time, the relative absence of public statements from the SvP makes it difficult to interpret to what extent its participants and members actively saw the opening of

discursive opportunities. In either case, what comes out of the long process of initially nonviolent protest is a context where organized and unorganized actors converge on the targeting and justification of violence at a specific site of migrant accommodation, leading to a sustained pattern of attacks.

4.5 Summary

This chapter has presented pathways from nonviolent to violent protest through case studies from eight communities. In the first two sections, I showed how violence developed in continuity with nonviolent protest. In Bällsta and Ivö, my two examples of moral outrage, nonviolent and violent protest emerged through frame extension within wide, weakly coordinated networks. In Ivö, moral outrage developed through wide reactions to dishonest business practices and the sense of threat against what residents perceived as the “holiness” of the local environment. In Bällsta, the residents’ concerns were more narrowly defined, as they linked the fear of declining property values to longer experiences of geographical inequalities and democratic malpractice.

In Lerkil and on Gotland, my examples of nationalist opportunism, violent and nonviolent protest emerged from the milieu around the radical right, formed in response to the signalling of discursive opportunities. In Lerkil, locally based radical right activists instrumentalized local fears that migrant accommodation would threaten the reopening of the community school to “capture discontent against migration.” On Gotland, members of the NMR, as well as unorganized radical right activists mobilized outrage over sexual violence into a general campaign against migrants’ alleged sexual criminality. In both cases, violence developed intermittently, either in very short sequences (such as on Gotland), or in very long series (Lerkil).

The second half of the chapter presented cases where violence occurred through a change in the structure of nonviolent pathways. In Tollarp and Ljungskile, violence emerged only after the demobilization of localist protest. Both sequences thereby consisted of two phases. In the first phase, small groups of people coordinated the protests, extending the framing of migrant accommodation into more widely resonant local concerns. Through disillusionment or through the passing of the policy process, the initial protesters demobilized, making way for a shift toward a fragmented, privatized pattern of protest. In the latter pattern, violence emerged

from everyday interactions in which local migrant accommodation was extended to threats to personal security.

In Tollarp, a limited group of coordinated local protesters quickly emerged to channel discontent into a mainly communicative strategy of correspondences, petitions, and meetings with the municipality, framing the grievances associated with migrant accommodation mainly as a case of democratic mismanagement. In Ljungskile, parents to the neighbouring school framed migrant accommodation as a threat to their personal security, mobilizing through internal meetings, petitions, and contacts with the municipal government.

In the escalation pathway, finally, illustrated by Lilleby and Mönsterås, the shift toward violence was likewise associated with the negative framing of political opportunity, and the demobilization of moderate actors. However, whereas the cases in Tollarp and Ljungskile developed in the absence of organized actors, the latter episodes developed through initially broad mobilization, where the radical right was present but marginal. As moderate actors changed their attribution of political opportunities, however, the radical right became increasingly central to the relational setting of the episodes. This produced a pattern similar to nationalist opportunism, as violence emerged from the violent milieu between the radical right and its supportive environment.

5 Violence in the absence of nonviolent protest

In this chapter, I provide three empirical narratives from cases where violence occurs in the absence of nonviolent protest. In the subcultural pathway, violence emerges out of private interactions, following the immediate privatization of grievances. In the autonomous cell pathway, violence comes out of the specialization of small groups of radical right activists. As in the previous chapters, the localist subcultural pathway relies on successful frame extension, while the nationalist autonomous cell pathway develops through the attribution of discursive opportunities. Due to the uncommon availability of detailed court records, and in order to reflect the centrality of non-public interactions, I shift the narrative scale to a level that is considerably closer to the individual assailants, while still maintaining the focus on the longer sequence from the announcement of the targeted facility to the decline of protest.⁶⁵

5.1 Subcultural violence

The subcultural pathway combines an independent temporality with a localist orientation. The subcultural pathway thereby develops through the immediate privatization of grievances and the frame extension of migrant accommodation into wider issues related to local experiences. Owing to the privatization mechanism, however, the mechanism of frame extension does not relate migrant accommodation primarily to political or moral issues, but to personal frustrations. Separated from policy processes or sequences of nonviolent protest, violence occurs out of the rhythms of personal, everyday interactions, from unexpected confrontations with migrants, and from minor conflicts. At the same time, the outbreak of violence cannot be understood without reference to the development of frames and relations in the wider communities.

In this section, I will illustrate the development of the subcultural pathway through examples from Tomelilla and Forserum. In Tomelilla, a small group of unorganized neo-Nazi sympathizers attacked a home for three recently arrived Somali migrants. Tomelilla thereby

⁶⁵ I find it plausible that different pathways to violence make different scales more or less relevant. At the same time, speaking with White, the narrative style of historical processes is never intrinsic to the "actual" sequence of events, "but can be constructed as such only by the imposition of the structure of a given story-type on the events, it is the choice of a story-type and its imposition upon the events which endow them with meaning" (H. White, 1984, p. 20).

involves the narrowest scope out of all the case studies, focusing mainly on the activities of one group over the course of a few hours. As I discuss in that section, however, the events resonated with wider, recurring series of attacks across the municipality. In Forserum, on the other hand, a larger group of teenagers and young adults harassed and assaulted local migrants over the course of several years.

5.1.1 Tomelilla

Tomelilla is a town of approximately 7000 inhabitants located in the southeast end of the Scania region. Throughout the studied period, Tomelilla maintained a small but consistent level of migrant accommodation. For the most part, the municipality could place migrants allocated from the MV in private residences, instead of the larger, more visible facilities that I have described in the previous chapters. With the exception of some letters to the editor by the SD (Malmgren, 2013), there were no signs of public protest before the end of 2014. At the same time, negative framings of migration were prevalent in the municipality, as 25.5 % of the residents voted for the SD in the 2014 national elections. Hence, while public protest was uncommon in the area, opposition to migration was channelled into private settings, and into the electoral arena.⁶⁶ As early as 2010, this dynamic was visible in a widely reported series of events where local youths repeatedly harassed and threw rocks at migrants. In this section, I will describe another case in which violence emerged from private settings, looking at events that took place in the summer of 2014. Across the entire period, however, Tomelilla stands out in the relative frequency of such “random” attacks, in which gangs of youth targeted migrants and their accommodation.

Due to the level of detail in the existing data, the following narrative focuses on only one single event, which occurred on August 20, 2014. Unless otherwise noted, the narrative is based on witness and perpetrator accounts assembled by the police and courts in advance of the assailants sentencing in October 2014 (Ystads Tingsrätt, 2014).

In the evening of August 20, four young men met up for drinks in an apartment in central Tomelilla. One of the men identified as a neo-Nazi, but none of the participants were members of any radical right organizations. As the four men consumed alcohol, spice and

⁶⁶ As Sannerstedt shows, the SD’s electoral base consists of a variety of ideological affiliations. What unites the voters, however, is their consistent opposition to immigration (Sannerstedt, 2015).

cannabis, their discussion centred on migration. Approaching the issue in general terms, the four men shared their anger and frustrations with prime minister Fredrik Reinfeldt's recent speech, in which he had urged the Swedish population to "open its hearts" to Syrian refugees (see ch. 1). They then discussed how "them and their friends had been refused help by the social services, while the Somalis had been given so much help." In a different statement, not included in the final court documents, one of the assailants claimed that the group discussed how young Somali men rape Swedish women, and how one of the men had been "glared at" by a migrant before the party (Alcalá, 2014).

Late at night, as the four friends broke up the party, three of them decided to "pay the Somalis a visit." The migrants they referred to were three brothers who were staying in temporary accommodation in a disused storefront, located down the street from the apartment. Armed with sticks and clubs, the drunken youths stopped outside the building, and started yelling insults and racist threats, raising their arms under shouts of "Sieg Heil." The brother who slept closest to the storefront was awoken by chants of "blacks, come out." A few moments later, a spiked wooden board flew through the window and landed next to him on the bed, along with a spraying of broken glass. The three assailants also launched rocks and a bicycle through the windows, before running off into a nearby yard.

As the assailants left the storefront, a group of neighbours followed in pursuit. The focus thereby shifted, as the three men started throwing rocks at protesting neighbours, calling them "Somali lovers" and such. After some minutes of standoff with the neighbours, the police arrived and apprehended the three men. In the back of the police car, one of the attackers told the officer that he was a Nazi, and that the Nazis "are many" (Alcalá, 2014). Two months later, the three men were each charged to pay damages for agitation against an ethnic group, attempted assault, and infliction of damage to property.

In the absence of nonviolent protest, the emergence of violence in Tomelilla was facilitated by the presence of a very specific relational setting. This was a group in which all members had prior experience of violent crime, and where participants collectively extended negative framings of migration into personal frustrations and more widely circulating radical right frames. This occurred in a context where SD support was very high, and where opposition to migrant accommodation was widely resonant, but where migrant accommodation did not result in public protest. On the night of the attack, these frames were made salient and emotionally resonant through the combination of small-group interactions and drug

consumption. The case in Tomelilla thereby shows the importance of understanding the dynamic between macro-, meso-, and micro-level factors in accounting for the subcultural pathway. I will return to these issues in chapter 6.

The event that occurred on August 20 was the first example of a series of intermittent acts of violence in Tomelilla and its surroundings. In September 2015, two assailants broke the windows of another accommodation facility in central Tomelilla. In December and February, groups of youths repeatedly vandalized a facility in the nearby village of Hökerum. Later in February, a large group of youths gathered outside a home for unaccompanied minors, breaking windows and shouting racist slogans at the inhabitants. In November 2016, unknown assailants broke several windows at a facility in the central parts of the municipality (Ystads allehanda, 2015a, 2015b, 2016a, 2016b).

5.1.2 Forserum

Forserum is a community of approximately 2000 inhabitants, located in the municipality of Nässjö. A traditional industrial community, the electoral district has historically voted in favour of the S. In the 2014 national elections, the SD became the second most successful party in the district, with nearly 25 % of the vote. Already in the 2010 elections, however, the party did better in Forserum than in the country as a whole, with more than 10 % of the local vote (as opposed to 5.7 % for the country as a whole).

In the mid-2000s, Nässjö negotiated with the MV to increase its accommodation of recently arrived refugees. Starting from 2008, many of these were located in Forserum, where structural transformation had left a relatively large number of unoccupied apartments. Among the recently arrived refugees was a large group migrating from Somalia. Over time, further allocations as well as voluntary migration within Sweden, contributed to the creation of a substantial Somali community in the town, numbering around 160 individual residents in 2011.

The migrants' arrival was broadly supported in the local community. Starting with the arrival of nineteen children in 2009, local civil society groups framed migration as a means to expanded enrolment for the local elementary school. Throughout 2008, the school had been under threat of closure, owing to municipal cutbacks. The issue caused broad protests around the community, as parents, pupils and other residents sent letters to the municipality,

organized marches, and attended municipal meetings. While the S government had voted to keep the school open at the February meeting of the municipal council, protesters and politicians alike believed that it was still under threat. From this point of view, both camps welcomed the migrants as a possible relief for the school, and for the community as a whole (SR Jönköping, 2009). More generally, local civil society groups – the Pentecostal churches and the village association – mobilized to provide language training and organize sports and cultural events for and with the migrants (Järved, 2011; Sundler, 2010).

While most locals welcomed the migrants into the community, a small group soon became abusive. At the start of the fall semester of 2009, a pupil was reported to the police for repeated acts of agitation against an ethnic group after physically and verbally abusing a Somali boy (Höglandet nu, 2009). Throughout the school year, a larger group of 15-year old boys repeatedly followed and harassed migrant youths. In September 2010, the headmaster maintained that the situation had stabilized within the school, but that the conflict had moved into the wider community. In September 2010, someone threw a pig carcass into the Somali cultural association's assembly hall. At this point, a village association representative suggested that "racist tendencies" in relation to the Somalis was recurring among some of the town's adult population (Sundler, 2010).

Between 2011 and 2012, the harassment intensified. In August 2012, the Somali cultural association and the Pentecostal church jointly organized a meeting with the police and the municipal government. The participants reported of repeated acts of vandalism and property destruction, assault, and verbal harassment. In the months leading up to the meeting, a Somali bus driver had been assaulted, a pregnant woman had been attacked with pebbles, and the cultural association had had its windows broken on at least three occasions (Orrenius, 2012). The reports centred on a group of 6-10 men between the ages of 17 and 22. Known for years in the community, this small group of assailants had repeatedly been subject of interventions by the police and the social services, owing to a history of petty criminality, substance abuse, and other social problems. None of them were affiliated with organized racism (Askelöf, 2012). In the daytime, witnesses stated, the group typically hung out in the town square. From this central location, right next to the Somali cultural centre, they had repeatedly attacked and abused bypassing migrants. As a consequence, individual migrants had developed strategies for moving about in local space, making sure to travel in pairs and requesting protection from sympathetic natives (TT, 2012).

In the aftermath of the meeting, the events in Forserum were widely reported in the national media. In editorials and op-eds, the community was demonized as a hotspot for racism and “hate.” Integration minister Erik Ullenhag publically denounced the attacks, and urged Forserum to “stand up” against xenophobia (E. Andersson, 2012). Throughout the end of August, representatives from most political parties visited the community to express their support for the Somali population (Brandel, 2012a). On August 24, the village association organized an anti-racist march that mobilized between 300 and 400 residents (Orrenius, 2012). A week later, Muslim associations rallied outside the parliament building in Stockholm, targeting Minister of Justice Beatrice Ask for what they perceived as the government’s passivity against xenophobic violence (SR Jönköping, 2012). In Malmö, anti-racists collected roughly 1000 signatures in support of Forserum’s Somali community (Brandel, 2012b).

As the events in Forserum reached the national media, the radical right and the SD also began paying attention to the area. Across radical right media, authors portrayed the stories as biased, exaggerated, or even fabricated (Avpixlat, 2012; Nordfront, 2012; Torssell, 2012). Some authors, including members of the SD, lauded the attacks as signs of “native resistance” (Loberg, 2012; Ström, 2012b). On August 25, the SvP held a rally in the town square, meant to “inform the residents that there is a political party that is actually on their side, one that does not want the Somalis to stay” (Svenskarnas parti, 2012). Afterwards, party activists repeatedly spread propaganda in the area (Svenskarnas parti, 2012). On September 4, SD leader Jimmie Åkesson visited the community, despite protests from the municipal government. At the rally, which attracted between 20 and 30 supporters, Åkesson stressed that Forserum was no more racist than other Swedish communities, and that the recent reports were exaggerated (Lönnaeus, 2012). Despite mobilization by the SD and the SvP, there was no sustained nonviolent protest against the Somalis. Likewise, the intensity of the attacks declined over the course of 2012, as the main group of assailants disintegrated (Broman, 2013). As in Bällsta and Ivö, the apparent attribution of discursive opportunities among actors involved in organized racism, as well as among mainstream parties, did not contribute to the continuation of the sequence.

As the SD and the SvP began writing about the events, they made public a very different framing of migrant accommodation in the area. To supporters of the SD and the radical right, the attacks were framed as responses to a more general pattern of incongruity and conflict

between some of the migrants and the natives (Sverigedemokraterna Eksjö, 2012; Sverigedemokraterna Nässjö, 2012). According to an anonymous author, groups of Somali youths had long harassed other pupils at the school (Sverigedemokraterna Nässjö, 2012). A young male, interviewed by national daily *Expressen* recounted multiple cases of conflict, including one robbery, in encountering individual Somalis (Orrenius, 2012). Among the participants at Jimmie Åkesson's rally on September 4, some claimed the Somalis were unruly, loud, and that they picked fights with natives (Lönnaeus, 2012).

Whatever truth there was to the SD supporters' statements, it is important that a subset of the population in Nässjö subscribed to a framing that interpreted the migrants' presence as a cause of interpersonal conflict. The reason this is important is because it underscores, in yet another context, the dynamic between personal grievances and their wider resonance in the mechanism of frame extension. Hence, even in a context where grievances were immediately privatized, a specific framing of migrant accommodation, extended into perceptions of interpersonal conflict and neighbourhood decline, resonated across a subset of the local community.

Notably, the pathway in Forserum also suggests a pattern for how migration does *not* lead to the onset of nonviolent protest. As in the cases reported in chapter 4, migration into the community immediately lead to diverse mobilization by local civil society groups, specifically the Pentecostal church and the village association. However, unlike in the other cases, this initial mobilization was made in support of the migrants. Just as this type of initial protest allowed groups that were committed to negative framings of migration to mobilize broadly in the cases in chapter 4, the initial anti-racist and refugee solidarity initiatives left no room for these groups to mobilize local networks, especially in the absence of radical right groups.

5.2 Autonomous cell violence

In the sixth and final pathway, nationalist actors plan and stage attacks independent of local protest. In these cases, wider intra-movement processes on the radical right are channelled into the formation of clandestine cells. Within these cells, activists plan and use violence extensively in relation to the attribution of discursive opportunities. Unlike the nationalist opportunism and escalation pathways that I presented in chapter 4, violence does not emerge from supportive milieus, but from the organized radical right itself.

In my data, there is only one observable case of autonomous cell violence.⁶⁷ This case, which spanned three attacks on three different locations in Gothenburg throughout the winter of 2016/2017, has already been mentioned in the section on escalation. However, whereas the group did participate in the escalation of protest in Lilleby, the members also attacked two other targets – one migrant accommodation centre and one left-wing bookstore – where there was no surrounding protest. The case thereby shows how different pathways sometimes intersect in the same empirical settings.

5.2.1 Gothenburg

Between November 11, 2016 and early January 2017, three neo-Nazi activists carried out three bombings in and around Gothenburg. The first attack targeted a left-wing bookstore, while the second and third attacks targeted accommodation facilities in Västra Frölunda and Lilleby. Unlike the majority of cases reported in the thesis, all three members of the cell were ultimately apprehended and sentenced. This has allowed me to draw on surveillance and primary investigation materials gathered by SÄPO and the police, and compiled for the court proceedings. For this reason, the current case allows a considerably more detailed analysis than what has been reported in previous sections. If nothing else is stated, the following narrative is built from data provided in the preliminary enquiry report (SÄPO, 2017)

The Gothenburg cell consisted of three members: Viktor Melin, Anton Thulin and Jimmy Jonasson.⁶⁸ The Gothenburg district court concluded that one attacker, Viktor Melin, was present during each of the three bombings. In each of the three attacks, Jimmy Jonasson aided Melin in acquiring explosives. Anton Thulin was sentenced as an accessory for participating in reconnaissance, planning, and the purchase of bomb materials before the third attack. Before the formation of the cell, Melin, Thulin and Jonasson had all been members of the Western chapter of the NMR (*Näste 2*). Melin in particular had held a central position in the organization, occupying the leadership role in the chapter. However, he had left this position, and the organization altogether, before the summer of 2016. Thulin and Jonasson were paying members all through the studied period.

⁶⁷ This does not mean that I rule out the possibility of similar cases. However, there is no data to support the presence of comparable pathways in any other locality during the period.

⁶⁸ Since the court ruling, Melin, Jonasson, and Thulin have all been named multiple times in mainstream and anti-racist media sources. For the sake of presentation, I therefore report their names without anonymization.

Judging from the court records, the formation of the cell can be traced to the early summer of 2016, and to the onset of a conflict between parts of the local NMR and Gotheburg's anti-fascist milieu. In June 2016, Anti-fascist Action (*Antifascistisk action*, AFA) disseminated propaganda that exposed one of Jonasson's daughters as a member of the NMR. Two days later, Jonasson took up contact with Melin. Jonasson also made his first phone call to an acquaintance from which the group purchased their explosives. In August, there was a pause in the group's activities, as Melin and Thulin underwent weapon's training with Russian paramilitaries. In October, there was renewed contact between the members, as Jonasson notified the others of a second antifascist campaign against his daughter.

On November 3, Jonasson created a folder on his personal computer entitled "terror." Among other things, the folder contained instructions for constructing improvised explosive devices (IEDs), specifically of the kind used in the three attacks. The same day, Jonasson made the web search "plastic dough, how to make." Sometime between November 4 and November 10, one of the cell members purchased the egg clocks that were later used for constructing the first bomb. On November 11, Melin detonated a bomb placed on the cargo rack of a bicycle standing outside of a left-wing bookstore in central Gothenburg.

The formation of the cell, also related to tactical disputes within the NMR, which the participants in the cell perceived to have gone "soft." The specialization mechanism is thereby inherently tied both to external threats and to strategic disputes within the movement. Two chat logs, saved on November 8 and December 22 2016 respectively, reflect Melin's (M) and Thulin's (T) views on the issue.

In the first chat log, the activists discussed the contents of a recent episode of the NMR podcast *Radio Nordfront*, and the style of discourse on Nordfront more generally.

M: "National socialism stresses blood relations as hard, possibly even harder, as Judaism does and for that exact reason national socialism can defeat the religions of the circumcised – Judaism and Islam. Let's hope everything happens peacefully and democratically up until the final confrontation" – commentary on Nordfront.

M: What the hell

T: Disgusting. I was so fucking angry with the last episode of Radio Nordfront⁶⁹

M: Yes.

T: Hagberg was like the only one who admitted that revolution is good

T: They said “the newspapers say we want to make violent revolution!” “We don’t want that”

T: Pär and another was saying.

T: Still, Hagberg said, like, “Yes, but if it is necessary, then it will have to be so”

T: But Pär and the others meant it was a prejudice against us that we want to use violence and make a revolution

M: ... Oh my god. Populism. Hell.

In the second log, Melin and Thulin discussed the potential consequences of the murder of an antifascist activist by an NMR member in Finland.

T: He would have been “charged” for assault or aggravated assault in Sweden at least.
[...]

M: He will probably be celebrated in Finland, and by activists in Sweden. If we had done [the same thing], it would have meant immediate expulsion.

T: Yes. At least in N2⁷⁰

M: Jonathan was abused just for confronting someone who threw our flyers on the ground.

T: Yes haha pathetic.

⁶⁹ Thulin refers to NMR’s official podcast at the time

⁷⁰ Here, the author is referring to ”Näste 2”, NMR’s chapter in the Gothenburg area.

M: He didn't even beat him. He just put his hand on his chest and told him off. So fucking ridiculous.

T: Yes. Haha. Pathetic.

In a context where the NMR as a whole was turning toward political normalization (see ch. 1), Melin and Thulin represented the organization's radical flank. As mentioned above, Melin had left the organization entirely at this point, thus resigning his regional leadership position. Likewise, Melin's and Thulin's private travels to Russia contrasted sharply with the NMR leadership's stress on political normalization. Before he went to Russia, Melin had also been involved in the mob attack against an anti-racist demonstration in Stockholm, and numerous others of the NMR's more disruptive events in the preceding years. Already in 2017, Melin was sentenced as part of an investigation of violent disorder during an NMR demonstration in January 2016 (Dalsbro, 2017). In 2019, Thulin was deported from Poland after participating in militia training (Kasurinen, 2019).

By the end of December, the group's activities intensified. On December 29, they had their first registered face-to-face meeting at Jonasson's lot in rural Mark municipality. This was the same place where Jonasson stored the explosives he had bought earlier the same year. On December 30, the group met up again in a gym parking lot in Eastern Gothenburg. At the meeting, the participants moved something from Jonasson's car to Melin's. SÄPO assumed that they were exchanging explosives. The same day, SÄPO observed Melin and Thulin purchasing bomb parts at a nearby department store, and new egg clocks at a central Gothenburg supermarket. Earlier in December, Melin had visited the area around the Lilleby campsite while absent from a work assignment.

On December 31, the police intercepted Melin and Thulin as they were driving around the refugee camp in Lilleby. In the car, the police found multiple knives, balaclava masks, a pair of binoculars, and a severed pig's head. Melin was charged for carrying a knife. SÄPO

interpreted it as a reconnaissance trip. The severed pig's head in the backseat suggests that the two assailants were also planning other actions against the facility.⁷¹

On January 5, Melin placed a nail bomb in a garbage can outside of an MV-administered ABT in Västra Frölunda. In the course of the bombing, a maintenance worker was critically injured. The facility, which was located at the other end of the municipality from Lilleby, had been operational since the beginning of 2013, before which it was used as a hotel. Unlike in Lilleby, there are no reports of wider protest, and none of the intelligence materials suggest why the group chose to target this particular facility. Notably, however, it was located merely two kilometres from Melin's place of residence.

On January 17, Melin was apprehended for the attack against the left wing bookstore. In the following days, the police carried out searches of Jonasson's properties, and later picked him up for interrogation. On January 25, a janitor at the Lilleby camp found an undetonated nail bomb behind one of the mobile homes. The bomb was identical to the one used in Västra Frölunda. The police also found Melin's DNA on the bomb. In the following week, the police apprehended Thulin and Jonasson. Looking through Jonasson's phone, they found that the perpetrators had been in close telephone contact throughout the period. According to Jonasson himself, he had made at least 60 calls to Thulin in the past six months. All three participants were sentenced to prison for their involvement.

On the surface, the events from December onwards suggest two different logics in the immediate emergence of violence. The targeting of the SMA's center in Västra Frölunda appears rather arbitrary. If not for the size of the facility, and Melin's knowledge of the surroundings, there is nothing about the facility itself that separates it from others of its kind. The targeting of Lilleby camping saw the cell join a protest that was already highly mobilized, involving radical right activists as well as a wider informal network. The attack in Lilleby also appears to be more premeditated than the one in Västra Frölunda, looking at the group's multiple reconnaissance trips. The attack in Lilleby thereby suggests the role of discursive opportunities, whereas the attack in Västra Frölunda indicates a more circumstantial motivation. At the same time, it is important to note that both attacks occurred in a context

⁷¹ Various acts of harassment involving pigs, e.g. leaving pigs' heads on the doorstep of targeted refugee homes, smearing pigs' meat on doorknobs, or threatening to open pig farms in the vicinity of planned centres, recurred throughout the period.

where migrant accommodation was deeply politicized and salient in the municipality as a whole (see ch. 4). Combined with the high destructive capacity, and the size of the facility, the attack in Västra Frölunda was indeed highly visible and salient in the subsequent media reporting. Given these disclaimers, of course, it is important to note the closeness of the facility to Melin's everyday routines.

The case in Lilleby also shows the potential overlaps and mutual influence that can exist between different pathways. While the case in Lilleby *in general* adheres to the escalation pathway described in the previous chapter, Melin, Thulin and Jonasson's involvement must be understood with reference to the independent development of the autonomous cell. However, without the prior escalation pathway, it is not possible to explain why the group would choose a target so far away from the members' everyday environments. Thus, mechanisms tied to discursive opportunities, activated by the escalation pathway, appears necessary for understanding autonomous cell violence beyond more immediate situational factors.

5.3 Summary

This chapter has detailed how violence emerges in the absence of nonviolent episodes of contention, i.e. through what I call the independent sequence from nonviolent to violent protest. As such, the chapter faced the problem of explaining how participants developed the frames, emotions, attributions of opportunities, and relational ties necessary to make violence appear legitimate, desirable, and effective.

In subcultural violence, the independent temporality is combined with a localist orientation. In these cases, the negative framing of migrant accommodation was instantly channelled into private settings. In these settings, participants did not extend the framing of migration into wider political issues, but into personal grievances and conflicts. Even in locations such as Forserum, where local residents widely supported the migrants, a sufficiently wide part of the community nevertheless supported the maintenance of these privatized frames. In the absence of nonviolent protest, and without any connection to policy processes, violence emerged out of the dynamics of everyday interaction. In Tomelilla, violence emerged in the course of nightly drinking. In Forserum, repeated acts of violence came to form a ritualized pattern of behaviour among a cohesive group of young assailants.

In autonomous cell violence, the independent temporality combines with a nationalist orientation. In these cases, the formation of a group of violent specialists (or the individual commitment to violence) occurs on the basis of frame disputes internal to the radical right milieu. Owing to different assessments of political opportunities, or different framings of external events, a subset of the movement or its supportive environment breaks off to form a partially separate structure. In this chapter, I showed how this pattern was reflected in the trajectory of the group of neo-Nazis responsible for a series of bombings in the Gothenburg area. Starting from a dispute over the “soft” strategy of the NMR, the three participants gradually developed a separate operation through which they assembled bombing materials, gained weapons’ training, and conducted attacks against two migrant accommodation facilities and one left-wing bookstore. The decision to attack migrant accommodation facilities was largely coincidental in the light of the cell’s wider strategy. However, by attacking the facility, the group could seize on the wide visibility of the issue, and the discontent that it caused in Gothenburg in the period.

6 Comparing and contextualizing the pathways

Through the course of the past chapters, I have elaborated and illustrated the central causal mechanisms and their empirically observable representations in each of the six pathways. This procedure has left three lapses. First, within each pathway, I have made broad generalizations on the basis of data that have only been demonstrated for a very limited number of empirical cases. Second, while I have emphasized the importance of time within each pathway, I have separated the events in each empirical case from the longer history of events within the surrounding communities. Third, by focusing on local pathways, I have neglected how the sequences that occur in the local communities are impacted by broader events in the 2012-2017 period.

In the following sections, I use quantitative data to address each of the three lapses. In the first section, I use PEA data to compare sequences of events within and across the pathways. This section allows me to show how the mechanisms elaborated in chapters 3–5 correspond to systematic patterns in the duration, intensity, actor configuration and timing of events in each pathway. In the second and third sections, I compare the contextual conditions for each pathway. The second section consists of a cross-pathway comparison of differences in socioeconomic factors, in migration rates, and in electoral support for the Sweden Democrats. The third section compares local histories of protest on other topics, showing how these patterns influence the structuring of protest against migrant accommodation. Both sections combine the PEA data with external sources (see ch. 2). In the fourth section, I locate the six pathways in the context of national events, focusing on the impact of the discursive changes that took place at the end of 2015 (see ch. 1), and the role of diffusion dynamics in the proliferation of violent events overall. Keeping with the thesis' focus on the pathways, the second, third and fourth sections should be read primarily as a means to contextualize the cases, and not as conclusive analyses in their own right. They can also be read as starting points for future research into the facilitation of different pathways to violence.

All four sections are based on the comparison of the 85 individual case studies (ch. 2). Table 6.1 displays the number of unique sequences and events within each pathway. As the table shows, the subcultural and demobilization pathways are by far the most common in terms of unique sequences, while the moral outrage and demobilization pathways include the largest proportion of registered protest events. This observation underscores the necessity of looking

both at public protest and the dynamics of private interactions when studying racist violence. Because the autonomous cell pathway only includes one single sequence, and one single event, I have chosen not to include it in most of the presentations below. Where relevant, however, I include it in the commentary.

Pathway	Number of sequences	Number of events
Autonomous cell	1 (1.18 %)	1 (0.19 %)
Demobilization	22 (25.88 %)	153 (29.14 %)
Escalation	3 (3.53 %)	46 (8.7 %)
Moral outrage	18 (21.18 %)	134 (25.52 %)
Nationalist opportunism	12 (14.12 %)	101 (19.24 %)
Subcultural	29 (34.12 %)	90 (17.14 %)
<i>Total</i>	<i>85 (100 %)</i>	<i>525 (100 %)</i>

Table 6.1. Number of sequences and events by pathway

6.1 Comparing sequences

In this section, I use PEA data to graphically represent the sequences of events for all cases within the continuous and discontinuous pathways. Throughout the section, I present the data in the form introduced at the end of section 2.1.1, i.e. as horizontal timelines that describe all protest events (top row) and their associated actors (bottom row). The horizontal lines also present the announcement and opening/implementation of the targeted facility or policy, and all longer (30+ days) lapses between events. Fig. 6.1 presents the full legend.

Events		Actors	
C	Communicative event	I	Informal group
Ct	Contentious event	L	Local interest group
V	Violent event	M	Mainstream party
A	Announcement/other event related to policy/facility	R	Radical right organization
O	Opening of facility/implementation of policy	S	Sweden Democrats
	30-day gap between events		
...	1-year gap between events		

Fig. 6.1. Legend, sequences

Fig. 6.2 presents timelines for all sequences of moral outrage. Moral outrage combines successful frame extension with the activation of broad and weakly coordinated networks. Reflecting the breadth and weak coordination of the networks, nearly all reported events consist of informal actors. With some minor exceptions (Ekskogen, Bällsta), formal organizations only appear at the very end of protest. As I argued in the sections on moral outrage in chapters 3 and 4, this is reflective of the way in which formal actors channel protest into more coherent strategies, disrupting the relational structure that allowed protest to happen in the first place.

Moral outrage																	
Arboga	E		C	V	C												
	A		I	I	I												
Barkarö	E	A	C	C	C	C	V	C	C	V							
	A		I	I	I	M	I	S	S	I							
Bällsta	E	A	Ct	V	V	V	V	C	Ct	C	Ct	C	V	C		C	O
	A		I	I	I	I	I	L	S	R	S	I	I	I	I	I	I
Ekskogen	E	A	Ct	V	C	C	C	C		C						O	
	A		S	I	I	I	I	S									
Fjälkinge	E	A	C	V	C	C	C	C	C	C					O		
	A		I	I	I	I	L	L	M	M							
Floda	E	A	C	V	O												
	A		I	I													
Höganäs	E	A	C	Ct	C	V		O									
	A		I	I	I	I											
Kortedala	E	A	C	Ct	V												
	A		I	I	I												
Mellbystrand	E	A	C	C	C	C	V										
	A		I	I	I	I	I										
Onsala	E	A	C	C	V												
	A		I	I	I												
Sandviken	E		C	V	V												
	A		I	I	I												
Södertälje	E	A	C	Ct	V	O											
	A		I	I	I												
Torsby	E	A	V	Ct	C	C	C	V	O								
	A		I	I	I	I	I	I	I								
Torslanda (2)	E	A	C	Ct	C	V		O									
	A		I	R	I	I											
Trelleborg	E	A	C	C	Ct	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	V	V	O		
	A		I	I	I	I	I	S	S	M	I	I	I	I			
Uddevalle	E	A	C	C	C	V											
	A		I	I	I	I											
Valbo	E	A	C	V	O	C	C	C	C	C	C	C					
	A		I	I		I	I	I	I	I	I	I					

Fig. 6.2. Sequences in the moral outrage pathway

Owing to the low degree of coordination and the rapid elicitation and exhaustion of emotions, cases of moral outrage are short and intense. In fact, no single sequence surpasses fifteen individual events, and there is only one case (Bällsta) where there is a period of more than 30 days between reported events.

Beyond differences in the duration and intensity of protest, only one single sequence of moral outrage continues after the opening of the targeted facility. In this case (Valbo), the continuation of protest reflects a shift in framing, as participants targeted what they perceived as the “demonization” of their community as racist and bigoted (Integrerad invandrare, 2015; Wallenius, 2015). The nearly complete absence of protest after the moment of implementation speaks to several aspects of the moral outrage pathway. This speaks to the framing of events,

as protesters presented migrant accommodation itself as secondary to more widely resonant issues. Hence, the presence of migrants, in moral outrage, does not appear to have provoked either violent or nonviolent protest. Instead, nonviolent as well as nonviolent acts of protest are both deeply embedded in the policy process. I will return to this issue as I discuss the demobilization pathway.

The moral outrage pathway invites broader comparisons of the different pathways’ temporal patterning. Table 6.2 displays the minimum, maximum and average duration between the first and last event in each pathway. As expected, the discontinuous pathways are generally longer, while the continuous pathways are shorter. Sequences in the moral outrage pathway are shortest of all, averaging two months from the first event to the last. Sequences of demobilization are the longest, at almost nine months on average. In fact, the average sequence of moral outrage is thereby only three days longer than the very shortest case of the demobilization pathway. The results are very similar in table 7, which sets the starting point at the announcement of the targeted facility instead.⁷² As I will discuss later in this section, the biggest difference between the two tables is the considerably longer maximum and average durations for the subcultural pathway.

Pathway	Minimum duration (first event–last event)	Maximum duration	Average duration
Demobilization	57 days	691	269
Escalation	61 days	185	111
Moral outrage	1 day	331	60
Nationalist opportunism	2 days	806	169
Subcultural	1 day	764	119
<i>All pathways</i>	<i>1 day</i>	<i>806</i>	<i>117</i>

Table 6.2. Minimum, maximum and average duration by pathway, starting from the first protest event

⁷² Owing to a higher proportion of missing data for announcement dates, the observations in table 6.3 are less reliable than those in table 6.2

Pathway	Minimum duration (announcement – final event)	Maximum duration	Average duration
Demobilization	83 days	931	285.8
Escalation	61 days	207	122
Moral outrage	7 days	402	82.6
Nationalist opportunism	43 days	802	249.4
Subcultural	20 days	1546	626.7
<i>All pathways</i>	<i>7 days</i>	<i>207</i>	<i>134.9</i>

Table 6.3. Minimum, maximum and average duration by pathway, starting from the date of announcement

The differences in duration are also reflected in the pathways' temporal intensity. As table 6.4 shows, cases of demobilization have a very low intensity, averaging one event every 33 days. In moral outrage, the average intensity is six times as high, with just under one event every five days. The difference is most prominent in the fifth column, which measures the average duration from a violent event to the closest preceding nonviolent event. As expected, violent events in the continuous pathways occur very close to prior nonviolent events. In the demobilization pathway, on the other hand, the average distance between nonviolent and violent events is more than two and a half months, mirroring the mediation of the privatization mechanism.

Pathway	Minimum number of events	Maximum number of events	Average number of events/day	Average duration nonviolent event-violent event
Demobilization	3	12	0.03	81.18 days
Escalation	6	29	0.07	24.7 days
Moral outrage	2	15	0.18	4.45 days
Nationalist opportunism	3	13	0.05	11.56 days
Subcultural	1	10	0.03	11 days ⁷³
<i>All pathways</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>29</i>	<i>0.04</i>	<i>38.9 days</i>

Table 6.4. Intensity of events by pathway

Fig. 6.3 presents all observed sequences of nationalist opportunism. These are sequences in which a nationalist orientation develops within a continuous sequence. As such, the relevant mechanisms involve the identification of discursive opportunities, and the activation of a milieu between the radical right and its unorganized sympathizers. While the radical right

⁷³ This figure is meaningless, as almost no cases in the subcultural pathway include nonviolent events.

The large concentration of radical right groups in nationalist opportunism stands out in comparison to the other pathways. Table 6.5 shows the distribution of actor types for each pathway. While it is the informal groups that dominate all the pathways (see discussion in chapter 1), the absolute and relative numbers of events that involve radical right organizations are considerably higher for nationalist opportunism than for any of the others. Reflecting the tension between radical right groups and the SD, the latter are considerably more common in the localist pathways. The table also shows the higher concentration of formal organizations that are not affiliated with organized racism in the demobilization and moral outrage pathways. As the case from Bällsta showed (ch. 4), these organizations sometimes actively opposed radical right groups and the SD, at the same time as they protested local migrant accommodation.

Pathway	Radical right	SD	Other formal organization	Informal actor	Total
Demobilization	8 (5.23 %)	21 (13.73 %)	17 (11.11 %)	107 (69.93 %)	153 (100 %)
Escalation	6 (13.04 %)	10 (21.74 %)	2 (4.35 %)	28 (60.87 %)	46 (100 %)
Moral outrage	4 (2.99 %)	14 (11.19 %)	12 (8.96 %)	104 (77.61 %)	134 (100.75 %) ⁷⁴
Nationalist opportunism	33 (32.67 %)	11 (11.88 %)	4 (3.96 %)	53 (52.48 %)	101 (100.99 %)
Subcultural	8 (8.89 %)	2 (2.22 %)	0 (0 %)	82 (88.89 %)	90 (100 %)
<i>All pathways</i>	<i>57 (10.88 %)</i>	<i>60 (11.45 %)</i>	<i>35 (6.68 %)</i>	<i>372 (70.99 %)</i>	<i>524 (100 %)</i>

Table 6.5. Frequency and proportion of events by actor type and pathway

Fig. 6.4 presents the timelines for all cases of the demobilization pathway. In this pathway, violence follows from the privatization of protest and the extension of the negative framing of migrant accommodation into personal fears, frustrations, and interpersonal conflicts. Cases of demobilization can be divided into two distinct phases, where the first phase involves relatively coordinated nonviolent protest, and the second phase develops through non-public interactions and intermittent violence, where violent events have no temporal relation to the policy protest or to nonviolent protest. This temporal sequence is clearly visible in the PEA data. In the first phase, protest occurs through nonviolent means, particularly through the use of communicative tactics. Sometimes, these events involve moderate, formal organizations, including local interest groups, mainstream parties, and the SD. The second phase begins with a sustained break with public protest, which is then interspersed with intermittent reports of

⁷⁴ Some cases involve more than one type of organizer. Therefore, the total percentage sometimes exceeds 100.

opening of the targeted facility, as various events suggested that the protesters' chosen strategies were unlikely to yield results. In other cases, the opening of the facility coincided with the shift into the second phase of demobilization. As table 6.6 shows, the balance between nonviolent and violent events in the demobilization pathway shifts greatly across the opening of the targeted facility (or implementation of the targeted policy). In fact, it is only in the demobilization and nationalist opportunism pathways that the proportion of violent events increases after the opening date. For the subcultural pathway, the near absence of any protest before the opening date makes the relationship meaningless.

Pathway	Nonviolent events before opening	Violent events before opening	Nonviolent events after opening	Violent events after opening	Total
Demobilization	98 (64.05 %)	18 (11.76 %)	17 (11.11 %)	20 (13.07 %)	153 (100 %)
Escalation	31 (67.39 %)	10 (21.74 %)	0 (0 %)	5 (10.87 %)	46 (100 %)
Moral outrage	94 (70.15 %)	33 (24.63 %)	6 (4.48 %)	1 (5.22 %)	134 (100 %)
Nationalist opportunism	44 (45.36 %)	15 (15.46 %)	18 (18.56 %)	20 (39.18 %)	97 (100 %)
Subcultural	2 (2.22 %)	6 (6.67 %)	10 (11.11 %)	72 (91.11 %)	90 (100 %)
All pathways	269 (51.73 %)	82 (15.77 %)	51 (9.81 %)	118 (22.69 %)	520 (100 %)

Table 6.6. Violent and nonviolent events before/after the opening of the targeted facility (by pathway)

Fig. 6.5 details the three observable sequences of escalation. These are cases where nationalist orientations develop in the course of discontinuous sequences. As such, they develop through the shift from broad and mostly nonviolent networks, mobilized through the attribution of discursive opportunities among radical right actors and a wider set of formal organizations. Only through the demobilization of more influential formal organizations can the radical right then establish the activation of a milieu between itself and its surrounding network of local sympathizers.

Escalation																											
Mönsterås	E	A	C		C		Ct				V	V	V		O	V			Ct	V							
	A		I		I		S				R	I	I			I			R	I							
Påskallavik	E	A	Ct	C	C	Ct	C	C	O	V	V	V	V														
	A		R	R	I	R	I	I		I	I	I	I														
Torslanda	E	A	C	C	C	C	C	Ct	C	C	C	C	C		Ct	C	C	V	O	C	V	V	V	V	V	V	V
	A		S	M	S	S	S	R	I	R	M	I	I	I	I	I	I	I	I		I	I	I	I	I	R	R

Fig. 6.5. Sequences in the escalation pathway

Cases of escalation are very rare in the dataset as a whole. Further, as the description of the case from Mönsterås in chapter 4 showed, relevant events do not necessarily occur in the context of public protest, but may also happen in non-public or semi-public interactions among the SD, the radical right, and its wider social environment. Both these issues make it

more difficult to obtain a general view of cases of escalation, and the conditions through which they develop. These disclaimers in place, however, the cases share a number of similarities.

As in the case of demobilization, violence develops through a discontinuity in the relational structure of protest. In Lilleby, this is clearly visible in the shift from broad and mostly moderate protest, into informal, violent, radical right protest. In Mönsterås, the same pattern is visible only if we include what we know from the qualitative analysis, i.e. the repeated protests conducted by the SD and the S within the municipal institutions, and the subsequent shift in local organized racism from the SD and onto the SvP. In Påskallavik, the radical right is in place throughout the process. However, what happens in the latter part of the sequence is a relational shift in which the informal actors shift from moderate locals to subcultural youths.

As in the demobilization pathway, the factor that mediates between nonviolent and violent protest is the closure of political opportunities. However, this event has a different type of impact in the escalation pathway. Owing to the presence of the radical right, the opening of the targeted facility – and its consequences in the form of closed opportunities – only leads to a partial demobilization of the participating protesters. Hence, it contributes to a relational mechanism in which only moderate actors demobilize, increasing the relative salience of the radical right and its milieu. Owing to this difference, the escalation pathway does not include any breaks in protest after the opening of the facility. Instead, protest immediately switches into a violent pattern.⁷⁵ Further, as table 6.6 showed, the difference in protest activity and protest types is not as significant in the escalation pathway as in the demobilization pathway.

Figs. 6.6–6.7, finally, represents all cases of the subcultural pathway. In the subcultural pathway, violence emerges in the absence of nonviolent protest. Accordingly, grievances are immediately privatized, and the framing of migration extends into personal grievances, experiences, and interpersonal conflicts. The emergence of violence therefore lacks any relationship to the policy process, or to any sequence of nonviolent protest. This is visible in two ways. First, nearly every single event in the subcultural pathway occurs after the opening of the targeted facility (see also table 6.6). This signals the disconnection between the

⁷⁵ In Mönsterås, there are multiple breaks in the sequence of public protest. However, there is no break immediately following the opening of the facility.

and the larger involvement of the radical right in the nationalist orientations. Finally, the duration and intensity of protest range from the explosive pattern of moral outrage to the long, sparse patterns of demobilization and subcultural violence.

The comparison of the four sequences highlights the heterogeneous relationship that exists between protest, the policy process, and the attribution of political opportunities. In the continuous sequences, violence is part of a diverse attempt to block the implementation of a policy, or to stop the opening of a given facility. Violence, like nonviolent protest, therefore occurs within the temporal frame of the policy process. In the discontinuous pathways, where protest is more coordinated and moderate, violence occurs only after the closure of political opportunities, and the fragmentation of protest into private interactions. In the independent sequences, where participants make no or few attempts to block the opening of the targeted facility, violent and nonviolent protest (to the extent that it occurs), happens independently of the policy process altogether.

The most coherent finding regards the moderate actors, and their relationship to the emergence of violence. While the causal mechanisms differ between the pathways, the involvement of formal, moderate organizations is related nearly universally to the absence of nonviolent protest. In moral outrage, the involvement of moderate actors (and radical, formal organizations) happens only at the end of the sequences. In the escalation and demobilization pathways, the demobilization of moderate actors is closely linked to the shift toward violence. In the remaining pathways, moderate organizations are not present at all. While this could invite the suggestion that moderate actors *should* protest migration, as a means of keeping protest nonviolent, one should note the greater potential for moderate actors to promote more repressive asylum regimes, and to further legitimize local opposition. For these reasons, the long-term consequences of moderate protest can be just as, if not more, destructive for the victims than scattered violence from the radical flank.

Owing to insufficient or ambiguous data, the empirical cases cover only about one half of all violent events that were reported in the period. Keeping this in mind, however, the comparison does allow some observations about the relative frequency of the different types of pathways. First, all three of the nationalist pathways are relatively uncommon. While it is plausible that nationalist actors – i.e. the radical right – are involved in more cases than the sources indicate, it supports the notion of racist violence as a diverse, broadly occurring phenomenon, and one which cannot satisfyingly be captured solely by paying attention to

organized racism or extremist ideology. Second, the largest number of cases fit the pattern of the subcultural and demobilization pathways. What these pathways have in common is the fragmentation of protest, and the emergence of violence from the dynamics of everyday interactions, outside of the policy process. Coupled with the relative infrequency of the nationalist pathways, this greatly suggests the need to attend further to private, informal, everyday settings in the emergence of violence, and to the way in which these settings are informed by the patterning or absence of public protest.

6.2 The contextual determinants of racist violence

In this and the following sections, I raise the level of analysis to study the contextual conditions that facilitate the emergence of each pathway. In this section, I focus on two dimensions. First, I inquire into the role of structural conditions, looking at the relative affluence or poverty of the communities, the scale of local migrant accommodation, and local support for the SD. I then look at the role of prior protest activities in the selected communities. In conclusion, I suggest that prior protest mediates contextual causes into particular frames, emotions, opportunities and relations that subsequent actors can use to mobilize against migrant accommodation. As the section shows, the ways in which protest against migrant accommodation (or its absence) develops into violence is weakly but meaningfully related to frames, opportunities and relations derived from macro-level conditions and prior sequences of protest.

6.2.1 Socioeconomic differences, migration, support for the SD

Conventional perspectives on racist violence frequently return to three potential explanations: the impact of migration or demographic change, the impact of socioeconomic grievances, and the impact of support for radical right and/or nationalist parties. As mentioned in chapter 1, neither of these models, or their combinations, has produced coherent results with any meaningful explanatory power. Because these accounts do not take equifinality into account, however, it is relevant to rephrase the question, asking whether some pathways are more likely to occur under different socioeconomic conditions, or under different rates of migration. The analytical consequence of this rephrasing is that external conditions are no longer made to account for why people choose to protest, but for the forms through which they do so. In this sense, external conditions are only interesting insofar as they facilitate a particular structure of protest.

In this section, I compare the six pathways in relation to the local rate of migrant allocations, local socioeconomic conditions, and local support for the SD. Overall, no factor appears sufficient, on theoretical or empirical grounds, to account for any single pathway. However, local socioeconomic conditions and support for the SD do systematically and significantly coincide with some of the pathways, suggesting how patterns of protest against migrant accommodation reflect wider patterns in the affected communities.

The first comparison concerns the scale and rate of local migrant allocations. This comparison yields no meaningful differences whether at the level of individual pathways, nor at higher levels of aggregation. This is unsurprising, given the relatively even levels of migrant accommodation in the period, especially in the years with the most violence (see ch. 1). It also underscores the role of framing, and the way in which single actors manage to identify discursive opportunities, to extend frames, and/or contribute to processes of moral outrage. As I hope to have shown in the previous chapters, the meaning of migration should therefore ultimately be seen as the outcome of social interaction within the host community.⁷⁶

The second comparison concerns the role of socioeconomic factors.⁷⁷ The municipalities where violent protest occurs in the absence of nonviolent protest are systematically less affluent than those in which violence develops alongside nonviolent protest. In 2012, the difference between the locations of the independent and continuous pathways was approximately 8000 SEK. In 2014, the difference was close to 10 000. For the 2012 figure, the between-group variance is statistically significant at the 90 % level. For 2014, the difference is significant at 95 %. There is no statistically significant variance between the discontinuous pathways and either of the others. In interpreting the figures, it is also important to note that violent protest did occur in all of the studied cases. Therefore, it is not meaningful

⁷⁶ To assess the impact of migration, I have measured conducted a variance analysis comparing the pathways on the number of migrants allocated in 2012, 2014 and 2017, and on the rate of change in the number of allocated migrants between 2012 and 2014 and between 2012 and 2017. For both measures, I have divided the number of allocated migrants by the size of the municipality's population. As in the cases of income levels and SD support, I have conducted the analysis four levels of aggregation, making comparisons across all six pathways, across the three temporal sequences, across the two spatial orientations, and between independent sequences and those where violence followed nonviolent protest.

⁷⁷ In order to assess the explanatory power of the socioeconomic context, I have conducted a variance analysis on the municipal median and average income in 2012, 2014 and 2017, the difference between average and median income (as a measure of inequality) in the same years, and the rate of change in the median income between 2012 and 2017. Aside from those mentioned here, these tests did not report any significant between-case differences.

to interpret the relative poverty of the independent sequences in terms of grievances. Instead, as I will show below, their relative poverty appears to be associated with a lower degree of formal organization. However, the relatively limited absolute difference between the independent pathways and the others makes it difficult to interpret this observation.

Pathways	Median income 2012	Median income 2014
Continuous pathways (moral outrage, nationalist opportunism)	232 600 SEK	243 100 SEK
Discontinuous pathways (demobilization, escalation)	225 200 SEK	234 100
Independent pathways (Subcultural, autonomous cell)	225 100 SEK	233 500 SEK

Table 6.7. Median income by pathway, 2012 and 2014

The third comparison concerns the level of support for the SD.⁷⁸ Community-level support for the SD differs somewhat between the localist and nationalist orientations. In the electoral districts where protest developed through a localist orientation, support for the SD in the 2014 national elections was 16.98 % on average. Support for the SD is particularly strong in electoral districts, and in the wider municipalities, where violence develops through the demobilization pathway. Notably, however, all pathways develop primarily in locations with above-average support for the SD. This relationship is repeated at the sub-municipal level, as all pathways develop in districts with higher average SD-support than their surrounding municipalities. Importantly, none of these differences are statistically significant. Hence, the degree of SD support is not a robust predictor for violence, even if it is likely to affect the development of violent and nonviolent protest at some level (cf. Törnberg et al., 2020).

⁷⁸ To assess the level of support for the SD, I have conducted variance analyses comparing the pathways on the SD’s results in the 2014 national elections. While the municipal elections would have been meaningful in relation to a political opportunity-interpretation of the SD’s results, the national election result is less affected by the splitting of votes between the SD and various local parties, which often share the former’s anti-immigrant agenda. Further, as I discuss here and in chapter 1, conditions at the time question the plausibility of interpreting support for the SD as an indicator of political opportunities, even at the local level.

Pathway	2014 national elections	2014 national elections (district level)
<i>Localist pathways</i>	15.67 %	16.98 %
Demobilization	16.69 %	18.39 %
Moral outrage	14.38 %	15.17 %
Subcultural	15.69 %	17.12 %
<i>Nationalist pathways</i>	13.84 %	15.29 %
Autonomous cell	9.64 %	14.3 %
Escalation	14.75 %	17.1 %
Nationalist opportunism	13.96 %	14.86 %
<i>National result</i>	12.86 %	12.86 %

Table 6.8. Support for the SD in the 2014 national elections, municipal and district level

In the existing literature on racist violence, electoral support for the SD – and other parties associated with organized racism – is typically interpreted through the lens of political opportunities. From this point of view, it is reasonable to assume that the radical right will only mobilize in locations where the SD is weak, and where grievances are unlikely to be channelled into institutional arenas. However, the centralization of the Swedish accommodation system, and the cordon sanitaire that existed between the mainstream parties and the SD at the time (see ch. 1) meant that the SD had very limited opportunities to affect local migrant accommodation. Instead, the observable differences in SD support between the localist and nationalist pathways should be understood as part of the wider puzzle of the localist orientation. In this sense, the perception that a negative framing of migration and migrant accommodation were acceptable in a given community should have helped participants overcome frictions between different ideological standpoints and organizational affiliations, thus facilitating successful frame extension (see also Törnberg et al., 2020).

Overall, the macro-conditions explored in this section appear to be of limited importance for the development of any given pathway (see table 6.9). Across all pathways, differences in the level and rate of migration, and the level of income, differ little between the communities included in the six pathways. While SD support is especially high for some pathways, it is generally higher in the affected communities than in the country as a whole. In the following sections, however, I will return to the issue of how SD support and the opening of discursive opportunities may be especially relevant for understanding the emergence of the localist pathways.

Pathway	Migration	Income levels	SD support
Demobilization	n/a	n/a	High
Escalation	n/a	n/a	High
Moral outrage	n/a	High	Moderate
Nationalist opportunism	n/a	High	Moderate
Subcultural	n/a	Low	High

Table 6.9. Summary of macro-conditions

6.2.2 The effect of prior protest on pathways to racist violence

In the processual framework, contextual conditions matter through their impact on historical sequences, and on the relations between different actors within these sequences. One powerful way that contextual conditions create lasting effects in a community is through their articulation in collective action and protest. From this point of view, the low explanatory power of contextual conditions does not mean that they do not matter, but that their results only become meaningful when mediated through the framing, organization and behaviour of the people living under them. In this section, I thereby inquire into how prior patterns of protest influenced the development of protest against migrant accommodation in each of the six pathways. In doing so, I look at two types of data. First, I look into the structure of protest on other issues, reported in the five years that preceded protest against migrant accommodation. Second, I zoom in on the prior activities of the radical right.

In a general sense, prior protest was very similar across the six pathways. In all six pathways, the majority of the affected communities had reported some sustained protest in the five years prior to the onset of protest against migrant accommodation. On average, these sequences of protests consisted of between three and four individual events. In most communities these involved formal organizations as well as informal actors, with the organizations ranging from left-wing organizations (e.g. trade unions, leftist parties) to local interest associations and right wing organizations.

Across all pathways, the most common types of protest revolved around issues of welfare and austerity (e.g. school closures, cuts in health services). This finding reflects prior research on local protest campaigns in Sweden (Uba, 2016b, 2016a). For the other two most common protest issues, anti-siting and anti-racism/refugee solidarity, there are systematic and meaningful differences between the pathways. Anti-siting issues, in which protesters target construction projects, human services, infrastructure, and so on, are disproportionately

common in the demobilization and moral outrage pathway. This is consistent with the subsequent localist framing of protest against migrant accommodation. As other authors have noted, there are close affinities between this framing of migrant accommodation and wider “not in my backyard” frames (Borell & Westermarck, 2018; Hubbard, 2005; Maney & Abraham, 2008). Anti-racist and refugee solidarity issues, on the other hand, are by far most common in communities where violence develops through the subcultural pathway. While these issues are virtually absent from all other pathways, they exist in nearly half the cases of the subcultural pathway (see table 6.10). This finding is consistent with my analysis of the case of Forserum (ch. 5), where successful refugee solidarity mobilization pushed negative framings of migrant accommodation into private settings. In that regard, it is notable that the second pathway where anti-racist protest occurred with some regularity is demobilization, which develops through the same combination of narrow mobilization and subsequent privatization of protest. In the nationalist pathways, on the other hand, anti-racist mobilization is almost entirely absent. It is thereby plausible that the presence of counter-movements contributes to the structuring of subsequent protest by changing the mobilization potential of racist actors.

Pathway	Total number of communities	Communities with anti-austerity/welfare protest	Locations with anti-siting protest	Locations with anti-racist / refugee solidarity protest
Demobilization	15 (30 %)	8 (37.5 %)	9 (33 %)	3 (25 %)
Escalation	3 (6 %)	2 (6.06 %)	0 (0 %)	1 (8.33 %)
Moral outrage	9 (18 %)	7 (21.21 %)	7 (25.93 %)	1 (8.33 %)
Nationalist opportunism	7 (14 %)	5 (15.15 %)	4 (14.81 %)	1 (8.33 %)
Subcultural	16 (32 %)	11 (33 %)	7 (25.93 %)	6 (50 %)
<i>Total</i>	<i>50 (100 %)</i>	<i>33 (100 %)</i>	<i>27 (100 %)</i>	<i>12 (100 %)</i>

Table 6.10. Distribution of protest issues by pathway

The subcultural pathway also stands out in the low degree of organization among past protesters. Table 6.11 displays this pattern in two ways. On one hand, it is visible in the proportion of communities where formal organizations are mobilized at all. In more than half of the communities where violence develops through the subcultural pathway, past protest included no formal organizations whatsoever. For demobilization, moral outrage, and nationalist opportunism, formal organizations had been mobilized in nearly all studied communities. In fact, despite containing almost roughly a third of all studied communities, the subcultural pathway only includes a fifth of those where formal organizations had been mobilized at some point in the preceding five-year period.

Pathway	Total number of communities	Communities with formal organizers among the protesters	Total number of sequences	Number of sequences with formal organizers
Demobilization	15 (30 %)	13 (37.14 %)	56 (29.95 %)	34 (31.19 %)
Escalation	3 (6 %)	1 (2.86 %)	7 (3.74 %)	7 (6.42 %)
Moral outrage	9 (18 %)	7 (20 %)	47 (25.13 %)	21 (19.27 %)
Nationalist opportunism	7 (14 %)	6 (17.14 %)	33 (17.65 %)	26 (23.85 %)
Subcultural	16 (32 %)	8 (22.86 %)	44 (23.53 %)	21 (19.27 %)
<i>Total</i>	<i>50 (100 %)</i>	<i>35 (100 %)</i>	<i>187 (100 %)</i>	<i>109</i>

Table 6.11. Formal organizations in prior protest, by pathway

Differences in the degree of formal organization are also visible in the aggregate number of sequences within each pathway. Once again, the subcultural pathway stands out in its low degree of prior organization of protest. Comparing cases within the pathway, less than half of its 44 individual sequences involve formal organizations. Comparing across pathways, the proportion of sequences with formal organizers is less than one-fifth, despite the pathway containing close to one-fourth of all observed sequences. Instead, the nationalist opportunism

and demobilization pathways stand out as disproportionately “organized.” These results mirror the degree of organization in subsequent protest against migrant accommodation, as shown in table 9. The degree of prior organization thereby appears to influence the development of relational mechanisms in subsequent protest, and hence the observed differences in the capacity for sustained nonviolent protest, even in locations where a negative framing of migration is salient in the population as a whole. It is possible that the low degree of organization in the communities of the subcultural pathway is linked to their relative poverty, as suggested in previous studies of the geographic patterning of social movement activism at the local level (McAdam et al., 2005).

Aside from general protest issues, the pathways differ in the prior presence of the radical right. As table 6.12 shows, pathways in the nationalist orientation consistently stand out, with an average of radical right activities that is between two and nine times as high as any of the localist pathways. Importantly, this difference holds up regardless of whether we look at the data on a one-year or on a five-year basis. Between the localist and the nationalist orientations, the between-group difference is significant at the 95 % level.⁷⁹

Pathway	Average radical right events (5 years prior)	Average radical right events (1 year prior)
Demobilization	41.72	11.83
Escalation	226	70.5
Moral outrage	96.18	22.65
Nationalist opportunism	155.82	44.36
Subcultural	82	20.25
<i>Total</i>	<i>95.44</i>	<i>25.26</i>

Table 6.12. Average number of prior radical right events by pathway (5 years, 1 year)

This observation serves as an important disclaimer for the wider argument about the nationalist orientation. Whereas the radical right is geographically mobile in theory, it is not impervious to spatial limitations in practice. As the empirical data show, and as Karapin (Karapin, 2002, 2007, 2011) has discussed in his study of German “anti-minority riots,” even regional radical right groups are unlikely to travel far outside of their home regions (see also Marchment, Bouhana, & Gill, 2018). On one hand, this is due to practical limitations. Maintaining sustained activism far from home is costly and logistically difficult. On the other

⁷⁹ This also includes the one community of the autonomous cell pathway (Gothenburg), where radical right activists reported 447 events in the five years preceding the onset of the sequence.

hand, the attribution of opportunities rests on geographically distributed access to information. As chapter 2 showed, the majority of relevant events that occurred in Sweden during the period were reported in local newspapers. This means that the knowledge necessary for mobilization is, to an extent, limited by whether the radical right has activists staying in a given location, and if these actors have the latitude and capacity to mobilize there.

Among the localist pathways, the subcultural and demobilization pathways report the lowest scores of prior radical right activities. For the subcultural pathway, the prior absence of the radical right helps explain the absence of nonviolent protest, and thus the channelling of grievances into private settings. For the demobilization pathway, the absence of the radical right helps explain how narrow groups of local protesters could dominate the construction of a relatively coherent framing and strategy, and how their demobilization did not lead to a pattern of escalation.

The history of protest in the local communities helps us understand why some pathways develop rather than any other, in a given context. Table 6.13 summarizes these histories for each pathway. First, nonviolent protest against migrant accommodation is less likely to occur where past protest is less formally organized, and where there is a history of anti-racist and refugee solidarity protest. These factors both impact directly on the conditions for protest against migrant accommodation by conditioning the relational structures in which radical right actors and locals may mobilize support for protest, and by changing the conditions for frame resonance. Second, the prior presence of radical right activists is meaningfully and significantly related to the development of all three nationalist pathways. Hence, where there are radical right actors present, it is more likely that these will manage to gain influence in local networks, and thereby steer protest onto the nationalist opportunism, escalation or autonomous cell pathways.

Pathway	Prior protest issues	Prior organization of protest	Prior radical right activity
Demobilization	Anti-siting	Strong	Very low
Escalation	Absence of anti-racism / refugee-solidarity	Moderate	Very high
Moral outrage	Anti-siting	Moderate	Low
Nationalist opportunism	Absence of anti-racism / refugee-solidarity	Strong	Very high
Subcultural	Anti-racism / Refugee solidarity	Weak	Low

Table 6.13. Summary of prior protest patterns, by pathway

6.3 National events, local outcomes

In my criticism of conventional approaches to racist violence, I have stressed the causal importance of events vis-à-vis static or slow-moving external factors. In doing so, I have mainly paid attention to local events. However, the assailants of racist violence are not only attentive of what happens in their own communities, but of things that happen elsewhere as well. On one hand, discursive opportunities are not only signalled in separate, local environments, but also develop through statements by national elites (Koopmans & Olzak, 2004). Second, even before the Internet, knowledge of specific attacks against migrants and migrant accommodation, spread across informal contacts, through radical right propaganda, and through the mass media, can inspire to further violence in remote locations (Esser & Brosius, 1996; Lööw, 1995). There are no reasons to assume that this effect has been dulled with the expansion of social media (Müller & Schwarz, 2018). The first half of this section locates the six pathways within the context of changing elite discourses. The second half of the section discusses the potential role of diffusion effects, looking at the uneven temporal distribution of violent events across the six pathways.

6.3.1 Elite framing and the emergence of racist violence

As I discussed in chapter 1, the fall of 2015 rapidly changed the macro-conditions for protesting migration in Sweden. In the course of a few weeks, the predominant national-level framing of migration shifted from welcoming to restrictive, changes in elite discourses made a negative framing of migration salient and legitimate, and the passing of the so-called “migration agreement” quickly turned Sweden into one of the least accommodating countries for asylum seekers in the EU. Coinciding with these changes, the number of new asylum applicants dropped dramatically, decreasing from 126 000 in 2015 to approximately 22 000 in 2016 and 2017.

As I have shown throughout this thesis, nonviolent and violent protest against migrant accommodation occurred continuously across the entire period. Hence, none of the changes that happened in 2015 can be regarded as either sufficient or necessary for explaining violence in general. At the same time, it is very plausible that some of these processes did facilitate an *increase* in the frequency of the attacks. Further, and closer to my general argument, it is plausible that these changes affected different pathways in different ways.

Among the various processes that occurred in the fall of 2015, the proliferation of the crisis narrative is the only one to have a meaningful impact on the pattern of violent and nonviolent protest. For all types of protest, in fact, Pearson's N for the correlation between the number of articles using either of the crisis frames, and the frequency of events one month later, is above 0.8. There are no significant correlations between the pattern of violence and the trends for new asylum applicants or newly allocated migrants. While difficult to separate, this points to the impact of framing and discursive opportunities for mediating between changes in the migration rate and the occurrence of violence (see also Koopmans & Olzak, 2004).

The salience of the crisis framing did not impact equally on all pathways. Fig. 6.8 zooms in on the period between January 2015 and December 2016 in order to show how the intensity of events in each pathway shifted alongside changes in elite discourse. At different rates, every single pathway increased its monthly frequency of events in the final quarter of 2015. However, the six pathways differed greatly in their subsequent trends. The moral outrage and demobilization pathways continued increasing into the first quarter of 2016, and the subcultural pathway only decreased incrementally. The two nationalist pathways (excluding the single case of the autonomous cell pathway), on the other hand, decreased immediately after the end of 2015. In bright contrast to the other pathways, the escalation pathway did not peak until the end of 2016, reflecting the increasing frequency of protest in Lilleby. At the three-month level, Pearson's N for the number of articles that use the crisis frame and the number of events in the localist pathways is 0.75. For the nationalist pathways, it is only 0.51.

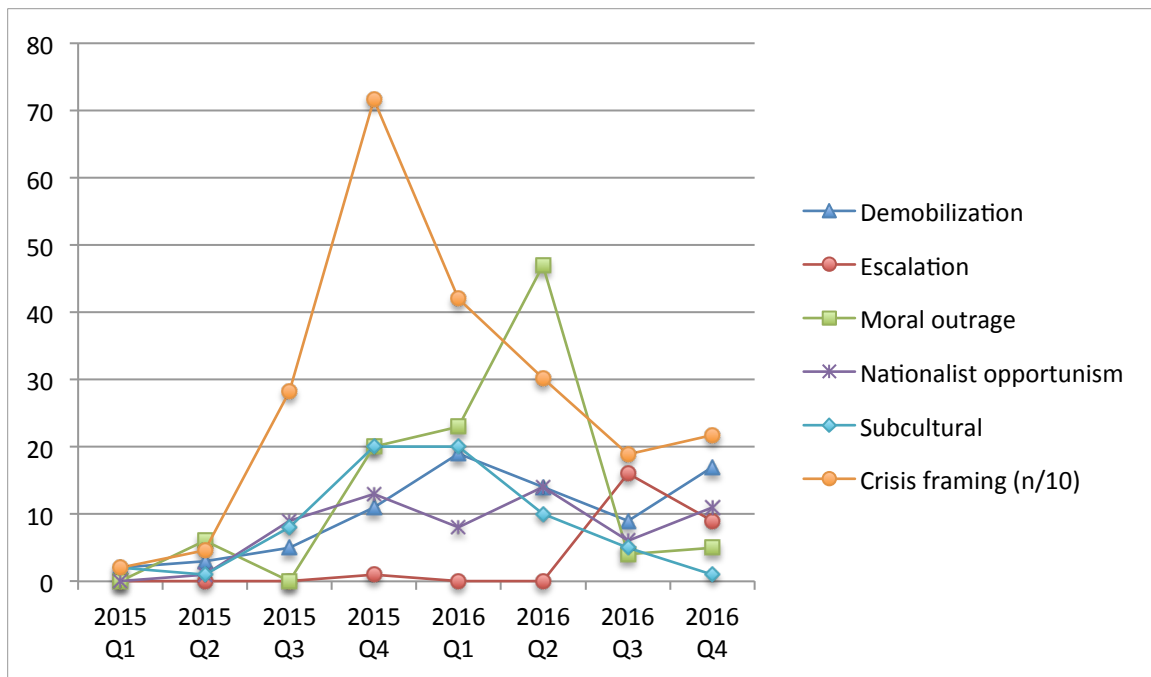


Fig. 6.8. Number of events by pathway, 2015-2016 (quarterly)

The relative concentration of the moral outrage and demobilization pathways to the latter part of the period resonates with the causal mechanisms that are contained within each. This is specifically due to the link between frame extension and macro-level sources of frame resonance. As described throughout the past chapters, localist protest is unlikely to occur unless some actor or some group of actors manage to establish a resonant link between negative framings of migration and more widely shared and locally resonant frames, whether related to political grievances or personal frustrations. For the most part, this effort is constrained by the low legitimacy of overt racist frames, and by the stigmatization of organized racist actors. In contexts where the elite framing of migration is generally negative, it is likely that frame extension is more resonant, as a broader set of mainstream actors legitimize opposition to migrant accommodation. In this sense, the more sustained effect of negative elite frames on the localist pathway can be interpreted in the same sense as those' pathways generally higher level of support for the SD. As in that argument, the lack of impact on the nationalist pathways supports the notion that violent and nonviolent protest emerges from smaller, more ideologically coherent milieus.

6.3.2 The effect of violent events on each other

As this thesis shows, attacks against migrant accommodation were frequently reported in local, regional and national news media, and by radical right organizations. This means that

the occurrence of violence was also visible for potential assailants. It is therefore necessary to look at the extent through which different assailants impacted on each other, and hence on the diffusion of violence.⁸⁰

Excluding cases with missing data, fig. 6.9 projects the timing of 329 individual attacks, distributed over the course of 312 weeks.⁸¹ Within each cell is a number indicating the number of violent events that were reported in the corresponding week. Each cell is colour coded according to this number, with lighter colours indicating a low number of events, and a darker colour indicating a higher number. If these attacks had been ordered evenly across the period, the table would have been an even pink, with roughly one event reported each week.

The timing of the attacks follows a clear clustering pattern. Despite the high number of attacks, almost half (151) of the cells are white. For every week where there is an attack, there is one in which nothing happens (or at least where nothing is reported). Further, just like the coloured cells, the white cells tend to cluster into chains. Across the entire period, only 24 out of the total 329 events occur more than one week before or after another event. In fact, the median distance between one attack and the next is only three days. While this pattern may be explained by the proliferation of external factors in some moments (especially in the fall of 2015), such causes cannot plausibly account for the clustering of attacks in the remainder of the period.

⁸⁰ The study of diffusion makes up its own subfield in the political violence literature, with its associated methodological and theoretical repertoire (e.g. Braun & Koopmans, 2010; Chabot, 2010; Haydu, 2019; Myers, 2000). Rather than add further complexity to the current thesis, however, I will approach in a much more provisional sense, discussing the potential role of diffusion in the overall patterning of violence on the basis of descriptive data. As such, I do not present diffusion mechanisms as an alternative to the pathways described in the previous chapters, but as a complementary factor that helps explain how facilitative contextual conditions ultimately led some groups to use violence.

⁸¹ These data involve all violent events that could be properly dated, and not only those included in the six pathways. If the data had only included the latter cases, then the reported distribution of violent events would be considerably more sparse than what "actually" happened in the period.

2012: 1-26		1	1					1	3	3	4		1	1		1			1	1					2		
2012: 27-52						1	1		1	1	2		1			1	3	1	4	1	2				1		2
2013: 1-26	2			2	1				1			1	1			1				1							
2013: 27-52	1	1	1			1		1		2	4		2	1		1					1	1	1				
2014: 1-26			1											1					1						1		
2014: 27-52				1	2			3				2	2			1			1	1	1	1	2	2			
2015: 1-26	1	1		1			1		1	1		1					2		1	3						2	
2015: 27-53						1	6		1	1	3	2	3	1	1	5	8	9	8	4	7	2	4	3	4	3	1
2016: 1-26	5	1	2	4	5	5	1	3	2	5	1	2	3	3	2	4		3	3	1	1	4	5	2	4	1	
2016: 27-52	1	2		1	2	2	2	1	2	5	2		2	3	5	5	1		3		1				2		
2017: 1-26	1			2		1		1	1		1	2	1	1							1		2	1	1	1	
2017: 27-52			1		1	2		1	1					1	1	2					1					2	

Fig. 6.9. Number of violent events (weekly), 2012-2017

To an extent, the clustering of events in time can be explained by the co-occurrence of multiple events in the same pathways. This seems particularly reasonable in the years where the general frequency of events is low, and where there are fewer overlapping sequences. However, it is important to note that in most cases, at the community level, the number of violent events was very low. Across the sequences compared in section 6.1, the average number of violent events is only 1.9, and very few cases exceed four or five events. Even within these sequences, as that section showed, the distribution of violent events is often considerably scarcer than for the nation as a whole. Hence, while some of the clustering obviously represents sustained violent protest in single communities, it cannot account for the pattern as a whole.

At the national level of aggregation, the timing of the violent events closely corresponded to the timing of nonviolent protest. In fact, Pearson’s N for the two series (at the monthly level), is 0.84. Given the very large gaps between nonviolent events and subsequent violence in the most commonly occurring pathways (demobilization and subcultural violence, see section 6.1), it is possible that not only violent, but protest in general, diffused across settings. While it is not possible to determine this relationship more closely in the format of this study, it suggests the possibility for novel research.

As this discussion shows, it is crucial to take diffusion mechanisms into account. This, however, does not exclude or invalidate the prior focus on local events. Instead, diffusion complements the explanation of local sequences by showing the wider processes through

which potential assailants, at a given point in time, come to perceive violence as a viable option. From this point of view, the private settings where violence ultimately emerges must be understood at the intersection of processes on several geographical scales. In order to determine the relative impact of each scale, and what these impacts look like in practice, however, it is necessary to conduct further research.

6.4 Summary

This chapter has expanded the empirical investigation of the six pathways away from the case studies and onto the full population of relevant cases reported in Sweden between 2012 and 2017. In doing so, I addressed three shortcomings in the prior chapters. First, I used PEA data to compare sequences of nonviolent and violent protest within and across the continuous and discontinuous pathways. In doing so, I showed how recurring patterns in the sequencing of events corresponded with mechanisms observed in the case studies. Second, I used municipal- and community-level data on migration, income, election results, and past protest activities to better understand how contextual conditions affected the development of each pathway. Third, I located the pathways within national-level events to show how their development was affected by general discursive changes, and by violent events in other locations. Table 6.14 summarizes the comparison of the six pathways.

Pathway	Sequence characteristics	Actors	Macro-conditions	Prior protest	External events
Demobilization	Very long, low-intensity sequences. The opening of the targeted facility mediates between nonviolent and violent modes of protest	Informal groups, SD, non-radical right organizations	High support for the SD	History of anti-siting protest, high degree of organization, low radical right activity	Strong impact of changes in the DOS/national-level framing of migration
Escalation	Medium-length sequences. The opening of the targeted facility mediates between nonviolent and violent modes of protest	Radical right organizations, SD, informal groups	High support for the SD	Very high radical right activity, absence of prior anti-racist protest	Moderate impact of changes in the DOS/national-level framing of migration
Moral outrage	Short, intense sequences that end before the opening of the targeted facility	Informal groups, SD, non-radical right organizations	Moderate support for the SD, high-income communities	History of anti-siting protest, moderate organization, low radical right activity	Strong impact of changes in the DOS/national-level framing of migration
Nationalist opportunism	Short and long sequences that are unaffected by the opening of the targeted facility	Radical right organizations, informal groups	Moderate support for the SD, high-income communities	Very high radical right activity, absence of prior anti-racist protest	Moderate impact of changes in the DOS/national-level framing of migration
Subcultural	Very long to very short sequences of very low intensity. Unaffected by policy processes	Informal groups	High support for the SD, low-income communities	History of anti-racist/refugee solidarity protest, low radical right activity	Moderate impact of changes in the DOS/national-level framing of migration
Autonomous cell	Low-intensity, long sequence	Specialized violent cell	n/a	Very high radical right activity	n/a

Table 6.14. Summary of the cross-pathway comparison

The first section of the chapter used PEA data to broaden the comparison of cases within and across the pathways. Through graphic representation of the PEA data, the section showed analogous patterns in the timing of protest, in the composition of protesters, and in the combination of tactics within all four pathways where violence coincided with nonviolent protest. In this section, I highlighted the diversity of sequences across the pathways, the different relationships between protest and the policy process, and the impact of moderate organizations on the channelling of protest into nonviolent tactics. I also noted the large presence of the demobilization and subcultural pathways, i.e. of pathways where violence

does not develop in the immediate context of protest, but through the rhythms of everyday, private interactions.

In the second section, I compared the contexts of the six pathways. I started the section by looking at differences in median income, in migration rates, and in electoral support for the SD. These analyses showed that the independent pathways generally occurred in locations where the residents were less affluent than in the other pathways. They also showed that localist pathways occurred in locations where the SD received higher electoral support. In the latter half the section, I looked at prior patterns of local protest. This section showed that the subcultural pathway tended to occur in locations where prior protest less often included formal organizations, and where it was more common to find anti-racist and refugee solidarity mobilization. These patterns, alongside more immediate factors in the local sequences, help explain the absence of nonviolent protest in the subcultural pathway. The section also showed the considerably higher frequency of prior radical right activism in cases where protest developed according to the nationalist orientation, questioning the mobility of radical right actors.

In the final section, I located the six pathways within the larger trajectory of migration and protest in the period. First, I showed how reported events in all six pathways increased in the final quarter of 2015, coinciding with the rapidly increasing salience of a crisis framing in migration in national discourse. After the fall of 2015, however, all pathways except moral outrage and demobilization declined in intensity. It thereby appears that only the localist pathways (except the subcultural pathway) benefitted from the long-term discursive shift in late 2015. Together with the localist pathways' higher voting for the SD, I take this pattern to suggest that localist pathways benefit more than the nationalist pathways from the perceived legitimacy of negative framings of migration, as this allows localist protesters to bridge potential frictions among its wider, less ideologically coherent networks. In the second half of this section, I briefly discussed the role of diffusion, suggesting that violent events – across all pathways – became more likely in the immediate aftermath of violent events elsewhere. Locating individual cases in the wider national context thereby informs the analysis of the occurrence of violence within specific settings.

7 Conclusions

7.1 Summary and main results

I opened this thesis with the observation that racist violence, while incredibly diverse in terms of form, motive, and actors, nevertheless tends to cluster into consistent sequences in a given time and space. This tension between diversity on one hand, and unity on the other, is at the heart of any account that intends to explain racist violence beyond individual events. In most existing research, however, authors bypass this tension either by separating violent events from each other and from their wider context, or by treating all events as if they were driven by the same causal dynamic. As a consequence, the literature on racist violence is fragmented, and tends to produce contradictory results with weak explanatory power.

In order to better solve the tension between unity and diversity, I suggested paying attention to time and space. By locating single instances of violence in their wider context, it is possible to capture how the dynamics between assailants, and others involved in and responding to violent and nonviolent racism contribute to the frames, emotions, opportunities and relations that make violence more likely for a variety of actors. As such, I moved from asking *why* violence happens, to *how* it emerges from primarily nonviolent sequences of events. To capture the diversity of racist violence, I also suggested that these pathways are equifinal, i.e. that there are multiple pathways to the same outcome.

In order to capture pathways to racist violence empirically, I conducted an empirical study of local cases of violence targeting issues related to local migrant accommodation in Sweden between 2012 and 2017. As in racist violence generally, the Swedish case includes a wide range of violent forms, actors and contexts, including premeditated bombings, drunken spur-of-the-moment attacks, and ritualized assault orchestrated by radical right activists, drunken passers-by and small groups of youths within a relatively limited timespan. The Swedish case, particularly during this historical period, thereby displayed much of the unity and diversity that characterizes racist violence as a whole.

Throughout the empirical study, I adopted the processual framework in SM theory. This meant three things. First, it meant that I emphasized the relationship between nonviolent protest activities and violence. Second, I used the processual framework in order to conceptualize the processes and mechanisms that connect nonviolent protest, and the way in

which these sequences related to contextual conditions at the local and national level. Third, in order to understand the specific mechanisms in each pathway, I used the conceptual vocabulary of framing, emotions, opportunities and relations. This way, I was able to systematically compare pathways that would likely appear highly dissimilar in a more inductive approach.

Throughout the thesis, I drew on the triangulation of quantitative protest event data and qualitative case studies. Through the triangulation of methods and data across a wide range of case studies (85 in full), I adapted to some of the practical difficulties of studying racist violence, including its sensitive character, the lack of valid large-N databases, and the “hidden” character of the field as a whole. At the same time, as I showed in chapter 2, the final research design also corresponded to the practical and ethical difficulties I encountered in conducting fieldwork on the emergence of violence in four selected municipalities.

In chapters 3–6, I presented my main findings through the elaboration of six pathways to violence. In chapter 3, I discussed the case studies in relation to the existing literature in order to develop a basic typology, and to specify the central causal mechanisms that facilitated the emergence of violence in each pathway. In chapters 4 and 5 I located these causal mechanisms in the course of empirical events, through the presentation of 11 case studies. In chapter 6, I increased the scope of the analysis through the use of quantitative data on the order of events in each empirical case, on the contextual determinants of the six pathways, and on the relationship between the local pathways and on national-level processes related to migrant accommodation and protest.

In the remaining sections of the thesis, I will summarize my main findings and discuss them in relation to the tension between unity and diversity in the study of racist violence. In section 7.1.1 I summarize the six pathways in the way that I have presented them throughout the empirical chapters. In section 7.2 I discuss the analytical and empirical implications for the study of racist violence, focusing on the tension between diversity and unity. In the final section, I discuss the limitations and potentials of studying racist violence in Sweden, both for the literature on racist violence and for the literature on political violence more broadly. I end the section with three suggestions for how to further improve the research begun in this thesis.

7.1.1 The six pathways to violence

The primary outcome of the empirical studies is a typology of six recurring pathways to violence. Following the thesis' thematic focus, I produced this typology by paying attention to time and space. On one hand, I distinguished between cases on the basis of temporal sequences, or the temporal relationship between violent and nonviolent protest. On the other, I distinguished between different spatial orientations, or the geographical scale on which protesters mobilized support and framed migration. While both these concepts have been used in the SM literature, they are surprisingly understudied in relation to other temporal and spatial concepts.

For each temporal sequence, I identified two possible causal mechanisms. In continuous sequences, where violence occurs simultaneously with nonviolent protest, violence was facilitated either through the activation of weakly coordinated networks, in which the lack of a single strategic concept or cohesive framing allowed the simultaneous use of a wide variety of tactics, or through the formation of smaller milieus between the radical right and its sympathetic environment. In discontinuous sequences, the mechanisms that facilitated violence emerged only after a break in the structure of nonviolent protest. This break, which consisted of the negative attribution of opportunity and the subsequent demobilization of moderate actors shifted the overall distribution of frames and relations in a way that either led to the privatization of protest or, as above, to the activation of milieus around the radical right. Through the privatization mechanism, grievances became part of everyday interactions, and negative framings of migration were extended into personal frustrations and interpersonal conflicts. In the independent pathways, finally, violence emerged either through the immediate privatization of grievances or through the formation of specialized cells of radical right activists.

On the second dimension, I distinguished between the localist and nationalist orientation. Aside from suggesting unique causal mechanisms, these orientations also helped mediate between the mechanisms on the temporal dimension. In the *localist* orientation, nonviolent and violent protest is mobilized on the basis of geographical proximity, and participants frame migration as a threat to local interests. The localist orientation forces the explanation of how diverse groups of people that lack the ideological and organizational integration of the nationalist pathways, and who operate in a context where overt expressions of racism are generally stigmatized, can come together for protest. To explain this pattern, I pointed

specifically to the role of frame extension, through which participants come to perceive migrant accommodation as part of wider, more resonant local grievances. Across the temporal sequences, successful frame extension coincides with the activation of weakly coordinated networks, the privatization of discontinuous protest, and the immediate privatization of grievances in the absence of public protest. In the *nationalist* orientation, participants mobilize on the basis of organizational and ideological ties, and they frame local migrant accommodation as one example of wider grievances. In the nationalist orientation, the mystery was why radical right activists – the primary actors in these pathways – would choose a particular target at a particular point in time. In order to explain the nationalist orientation, I pointed specifically toward the attribution of discursive opportunities, or the way in which radical right activists expected that a given action would become visible, salient, and potentially perceived as legitimate among some audience. Across the temporal sequences, the attribution of discursive opportunities contributed to the emergence of violence through milieu activation and violent specialization.

By combining the mechanisms in the temporal and spatial categories, and by adding data from the subsequent chapters, I arrived at the following six pathways:

Moral outrage combines the continuous sequence with the localist orientation. Violence thereby emerges from diverse, decentralized networks, through the successful extension of negative framings of migration into more resonant issues in contexts where participants perceive external events as morally and emotionally shocking. This mode of frame extension reduces tensions between different groups, and even allows unlikely alliances between racist protesters and refugee solidarity groups. The emotional component further contributes to rapidly unfolding and highly decentralized patterns of protest, where no single actor manages to channel grievances into any consistent strategy. Owing to the low degree of coordination, and to the centrality of emotional mechanisms, however, sequences of moral outrage tend to be very short, ending either with the fading of the emotional charge, or with the mobilization of more coordinated actors. A peculiar consequence is therefore that moral outrage tends to end when radical right activists join the protests.

In contextual terms, moral outrage occurred most prominently after the turn toward a more restrictive elite framing at the end of 2015. This suggests that the pathway is more likely to bring about violence in contexts where negative framings of migration are widely shared, and thus perceived as more legitimate among a wider public, and where stories of protest in other

areas are more salient. Moral outrage also occurred more often in locations with past histories of anti-siting activism, mirroring the close similarity between the moral outrage pathway and “NIMBY” activism in general. Further, it occurs in locations with low levels of prior radical right activism.

Nationalist opportunism combines the continuous sequence with the nationalist orientation. The pathway thereby combines the identification of discursive opportunities among radical right activists with the activation of milieu of radical right activists and unorganized sympathizers. In this milieu, the radical right has the possibility to identify targets, establish a dominant framing of migration, and justify the use of violence. The contexts where the nationalist opportunism pathway develops tend to be very similar to the national average, with the exception of a higher rate of radical right activity. Hence, while the radical right is theoretically very mobile, and while its patterns of mobilization is less affected by wide contextual conditions, it is unlikely that it will mobilize broadly in locations where it does not already have a local activist base.

The *demobilization pathway to violence* combines the localist orientation with the discontinuous sequence between violent and nonviolent protest. The demobilization pathway can usefully be divided into two phases. In the first phase, relatively narrow groups of local protesters target migrant accommodation, extended to resonate with wider local grievances. The negative attribution of political opportunities and the demobilization of moderate actors activate the mechanism of privatization. When this happens, grievances become part of everyday interactions, and the framing and emotionality that surrounds migrant accommodation comes to focus increasingly on the threat toward personal security. At this point, the emergence of violence does not follow from the rhythm of protest or from the policy process, but from the dynamics of private interactions. Typically, cases of demobilization are very long, but include few violent events.

The demobilization pathway develops primarily in locations where SD support is higher, and particularly after the turn toward more restrictive elite discourses in late 2015. Demobilization thereby appears to benefit from the wider legitimation of negative framings of migration, and the higher salience of protest in other locations. Like the moral outrage pathway, the demobilization pathway develops primarily in locations with low levels of prior radical right activism, but higher levels of prior anti-siting activism.

The *escalation* pathway combines the nationalist orientation with the discontinuous sequence between violent and nonviolent protest. It therefore involves the identification of discursive opportunities and a subsequent shift in the structure of protest through the activation of a milieu between the organized radical right and its unorganized sympathizers. Like demobilization, these pathways can usefully be described in terms of two linked phases. In the first phase, radical right activists identify discursive opportunities alongside a wider range of moderate groups. Because of the presence of more influential actors, the radical right actors gain a marginal position in the overall structure of protest. From this position, activists adopt the strategies of more central actors. In the second phase, the growing presence of the radical right and its milieu, and the negative assessment of political opportunities cause moderate groups to demobilize. As this happens, the relational structure of the sequence shifts greatly in favour of the radical right. The ensuing pattern then closely resembles the milieu formation described for nationalist opportunism. Along with the autonomous cell pathway, the escalation pathway is the least common in the dataset. However, the cases within the pathway tend to be very long, and include a wide use of violence. Like nationalist opportunism, escalation develops in locations that are contextually similar to the country as a whole, but where the radical right has a local activist base.

The *subcultural* pathway is the most common in the dataset. The pathway combines a localist orientation with an independent sequence between violent and nonviolent protest. In terms of mechanisms, it combines frame extension with privatization, as the absence of public protest immediately locates grievances within everyday interactions, extending negative framings of migration into personal frustrations and interpersonal conflicts. Owing to the disassociation between the framing of grievances and policy processes, the emergence of violence is extremely unpredictable, and overwhelmingly targets migrants rather than political authorities.

Subcultural violence is associated with very specific contextual patterns. First, subcultural violence develops in communities that are relatively poor and poorly organized, where local mobilization tends to be supportive of migrants and refugees. For both these reasons, negative framings of migration are not sufficient to cause sustained public protest. Instead, negative frames become part of private interactions. Second, subcultural violence, like the other localist pathways, develops in locations where support for the SD is considerably higher than the national average, and especially in the period after the turn toward more restrictive elite

frames. The latter characteristics of the contexts of subcultural violence suggest how the privatization of grievances occurs through social processes that go beyond the individual group of perpetrators. As research on racially motivated youth violence suggests, the assailants perceive that they are carrying out the will of the community, even when this will is not expressed through other means of protest.

The *autonomous cell* pathway combines the independent sequence with the nationalist orientation. It thereby combines specialization with the identification of discursive opportunities. The autonomous cell pathway therefore does not need to start from migrant accommodation at all, but from wider tactical disputes or frictions within the radical right. Participants then target migrant accommodation according to the logic of availability, and according to the assessment of discursive opportunities. As I showed in chapter 5, however, the greater violent capacities of these groups also means that they are more able to carry out violent actions on a situational basis, e.g. on the basis of proximity. Regardless, these cases are likely to be the most violent. Like nationalist opportunism, the autonomous cell pathway occurs in locations that are similar to the national average, but where the radical right is already mobilized.

7.2 Implications for the study of racist violence

The aim of this study has been to develop the explanation of racist violence through the elaboration of a limited number of empirically occurring pathways. In the first chapter, I framed this aim against the background of the tension between accounts that stress the unity, or wider patterning, of racist violence, and those that display its vast internal diversity. In this section, I will deepen this argument, discussing how the processual framework in particular helps clarify, nuance, and bridge conventional accounts of racist violence. In doing so, I will also present the implications of the thesis for our understanding of racist violence as a whole. Section 7.2.1 discusses these issues in a broad sense, focusing on how the processual framework contributes to solving the tension between unity and diversity. Sections 7.2.2–7.2.3 then add some specific observations on the implications that the processual framework has for accounts that stress unity and contextual explanation, vis-à-vis those that stress the diversity of racist violence.

7.2.1 Bridging the diversity and unity of racist violence

The processual framework adds nuance and complexity to existing accounts of racist violence. This would not be possible without a number of analytical procedures, each of which helps mediate between the particularity of the violent event, and the more general character of its context. The processual framework thereby contributes to solving the contradiction between the diversity and unity of racist violence.

In a simple sense, the processual framework bridges diversity and unity by locating individual instances of violence within longer historical sequences, without losing sight of their individual characteristics. Hence, the meso-level scale of analysis in itself contributes to bridging the two accounts that currently dominate the literature. As various authors in the literature on political violence have shown, the meso-level approach is therefore particularly useful for combining scales of analysis, and for overcoming the related tension between structural and agency-based explanation (Bosi, 2012; Bosi & della Porta, 2012).

The second way the processual framework helps bridge unity and diversity is by shifting the unit of analysis away from single events to more general pathways. By doing so, it is possible to compare the contextual determinants of violence without decontextualizing cases of violence within narrow subgroups, all while maintaining the nuance that these studies bring to the contextual explanations. As chapter 6 showed, this approach is promising, but severely underdeveloped in the current thesis.

In a more general sense, the processual framework helps clarify when and how unity- and diversity-focused accounts are valuable for the understanding of racist violence, and how they can contribute to each other. To a large extent, the processual framework achieves this by taking time and space seriously.

Unlike either of the dominant approaches to racist violence, the processual framework underscores the fact that violence happens somewhere. In other words, violence occurs in a given space. Unlike the abstract space of macroscopic studies, or the strongly limited space of the more event-focused approaches, these spaces are real communities with real histories, occupied by real actors. This has crucial consequences for the interpretation of individual events as well as for the wider contextual factors that are claimed to facilitate violence. Only by taking these relationships seriously is it possible to understand the complexity of

contextual causes, or the way in which single groups impact on one another in a given location and at a given time.

Space does not exist independently of time. As the six pathways have shown, the impact of contextual factors and the reactions of different types of groups are both closely linked to questions of temporal sequence. Only by paying attention to temporal sequence is it possible to understand why a particular spatial orientation comes to dominate in one setting and not in another, despite the presence of similar groups. Likewise, the effect of contextual factors is different depending on the particular moment in the historical sequence. At the beginning of the sequence, contextual conditions provide the relations, attributions of opportunity, and latent emotions that are initially available to protesters. As protest moves on, however, the impact of contextual conditions appears to diminish in favour of sequence-specific dynamics. Attention to time is therefore absolutely crucial for understanding the complexities and nuances that are obscured in the dominant approaches to racist violence. Through its attention to time, the processual framework presents analytical and methodological advantages to other complex approaches that recent authors have used to explain racist violence, such as qualitative comparative analysis (e.g. Ravndal, 2017; Törnberg et al., 2020).

7.2.2 Contributions for understanding the unity of racist violence

By locating the causes of violence within locally and historically specific dynamics between different groups, this thesis has suggested alternative way of interpreting contextual causes in the general patterning of racist violence. The approach presented in this thesis thereby suggests that we should pay closer attention to *how* contextual causes matter for different pathways to violence, rather than whether they matter at all. In this section, I will reflect on these issues more specifically, as they pertain to the contextual explanation of racist violence.

Generally, the analysis suggests that we should pay attention to the ways in which external conditions are made meaningful to the participants in concrete historical processes. This draws attention to the role of framing, or how various actors establish a particular understanding of external events. By paying attention to framing, and to how different actors are successful at establishing a given frame, it is possible to show how the same external events contribute to very different outcomes. In Forserum, a high rate of migration foremost led to the mobilization of anti-racist and refugee solidarity groups. In Bällsta, it led to the rapid proliferation of violence. The complex relationship between migration issues and wider

grievances should also serve as a serious warning to write off protest as simple expressions of bigotry and racism. Instead, we should note the complex interactions between racism and more “legitimate” interests and experiences, and how racist actors can exploit more widely circulating concerns for security and recognition.

External events and contextual conditions also matter through their wider impact on structure of protest. As the case from Lerkil showed, a long history of conflict concerning the local school provided the basic relational structure, and the basis for the relationship between the local community and the municipal authorities, which radical right activists could later exploit in order to mobilize wider local protest. Even though the parents’ association eventually disbanded, it is likely that protest would not have happened at all without their prior engagement. In this sense, prior events and contextual conditions also mediate between different attributions of political opportunity.

As developed in section 7.2.1, the processual framework also highlights the necessity of assessing how contextual conditions, and their impact, change over the course of protest.

More specifically, the six pathways revealed the complexity of opportunity-based explanations. Specifically, it showed the necessity of interpreting political opportunities not as a generic set of mechanisms, but as a mechanism that is tied to the relational location and strategies of specific actors (Alimi et al., 2015). This goes for discursive and political opportunities alike. In nationalist opportunism, discursive opportunities are crucial for attracting radical right activists, and thereby for facilitating the creation of the borderlands between the organized radical right and its sympathetic milieu. In the escalation pathway, on the other hand, the broad identification of opportunities among multiple groups makes discursive opportunities an insufficient explanation for understanding the creation of the same relational setting. In the localist pathways, discursive opportunities function mainly as a background factor, as suggested by the impact of SD support and wider national frames on the frequency of events. On the second dimension, the thesis maintains the analytical relevance of political opportunities. However, rather than impact directly on the emergence of violence, the openness of political opportunities affects the relational structure of protest. In the demobilization and escalation pathways, the identification of political opportunities facilitates nonviolent protest. Only through the negative attribution of political opportunities – i.e. the realization that change is not easily attainable – do the relational structures change in a way that facilitates violent protest.

Violent events also form part of each other's context. Between 2012 and 2017, and regardless of geographical area, violent events consistently cluster into chains spanning anything from a few days to multiple weeks. In this regard, it is not sufficient to locate the causes of violence purely within local settings, or to treat cases as independent (Abbott, 1988). Instead, the ordering and intensity of violent events elsewhere must also be incorporated in the analysis of contextual causes.

7.2.3 Contributions for understanding the diversity of racist violence

Authors who stress the diversity of racist violence disaggregate events and actors into ever-smaller categories in the hope of presenting more precise causal arguments. As I argued in chapter 1, these accounts, while necessary for surveying the diversity of racist violence, are directly linked to the fragmentation of the literature. Further, by focusing so closely on the violent event, or on the assailants' immediate context, they neglect the wider contextual conditions that link assailants to one another, and to their shared time and space.

By paying attention to the interaction between different types of actors, motivated by different causes, and using different means, the processual framework helps limiting the diversity of racist violence while maintaining its analytical importance. At the most general level, the attention to context shows how various actors can be brought to the point of violence through very similar causal processes, despite their differences in ideology, in motives, and so on and so forth. Regardless of the rigidity of a group's "violent" ideology, or their different degrees of violent specialization, it is clear that a given actor is unlikely to use violence unless they perceive it to resonate with a relevant audience. Further, there is no reason to assume that a given actor would choose a specific target, unless it had already been singled out as legitimate through more widely shared processes of interaction.

Even in cases where there is only one assailant, or one type of assailant, the analysis points to the necessity of understanding the dynamics between different actors. Through the course of the empirical chapters, I have repeatedly come back to three main actors. These are radical right activists, local residents, and formal organizations outside of the radical right. As seen above, differentiating between these groups takes us a long way in understanding the complexity of causal explanation. Understanding their roles in the emergence of racist violence, however, also helps us understand these groups in a wider sense, and how they complement and compete with each other in empirical sequences.

The analysis suggests a very complex role for the radical right. This argument, seriously questions the common sense assumption of the radical right as a homogeneous, inherently violent group (see also Blee, 2017b; Shoshan, 2016). First, it is apparent that the radical right is behind a relatively limited proportion of the violence recorded in the empirical cases. While their involvement is likely larger than what the data show, there is no questioning that the radical right does not exhaust the capacity for racist violence in Sweden or beyond. Instead, the decision to use violence is closely related to political concerns, to the presence of particular persons, and to frictions internal to that movement. The radical right is also likely to adopt less violent means in contexts where it has to compete with moderate and more powerful groups. The escalation pathway in particular shows the close link between radical right violence and their wider relational setting. As Lööw rightly notes, a better option to the equation between the radical right and violence is therefore to view violence as something that occurs in the “borderlands,” or the milieu, of the organized radical right and its unorganized sympathizers.

As the localist pathways show, however, “ordinary” people are perfectly capable of inflicting violence without outside agitation. As my analyses suggest, however, the “spontaneous” violence of local communities, in the absence of the radical right, occurs primarily where no other actors are present to channel grievances in any other direction. In moral outrage, we see violence ceasing at the moment when – or shortly after – formal organizations join protest. In the demobilization pathway, we see violence occurring only after the initial group of protesters has demobilized, making opposition to migration a private matter and an element of everyday interactions. In the subcultural pathway, violence happens in the complete absence of attempts at addressing migrant accommodation through political protest. As all three pathways show, understanding the violence of “ordinary” people requires attending to their wider relational setting, and to the frames, emotions and opportunities that circulate within it.

Outside of the radical right, formal organizations generally do not participate in the active exercise of violence. However, they are deeply implicated in the violent trajectories of radical right activists as well as informally coordinated locals. Their participation is therefore crucial for understanding the emergence of violence. In relation to the radical right, moderate actors close off discursive opportunities and promote tactical adaptations. In relation to the local community, formal organizations channel – or fail to channel – discontent into nonviolent forms. In both cases, formal organizations prevent violence in the short term. In the long term,

however, as seen in the escalation pathway, formal organizations may facilitate later violence by raising the salience of local grievances, and by attracting the radical right. The involvement of formal organizations and mainstream political actors may also lead to considerably worse outcomes than punctuated acts of violence, as they are more likely to successfully promote more repressive legislation and policy implementation (Dahlström & Sundell, 2012).

Throughout the empirical and analytical narratives, I have focused primarily on groups that are, for various reasons and by different means, opposed to migrant accommodation. To different extents, and varying across pathways, however, I have also attended to the role of groups that attempt to facilitate migrant accommodation. Municipal and national authorities matter greatly for the development of violence, as they respond to or ignore grievances, and as they maintain positive or negative relationships to the local communities. Likewise, anti-racist and refugee solidarity groups matter as they compete with neo-Nazis, subcultural groups and others in the framing of migrant accommodation. As the subcultural pathways suggested, the presence of refugee solidarity and anti-racist groups decisively affects the trajectory of violent and nonviolent protest. As the other groups, these actors matter not only as part of the context, but as active parts in the sequences of events that ultimately lead to violence. In order to understand the diversity of racist violence, it is therefore crucial to locate diverse actors within their wider relational setting.

7.3 Implications beyond the Swedish case

In studying the case of Swedish migrant accommodation, I have openly chosen to study only a limited historical form of racist violence. However internally diverse, this choice of case necessarily limits the scope of the thesis. At the same time, there are elements of the analysis that should be applicable beyond the Swedish case, and beyond the study of racist violence altogether. In section 7.3.1, I return to the limitations posed in chapter 1 in order to reflect on the scope of the study. In section 7.3.2 I shift the perspective to discuss the potential for generalization beyond the limitations of the Swedish case. I then end the section, and the thesis as a whole, with three suggestions for how the processual approach to racist violence may be improved empirically and methodologically.

7.3.1 Limitations

In chapter 1, I argued that the Swedish cases actualize two types of limitations. On one hand, it limits the coverage of the observed pathways. This means that the overall character of the events that are relevant to the Swedish case do not exhaust all potential pathways to violence. However, this is to be expected in any case study of more generally occurring phenomena, and particularly in a field as diverse as racist violence. On the other hand, there are elements of the Swedish context that limit the generalizability of the findings, in the sense that they have an immediate impact on the way in which particular mechanisms function in the course of the pathways. I will discuss these issues in sequence.

The Swedish case immediately excludes a number of violent events and processes that are observed in the international literature. Looking only at violent events, it excludes collective, large-scale violence such as lynch mobs, pogroms and riots. In the absence of sustained violent campaigns, the Swedish case also excludes gradual escalation through repeated confrontations between protesters and authorities. This absence is closely linked to the lack of large-scale, sustained, collective protest in general.

The lack of repeated large-scale collective events ultimately locates many immediate causes of violence in private settings, even as these settings are impacted by wider events at the local or national level. This means that the study cannot explain the violent events that do occur in the context of mass mobilization, such as the escalation of English Defence League marches in the UK (Busher, 2016), racist rioting (Karapın, 2007, 2011) or state-sanctioned – or even state-controlled – mass violence (Beissinger, 2002; Brass, 2005). At the same time, as micro-research on political violence shows, the latter studies are likely to benefit from closer attention to private interactions, to emotions, and to the interaction between short-term group dynamics and broader contextual factors (Collins, 2008; Klusemann, 2009; Nassauer, 2016). In this sense, the specificities of the Swedish case do not make it incongruent with existing research, but helps draw out some dimensions that are generally understudied in the literature. Attention to private processes appears particularly important in relation to the contemporary radical right in Western Europe, given its weakness in the protest arena (Hutter & Kriesi, 2013).

The application of SM theory, with its attention to political protest, also excludes some cases of violence that are not immediately “political.” As such, I have said very little of cases of

interpersonal conflict, or cases where violence follows from other criminal activities. At the same time, the sections on subcultural violence in particular show how these latter categories frequently overlap with more “political” motivations and processes. The thesis thereby invites an expansion of the framework to bridge SM theory with more conventional criminological approaches to violence (see also Bjørgo, 1997). This observation holds for most other areas of political violence as well. However, due to the close relationship between violence and private interactions, racist violence is especially useful for highlighting these factors.

Finally, my argument has focused primarily on mechanisms that play out at the local level. Because the local level is where grievances “happen” in migrant accommodation, and because most people still maintain most of their relationships within relative geographical proximity, there is good reason to focus on this scale of analysis. However, this does not mean that the local is the only scale that matters. As I showed in chapter 6, local events are also impacted by what happens at the national level. Further, many of the processes depicted in the empirical narratives occur in settings that cut across the local level, such as social media, the mass media, and the nationally and regionally organized radical right. Had I studied other types of racist violence than attacks against migrant accommodation, it is even possible that the local setting would be irrelevant. As such, my argument for the literature on racist violence as a whole is not to study the local level, but to pay attention to the way in which space organizes the impact of contextual conditions, and the ways in which diverse actors compete and complement each other in the structuring and interpretation of protest. Only by showing how diverse actors co-exist is it possible to understand how they come to converge in time and in space.

The bigger threat to the thesis’ relevance is the specificity of the Swedish context. In chapter 1, I specifically highlighted the low salience of ethnic, national or racial categories in the organization of Swedish politics, the trajectory of organized racism, and the circumstances of Swedish migrant accommodation. Each of these factors seriously impact on the interpretation of the generalizability for each pathway. However, how serious this impact is depends on the analytical scale from which one wishes to make empirical and theoretical generalizations.

First, the low salience of ethnic, national, and racial categories in the organization of Swedish politics is crucial for understanding the distinction between the localist and nationalist orientations. If it is true, as I mentioned in the previous section, that wider material or symbolic grievances allow negative framings of migrant accommodation to become resonant

in local communities, then this is only meaningful in a context where ethnic politics, or politics based in nationality and citizenship status, are not already central organizing principles. In the latter cases, which we should expect to find in deeply divided societies, in ethnically structured societies, or even in states with different conceptions of nationhood (Koopmans & Statham, 1999a), material and symbolic grievances are likely to be integrated with ethnic, national, or racial categories even before the onset of protest. In such settings, what we need to explain is not how actors manage to make their frames resonate in the first place, but how pre-existing boundaries are activated for violence, or how radical right activists exploit legitimate categorizations that are widely shared across the political spectrum (Koopmans et al., 2005; Tilly, 2003).⁸²

Second, the specific trajectory of organized racism distinguishes the Swedish case from historical and international cases of racist violence. In the absence of a large radical right subculture, where the dominant organizations each strive for normalization, the nationalist pathways are bound to develop in a distinct way. For instance, the observation that radical right activists adopt the strategies of more powerful moderate actors (as in the escalation pathway) is closely tied to the normalization strategy. This strategy is also a necessary part of the intra-movement frictions and disputes that I suggested are at the base of the autonomous cell pathway. In other contexts, the same pathway could equally be linked to police repression, to strategic trends, or to personal idiosyncrasies. In a more general sense, this circumstance points to the insufficiency of accounts that aim to explain the propensity for violence purely as a function of broad group ideologies.

Third, the design of the migrant accommodation system, and the issue of migrant accommodation as such, put protesters in a specific position vis-à-vis the policy process. In a context where migrant accommodation is strongly centralized, this position provides very few formal political opportunities. The lack of political opportunities, across the Swedish case, might help explain the relative absence of this mechanism across the pathways. While the negative attribution of political opportunities does play a role in facilitating the shift from a nonviolent to a predominantly violent combination of tactics, I have generally found it to play

⁸² As Tilly shows, the activation of boundaries is central to the explanation of all collective violence (Tilly, 2003). Through the concept of spatial orientations, the Swedish case shows the necessity of inquiring into how these boundaries are established despite competing claims.

a marginal role vis-à-vis the attribution of discursive opportunities. In contexts – and on issues – where the political opportunity structure is more flexible, it is possible that it would also play a larger role in the causation of violence. In this regard, it would be interesting to repeat the study in countries such as the US, where migrant accommodation is highly decentralized, or in countries where migrant accommodation is mostly informally organized. This would also contribute to the further complexity of the category of political opportunities.

The Swedish context, in summary, creates serious concerns for the generalizability of the thesis' substantive findings. In fact, it is very likely that it is not possible to directly transfer the pathways that recur in the Swedish case to any other context, without changing them in the process. Even in other Western European countries, where many contextual elements are similar, it is unlikely that all sequences of events would work in the same ways. Further, it is very possible that these contexts would necessitate the construction of entirely different pathways, owing to different actor constellations and different types of violent and nonviolent protest. These difficulties grow even bigger as we move into contexts where ethnic cleavages are highly salient and where organized racism is more diverse, or as we study violence in the course of other types of processes.

7.3.2 Generalizations

Regardless of the limitations of the Swedish case, there are elements in all pathways that should be broadly applicable, within and beyond the literature on racist violence.

First, the thesis shows the centrality of private settings and everyday interactions in the emergence of violence. This finding is hardly new, but has previously been found more in youth sociology, criminology and anthropology (Bjørge, 1997; Wigerfelt & Wigerfelt, 2001; Willems et al., 1993). In this thesis, I have attempted to incorporate similar findings in the conceptual framework of SM theory, thus bridging political violence with its seemingly “apolitical” forms. In the general literature on political violence, these dynamics comprise a promising and under-researched area of study (e.g. Goodwin, 1997; Wood, 2005).

Second, by distinguishing between spatial orientations and temporal sequences, the thesis contributes to the SM literature's understanding of time and space. While these distinctions have long been present in the literature, they have not been properly conceptualized. However, there are real theoretical and analytical benefits to be had from distinguishing

between continuous, discontinuous, or independent sequences, or between nationalist and localist orientations. Without them, in fact, researchers risk describing very different causal sequences in the same terms. As I have repeatedly shown throughout the thesis, it matters very much for the interpretation of a pathway, and its constituent mechanisms, whether violence develops in tandem with nonviolent protest, or whether violence develops only after a shift in the structure of the pathway. Likewise, the distinction between nationalist and localist orientations should suggest that issues of geographical scale matter beyond methodological choices.

Third, by taking a broad approach to racist violence, the Swedish case has allowed us to see how diverse and sometimes contradictory frames, emotions, opportunities, and relations can all be employed toward the same outcome. If violence flows from clearly migrant-hostile as well as from incongruence frames, from fear and from elation, from the openness and the closure of opportunities, and from weakly as well as strongly coordinated networks, then monocausal explanations are hardly useful. Through the construction of the six pathways, I have begun some of the sorting necessary for understanding these contradictions. This sorting act, and the analysis that follows from it, is bound to produce a number of insights into the complexity of political violence. By conducting this work in the area of racist violence, with its unique constellation of actors, contexts and types of violence, the study contributes to similar approaches in the study of political violence more broadly.

Finally, by moving the focal point between different analytical levels – while maintaining a focus on the meso-level – the thesis opens up to a wide field of studies where violence develops outside of political organizations or cells of violent specialists. This way, the thesis speaks as much to racist violence in Sweden as it does to ethnically, nationally or racially organized mass violence in South Africa, India or the US (Blee, 2005; Brass, 2005; Fourchard & Segatti, 2015), or to the sudden swell of other types of violence in local communities across the world. The degrees to which specific findings correspond in these settings, is up to compare research to discover.

7.3.3 Future research

In order to further improve our understanding of racist violence, I suggest three points for a future research agenda. First, it is clear that the processual framework needs to encounter a larger number of cases, in a larger number of contexts. This way, it would be possible both to

address the coverage or exhaustiveness of the six pathways, and show to what extent the specific analyses are contingent on elements of the contemporary Swedish context. These cases can be taken from other countries, from other issue areas, or from other historical periods. In practice, this means that we should further the integration between the study of racist violence and the study of political violence in general.

Second, it is necessary to achieve a better conversation between scales of analysis. In this thesis, I have only scratched the surface of the relationship between local pathways and their historical and national context. Likewise, I have not been able to substantiate the linkage between local pathways and micro-level processes outside of a limited number of empirical cases. To an extent, these are both methodological issues. In the former, the application of qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) could provide a good tool for understanding how different contextual conditions combine in the structuring of the pathways, even though it lacks sophisticated tools for interpreting temporal processes (Ragin, 2008; Ravndal, 2017; Schneider & Wagemann, 2012). More formal application of social network analysis could also be useful for systematizing the study of the relational context of violence (Caiani & Borri, 2013; Caiani et al., 2012). In moving toward the micro-level, future research should make greater use of life history or focus group interviews with assailants, in combination with a contextual analysis (for similar applications in other fields, see Bosi, 2012; Bosi & della Porta, 2012; della Porta, 1995; Wood, 2005). While this would likely mean narrowing the scope of the empirical cases, it would also greatly increase our understanding of the intersection between macro-, meso-, and micro-level processes, or between the unity and diversity of racist violence.

Third, further research should pay attention to those cases where violence does *not* happen (cf. Alimi et al., 2015). Throughout the thesis, I have maintained the suspicion that better relations between peripheral communities and local and national government authorities, more anti-racist and refugee solidarity mobilization, and more local mobilization by moderate organizations, all contribute to the absence of nonviolent as well as violent protest. A better understanding of how these factors impact on violence and protest would greatly improve our understanding of the cases where violence does happen. It would also counterbalance the impression that violence can essentially occur anywhere, at any time. As such, continued research would add an optimistic outlook to an otherwise bleak subject matter.

8 References

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