

Article

On Pride, Flags and Flowers: Jerusalem's Public Parades as a Mechanism for (de)Radicalisation

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Abstract: The practice of public parades involving marches has been used historically by political and civic actors as a tool of helping to accomplish recognition of particular agendas or, at the very least, suggest a peaceful proclamation of justice within a democratic framework. Over the past two decades, *The pride parade* and *The flag parade* are drawing the attention of radical stakeholders in Israel whilst taking place in Jerusalem—a religiously divided space. Based on EU official reports and data from news reports and social media publications between 2002 and 2022, this paper examines religious extremists' presence in the above parades, in parallel to the appearance of incitement, physical violence and vandalism. All as part of an ongoing Radicalisation process. In addition, it observes the establishment of *The flower parade* as a civic counter-response initiated by deradicalisation agents. The research reveals that under the values and rule of democracy, the mechanism of public parades can self-trigger a dynamic between participants and opposers, exploited by extreme collectives for violent purposes. It reflects upon a fundamental dispute between different interpretations of the connection between Judaism, nationality and family values in the light of the democratic framework. One is leading to religious-based exclusion agenda on the one hand, while the other is reacting with inclusion activities on the other.

Keywords: radicalisation; deradicalisation; incitement; violence; religious nationalism; democracy; parades; Jerusalem; LGBTQ+



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1. Introduction

A public parade is a mechanism in which mobilising supporters in a public space expresses common identity and values as part and parcel of social movements. It also contains symbols and rituals that can be used for insurgent goals (Smithey and Young 2010; Leal 2014). Political agency is part of civic parades or religious festivals, where there is a similarity between festivals, parades and demonstrations: all three emphasise the physical aspect of political agency, including banners, music and video clips. Therefore, they can be considered *protest marches* (Lazar 2015). The global “pride parades” that have taken place since the 1970s congregate millions of participants to validate the above definition of its purposes (Holmes 2021). Martin Luther King, Jr.'s march in Selma, as well as state parades and festivals that commemorate national values, like independence days, all present a meeting of the masses to pass on, share and encourage a particular agenda through gathering.

Various collective gatherings are assimilated within daily life. Social interactions such as Sports fans' assemblies, historic landmark days, or national and religious holidays can form a procession that does not necessarily present a claim of any sort except asking to celebrate, share, and commemorate with others (Brucher 2016; Saint-Blancat and Cancellieri 2014). Parades and festivals reflect and are part of social relations building. They have pragmatic goals when performed as political acts (Davis 1986).

Religious communities also embrace the act of collective gatherings in prayers and holiday parades (Don-Yehiya 2018). Moreover, gathering as a collective is also used by

religious communities for civic and political purposes. The inherent structure of the democratic state includes freedom of movement, speech, and freedom of religious values (Tilly 2007) within its pluralistic model (Mill [1859] 2002). To practice a religion of any kind, it must be grounded in state laws to allow all groups and individuals to be free of restrictions on their beliefs (Tilly 2000, 2007). Sometimes a paradox between the freedom “of” practising religion and freedom “from” religious frameworks can cause clashes between communities. Violence is the game changer when it comes to groups. “Violent rituals” are a characteristic of violent collective groups based, for example, on ethnonationalistic agendas (Brubaker and Laitin 1998). Violence as a collective counter-reaction against certain public parades sometimes manifests as a “normative” form of resistance to “other” groups when it constantly appears justified under religious/nationalistic reasoning. The case of the annual traditional Protestant “Orange Parade” in Belfast, Ireland, which has been notably violent for years, expresses a radical Catholic agenda, seeking an independent Ireland and declining any identification with the British crown (Jarman 2007; Ducourtieux 2022). In other cases, the dual battle over public space and assembly rights can be showcased as part of the transition from traditional conservatism to human rights plurality across the past two decades. Consider the violence against the first pride parades in Romania after the dissolution of the Soviet Union (Woodcock 2009), as well as the resistance to similar parades in Croatia and Serbia, disrupted by right-wing nationalists and Neo-fascist extremists (Ejdus and Božović 2019).

From its various interpretations, here we lean on radicalisation as a *process* that might attract its subjects to use violence to promote opinions, whether done individually or collectively. Over time, an individual’s belief system and ideology shift somewhat, detracting from the social norms of any given country or society, even if it does not necessarily lead to immediate violence (Taylor and Horgan 2006; Borum 2011; Baugut and Neumann 2020); however, Radicalisation presents the most significant danger when it affects collectives, particularly those vulnerable to polarisation: the social/ideological separation of a society into two or more groups, fostering increased in-group agreement while deepening disagreement between out-groups (Esteban and Schneider 2008). Polarisation is “best” expressed when political issues emphasise the importance of homogeneity (Carter 2018). Social Polarisation feeds into radicalisation as groups develop a perception of *Injustice*, *Grievance* and *Alienation* (I-GAP spectrum), creating grounds for further “us vs. them” approaches (D.Rad 2020). Monotheistic religions are known for embracing homogenous perceptions through traditions, rituals and rules that keep the framework of practising faith. Sometimes, groups and individuals can exploit a religious framework to serve extreme goals. These can serve as milestones in a broader radicalisation process, resulting in polarisation.

Deradicalisation is the attempt to lower rates of radicalisation practices and influences (D.Rad 2020). Non-violent public parades and political marches are known throughout history as tools for progressing opinions within the boundaries of a democratic regime’s rules and values. Those are considered ‘deradicalised’ actions, expressing the democratic commitment to the pluralism of views via the ability to act and participate within the borders of freedom of movement and speech. As Tilly (1995) defined, collective actions of parades are part of the Western world.

In Israel, parades are performed by the state and civilians; two are dominant in particular, with the number of participants and geographic spread increasing in recent years. The first—the *flag parade*—occurs during “Jerusalem Day” celebrations and includes multiple events across Jerusalem over a few days and in additional cities. It was established by the state after the Six-Day War (1967) when Israel conquered parts of Jerusalem’s territory and enabled Jewish prayers and religious rituals for the first time. It also included a public parade within parts of the old city performed by state employees and residents of the town. In recent years, this particular parade has become an attraction for extremists identifying as religious Zionists, creating violent clashes with the police while vandalising and inciting violence against the area’s local Arab/Muslim residents (Shalhoub-Kevorkian 2017). In response, the *flower parade* was established by opposing human rights movements.

Second is *the Pride Parade*, which involves the LGBTQ+ community's international fight for gender and sex acceptance. As LGBTQ+ rights have become more widely recognised across the globe, xenophobic religious extremism has risen in civic and political spheres (Padva 2009; Fenster and Manor 2010; Hartal and Misgav 2021). Usually, Tel Aviv is considered the capital of Israeli LGBTQ communal life, in contrast to Jerusalem, which, despite being the capital city, is considered orthodox and conservative (Rachamimov 2019); however, as a mixed living space, Jerusalem regularly sees clashes based on religious, political and social ideologies and norms, emphasising a debate between encouraging LGBTQ rights and oppressing them. Extremist opposition to the Pride Parade relies on the goal of reducing the presence of the march itself within the streets of the Holy Land.

By their very existence, the chosen parades support a political demand. The Pride Parade asks the state to provide equality in civic rights, as the Flag Parade supports the recognition of Jerusalem as the Jewish state's capital. The Flower Parade demands to stop the violence derived from xenophobia, racism, and ethno-religious nationalism. Unlike normative parades, mass prayers and other procession rituals, each one is progressing a conflictive issue attached to the relations between religion and state. These parades have been singled out because, in contrast to "regular" processions, the violence within them became a central, almost constant component. In a broader sense, religious fanatic violence may tarnish other religious-based processions which are not political in nature and present the opposite: camaraderie and solidarity (for example, mass prayers for Yom Kippur; the pilgrimage to Mecca, etc.).

In light of the radicalisation processes of socio-political extremism occurring within Israeli society over the past decades, both parades have some relation to broader notions regarding Jerusalem's contemporary issues: the acceptance of the LGBTQ community despite its religious identity; sustaining the ties between its western neighbourhoods and eastern ones populated by Israeli-Arabs and/or Palestinians; and finally, using the political centrality of national conflict as a tool for gaining individual profit in the name of radical ideologies (Gal and Solomon 2021b). The issue of the relations between religion and state within democratic laws occupies much of the doctrine of parties and religious movements in Israeli society (Gal and Solomon 2021a, 2021c).

The connection between Radicalisation and religion can be viewed most sharply through the lens of two topics within Jerusalem's parades: religious nationalism (Jewish state defined by faith) and cultural civicism (Jewish traditions' centrality in civic life). Both are highly motivated by religious Zionist extremists. They, in their beliefs, cannot allow inter-sexual relationships according to the biblical approach and resist the presence of Arab residents within Jerusalem's borders. Therefore, the Jerusalem case reflects how radicalisation and deradicalisation processes are manifested, the intensity of ethno-religious disputes and the risk of nationalism spread out under ongoing social raptures.

Here, religion can be considered a facilitator of radical processes and deradicalisation initiatives. Hence, this research follows three key questions: 1. In what way is the mechanism of parades exploited as a habitat for religion-based (de)Radicalisation? 2. Who are the main stakeholders who progress an exclusive approach during public parades? 3. What can the constant violence alongside opposing deradicalisation initiatives indicate about the democratic framework?

2. Socio-Political Context

Judaism might be considered in Israel as religion, nationality and culture, simultaneously or separate (Schwarz 2017); thus, the Jewish nationality inherently contains religious affiliation. In Israeli society's fragile construction, "*nationalism, religion and ethnicity are the central fault lines [. . .] each division with a life of its own, translated into demands, struggles and identities*" (Ben-Porat and Yuval 2020, p. 12). As a divided society accumulating various minorities, religious perceptions and practices are also varied, affected by one's land of origins, personal beliefs, gender, and socio-political agenda, among others. As a religion, Judaism contains many different approaches to its practice and conception, including secu-

lar, reform, ultra-orthodox, religious Zionism, conservative orthodox and more (Rubinstein 2017; Brown 2017). Spiritual perceptions are present in civic and political spaces and expressed, among other ways, in people's support of religious parties in municipal and state elections. As an outcome, civic and political stakeholders often seek to co-depend on religious and secular justifications for action taken within processes of conflicts over time (Don-Yehiya 2018; Fenster and Manor 2010). Thus, religious extremists often base their actions upon a narrow interpretation of Jewish rituals and assume "divine command".

In the past two decades, Israel has witnessed a rise in actions initiated by right-wing extremists (Kobowitz and Shizaf 2020). By 2014, "Jewish terrorism" was already recognised by public figures from all sides of the political map, expressing concern due to multiple cases of "price-tag" (*"Tag Mechir"*): acts of revenge through vandalism and physical violence against Arabs/Palestinians/Muslims. As part of a broader "Kahanist" ideology (an agenda named after Rabbi Kahana that was outlawed decades ago), it supports the notion of forced evacuation of the Arab population from all Israeli-occupied territory, suggesting that price-tag actions are a part of promoting religious values. Some of these actions have caused death and harm to innocents (Gal and Solomon 2021a). Even though Jewish terrorism is recognised as a valid term, some dispute the notion that acts of terror could also be performed by Jews; some such individuals serve as Knesset (Israeli parliament) members or hold important positions, such as communal rabbis (Gal and Solomon 2021b).

Usually, price-tag retaliation acts are performed within the West Bank by Youth of the Heels (*"Noar Ha'Gvaot"*), settlers of illegal outposts that inspire other Jewish youths and further radicalisation (Bartal 2017) through overarching heated "us vs. them" discourse on religious, political and ethnic issues. Although price-tag actions are illegal, the 2018 Nationality Law, established by right-wing parties, determined the superiority of the Hebrew language, customs and Jewish symbols over those of all other minorities, according to Israel Democracy Institute (IDI) (IDI 2018). The law in part gave right-wing extremists a nudge to feel empowered by re-embracing more vividly a messianic Kahanist agenda.

Some of these actions notably occurred in the past decade during Jerusalem Day. Jerusalem Day is a national event established by the state to celebrate Jerusalem as a capital city after the 1976 Six-Day War. It underlines the vivid Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the emphasis on a return to the capital of the Jewish nation (Reiter 2018). Jerusalem represents a religious bond with the Jewish people that manifests in its holy places (the western wall—part of the old Mount Temple) and its national institutions (government and parliament) by law (Knesset 2018, 1998). The celebrations are a mutual factor of both Ultra-orthodox and religious Zionist communities, which hold a special place for Jerusalem by ideology.

In recent years, what used to be flag dance—an ending event of dancing with flags—has morphed into a *"flag parade"*, a marching parade. Its route has expanded and is often the cite of vandalism, violent incitement and physical harm against the Arab residents of the east and old city quadrant (Shalhoub-Kevorkian 2016), tainting the national events of Jerusalem day with extremism. Since 2014, *"The flower parade"* has emerged as a direct response to the Radicalisation of the Flag Parade, taking place in the Muslim market of the Old City of Jerusalem, offering flowers to Arab visitors and shop owners along the same route. The parade hosts people from all over Israel, making it a new and integrative tradition (Mako 2019), with hundreds of youths sharing their experiences through social media and inviting more teenagers to participate (Tag Meir 2021).

Being the Jewish state's capital city, divided into dozens of neighborhoods populated by various ethnicities, Jerusalem has become a cultural flashpoint that highlights complicated contemporary issues, such as accepting minority civil rights displays despite its religious identity. Its unique texture combines religious and secular nationalists and human rights activists in one place; alongside religious extremism, one can also find a vibrant LGBTQ community fighting against long-term antagonism towards its presence in public spaces. LGBTQ rights, as a movement, symbolise for the ultra-orthodox community a diversion from biblical rules defining heterosexual relationships as the only form of marriage accepted by Judaism. In parallel, a claim suggests that the "coming of the Messiah" (or

“Tikkun Olam”) is being delayed by the LGBTQ community’s existence, among other reasons, since it encourages secularity and a divergence from the biblical order. Many others in Jerusalem’s population think *the pride parade* violates the city’s holiness (Hartal and Misgav 2021, pp. 1470–73); incitive posters (Pasquil–community announcements) supporting past violence in the pride parades have spread over the years in orthodox neighbourhoods, despite being countered by calls to denounce this type of violence (Farkash 2015). The heterogeneity and complexity of Jerusalem, as a place with a majority-orthodox population, makes it seem unwelcoming to the queer community. Therefore, some see it as a highly conservative and violent space (David et al. 2018).

Extreme agendas against Muslims and LGBTQ+ communities link religion, nationality and territory, materialising in incitement and hate crimes that further deepen societal polarisation. While the first implies that the Arab/Palestinian minority is the enemy threatening the Jewish state, the other claims LGBTQ+ sexual tendencies are the enemy of the Jewish religion. Both notions are rooted in the religious far-right-wing ideology carried out by radical religious Zionists. Jerusalem is a territory of conflicts within the Israeli Jewish and Arab civic populations and between liberalism and orthodox approaches concerning human rights and state laws (Solomon 2003). These conflicts re-emerge yearly during two public parades in Jerusalem while extremists protest, march and attack the participants and residents, capitalising upon the public parades as a ground for counter acts including threats, incitement, and physical violence.

3. Materials and Methods

The historical and political data used to conduct this research are taken from the EU Horizon 2020 reports of Radicalisation and deradicalisation traits (D.Rad 2020). As they offer a descriptive, explanatory, assessment and policy-oriented analysis, the findings are drawn from primary sources such as in-depth interviews and secondary sources, including official statistics, state reports, academic research, publicly available data and legal materials. The reports assisted in identifying the stakeholders of religious extremism, their political affiliations and leading activities (Gal and Solomon 2021a, 2021b, 2021c).

For this paper, additional data were obtained to find detailed information regarding extremism in the pride and flag parades, identified as part of the far right-wing radicalisation process. These findings are taken from data from secondary resources, combining national and local journalistic reports and official state records between 2002 and 2022. In addition, data were taken from Ngo’s websites, municipal public records, social media in some parts (YouTube videos) and judicial rulings regarding the parades, where a basis for a data set included between 1 and 5 resources for each year.

The empirical data were analysed following particular and similar radicalisation criteria while examining the activity and its characterisation in both parades. Similar criteria include features of vandalism, incitement and physical violence. In parallel, we addressed particular features, such as reports of threats toward the pride parade organisers and participants. In the flag parade, we considered the change and expansion of the original route by the state. Both data sets are partially based on police reports. Finally, we categorised each data set by highlighting the central aspects that appear most dominant and relevant to the research questions.

Data regarding the pride parade are presented in three categories. The first is “activity”, including the type of practice used as part of the participation in the parades, such as marches, protests and informative products (e.g., posters, stickers, etc.). The second one is the radical “agenda” expressed in the resistance against the LGBTQ+ participants, based on extracting quotes from stakeholders, advertisements and posters that appeared over time. The third and final one is the political affiliation of the “stakeholders” in the radical initiative.

The data regarding the flag parade also include the first and last categories (activity and participants). Here, the category “agenda” was changed during the research to account for the fact that very few reports included quotes of slogans and agendas, in contrast

to statements referring to violence and police enforcement. Instead of “agenda”, the category describes the “type of violence” as reported. Still, both represent elements in the radicalisation process.

Tables 1 and 2 summarise the findings from selected years, presenting a shift in participants and practices. The identification of participants was made based on their dominance in public data. The main groups that were recognised were given initials for technical purposes. The pride parade—Ultra-orthodox Rabbis (UOR); Ultra-orthodox individuals (UOI); Religious Nationalists (RN); Religious far-right activists (RFR); Religious far-right Rabbis (RFRR); The flag parade—Religious Zionists (RZ), Religious Youth Movements (RYM); Religious Zionists Youths (RZY); Ultra-orthodox Zionist Youths (UOZY).

Table 1. Radicalisation in The Pride Parade.

Year	Activity/Estimated Number of Activists	Agenda (quote)	Stakeholders
2004	Protest, 150±	<i>“Even animals do not behave like this”</i>	Ultra-orthodox Rabbis (UOR), Ultra-orthodox individuals (UOI)
2005 *	Protest, 150±	<i>“Homosexuality = destruction of the family unit and destruction of national loyalty”</i>	UOR, UOI
2006	Protest and march, 300±	<i>“Beast parade”; “Jerusalem- be horror”; “Gay Beast.”</i>	UOR, UOI, Religious Nationalists (RN), politicians, Muslims and Christians
2007	Assembly of mass pray (10,000±), protest and a march 500±	<i>“The open house closes the family’s door.”</i>	TZahar Rabbis, UOI, UOR, Religious far-right activists (RFR), politicians
2009	Posters, protest, 150±	<i>“We are sure that one day there won’t be a parade either [. . .] we will reduce and eliminate it.”</i>	UOI, National Jewish front (NJF—future Otzma Yehudit)
2011	Posters, a protest and a march. 50±	<i>“Beast parade” “Perverted patients fly out of Jerusalem.”</i>	NJF, UOI, RFR, politicians
2013	Protest and individual march, 100±	<i>“Parade of abomination”</i>	UOI, RFR, RN
2015 *	Posters, protest, 150±	<i>“Father, where is my mother?”</i>	UOI, RN, Lehava, RFN
2018	Protests (2), 200±	<i>“Get out of the Holy City”, “you don’t belong in Jerusalem.”</i>	RFR, Lehava Religious far-right Rabbis (RFRR), UOI, politicians
2021	Protest, 100±	<i>“This is not pride—this is an abomination”; “Dad and Dad are not a family.”</i>	Lehava, UOI, RFR, RFRR, politicians

* On these occasions, violence was at its peak (see Section 4.1).

Table 2. Radicalisation in the flag parade.

Year	Activity/Estimated Number of Participants	Incitement/Vandalism/Physical Violence	Participants
2004	Flag dance, prayers	-	Local Youths, Religious Zionists (RZ), Religious Youth Movements (RYM), public employees
2006	Flag dance, prayers	-	Local Youths, RZ, RYM
2009	Flag dance, prayers, march 20–30,000±	violent march, spitting, cursing, graffiti on Arab places, stores vandalism	Local Youths, RZ, RYM
2010 *	-	-	-
2011	Flag march, dance, prayers 50,000±	spitting at local Arabs, violent march, vandalism	Local Youths, RZ, RYM
2013	Flag march, dance, prayers, chants 50,000±	physical violence with flag sticks, verbal violence	RZ, Religious Zionists Youths (RZY), RYM, Religious far-right activists (RFR)
2014	Flag march, dance, prayers, chants	physical violence with flag sticks, verbal violence	RZ, RZY, RYM, Noar Ha'Gvaot, RFR, La Familia
2015	Flag march, dance, prayers, chants 50,000±	Incitement, physical violence with flag sticks, vandalism	RZ, RZY, RYM, Noar Ha'Gvaot, RFR, La Familia, Lehava
2018	Flag march, dance, prayers, chants 45–60,000±	verbal violence, physical violence	RZ, RZY, RYM, Noar Ha'Gvaot, RFR, La Familia, Lehava, politicians
2022	Flag march, dance, prayers, chants, music trucks, t-shirts and stickers 50–70,000±	Verbal violence, physical violence (bottles and stone-throwing), police clashes, graffiti, vandalism	Ultra-orthodox Zionist Youths (UOZY), RZ, RZY, RYM, Noar Ha'Gvaot, RFR, La Familia, Lehava, politicians

* The police cancelled the parade due to national security reasons.

4. (de)Radicalisation and Public Parades

Here we examined the presence of extremism in both parades to extract exclusive aspects that appear in participants' and stakeholders' agendas, potentially making the parades vulnerable to violence. In both cases, we found consistency in the presence of incitive content that accompanies the annual parades, a pool of 'counter-actions' that includes posters, marches, chants and public declarations of stakeholders. The primary resistance against religious pluralism manifests in dynamic march, static protest, or both, combining incitive slogans, vandalism and pre-planned threats. Each parade has a critical element that characterises the violence that occurs regularly. On both parades, even though they are public and join together various communities and individuals, similar stakeholders appear yearly and carry out a counter-agenda, traditionally amplifying the radicalisation process reported by participants, police and local and national media reports.

4.1. The Pride Parade

Ultra-orthodox protests against the pride parade have taken place since the first parade in 2002 and continue on smaller scales, facing resilient counter-demonstrations from the LGBTQ movement. On 30 July 2015, amid the march through the city's main streets, the joy was disturbed by an ultra-orthodox separatist who lashed out at the crowd and stabbed six people with a knife. One of the victims was a 16-year-old high school teenager who died from her wounds a few months later (Hasson 2015). The perpetrator, Yishai Schlissel, was released prior to the event after serving a ten-year sentence for stabbing three participants in the 2005 parade in Jerusalem (Rachamimov 2019). A week before the event, he stated that the march was harmful to all Jews as scholars said: "[...] in Jerusalem, the stabbings in 2005 and 2015 were framed as a direct result of the understanding of Jerusalem's urban space as holy" (Hartal and Misgav 2021, p. 1472).

After the stabbing in 2005, secular and mainstream media joined calls to narrow the parade in Jerusalem to avoid insulting the Ultra-orthodox community. The Ultra-orthodox agenda responded with more extremism, trying to prevent the march. Even though the police approved an alternative route, right-wing extremists attended the parade in a counter-march (Padva 2009, pp. 120–23). The parade's description as an abomination expresses a lack of democratic consciousness but, at the same time, exposed the LGBTQ+ movement to others within religious communities (p. 130). As a result, hundreds of people protested in different locations across the country to express solidarity with the family and the LGBTQ community. They saw this as a direct hit on its right not to be harmed (Jerusalem Open House 2021). It increased the number of participants at subsequent parades and emphasised that the murder derived from xenophobia.

Despite the rise in public support for the LGBTQ community, reflected in inclusive political discourse and state ruling, hate crimes have not been reduced (Misgav and Hartal 2019). The social atmosphere of a city that contains support on the one hand, but carries out resistance by extremists on the other, might be part of what led to the acts of violence. The leading Rabbis of Israel spoke at the time against Schlissel's action. They said it was worse than a simple murder since, according to the Jewish religion, it is prohibited to murder in the name of religion (Nachshoni 2015). No rabbi supported or helped his effort to stab and murder participants, nor did his family (Ademkar 2016).

The radical right-wing activists described the 2005 parade as the loss of Judaism (Padva 2009, p. 137). This interpretation was expanded over time by extremists who connected this to the mission of re-establishing the third Mount Temple and living according to biblical law, thereby combining it with a religious-territorial ideology. Some of the attitudes above have materialised in the radical religious party "Noam" agenda, with the party earning representation in the Knesset. Under the joint religious party "Religious Zionism" ("Ha'Zionot Ha'datit" combined with "The Jewish Home" and "Jewish Power"), one of Noam's principles relates to the definition of a "normal" family, as a traditional institution of man and female. (Gal and Solomon 2021a).

Noam Party's spiritual leader, Rabbi Tao, published a manifesto (Kipa 2019), sharing this point of view and proving to be supported by others. Even right-wing journalists were shocked by the alleged "cultural war" offered by Tao that focuses on the rejection of Rabbi Kook's national 'inclusive' philosophy (Sorek 2019). As reported: "Rabbi Tao is the leader who moves away from the media, but influences well-known names [...] Rabbi Yigal Levinstein ('Perverts who have lost normalcy') and Rabbi Kellner ('Bahurilot'-girl gorilla) [...]'" (Weiss 2019).

During the 2019 elections, the Noam party and LGBTQ activists had two days of public clashes that ended with death threats against the community, claiming that they had experienced verbal attacks for days just because they raised the multi-colour pride flag in Jerusalem (Greenwood 2019). The Supreme Court decided to disqualify Baruch Marzel and Benzi Gupstein, two party members who intended to run for office, within Itamar Ben Gvir's party Otzma Yehudit (Jewish Power) (Liss 2019). By rejecting the two's requests to be considered valid nominees, the Court's ruling grounded its position regarding the limits on freedom of speech and assembly. The Judges argued that Gutstein is the head of the

“Lehava” organisation, which poses a significant threat to liberal rights (Gal and Solomon 2021a), explaining that he consistently promoted incitement against the Arab population. The Court relied on “Basic Law: The Knesset”, clause 7a(a)(2), prohibiting incitement to racism (Segal et al. v Ben Gvir et al 2019). Marzel eventually signed a document at the committee chair’s request, renouncing his offensive publications on social media, but the judge disallowed it (Liss 2019). The entities above were seen multiple times during both parades.

Other organisations, using self-made websites, joint meetings and religious sermons, spread an ideology of LGBTQ as despicable in the eyes of the Bible and try to promote notions of illegal “conversion therapy” to heal homosexual tendencies among ultra-orthodox and young Jews. “Lehava” organisation has been active in preventing weddings between Jewish women and non-Jews, alongside demonstrations against the LGBTQ community and encouraging violent price-tag actions as retaliation against Arabs since 2011 (Lehava 2021). It was described as an institution that grooms “*hatred of Arabs and hatred of women*” (Levin 2012). On 10 October 2015, the Minister of Homeland security said that the government was considering outlawing the organisation after one of its members was arrested during a violent demonstration in Jerusalem (Haaretz 2015). Gupstein and Marzel are both parts of the organisation. Still, the government has failed to do so (Cohen 2015). In 2022 the Minister of Defense said officials are still deciding whether Lehava is acting as a terror organisation (Ben Porat 2022).

Meanwhile, other rabbis who identify with radical religious Zionist ideology see the LGBTQ community’s existence as an “abomination” that directly influences their public and others. It shows that, even though Israel responded firmly against the attack and supported the LGBTQ community, it still allows LGBTQ rights to co-exist with notions that the LGBTQ community undermines the Jewish religion within and outside of Jerusalem. For example, hate crimes against individuals and groups increased in 2019 (Dvir 2020). During the COVID-19 pandemic, there was an unusual increase of 27% in reports of suicide among youth in the LGBTQ community (Ministry of Community Strengthening and Advancement 2021). An LGBTQ+ person is attacked every three hours in Israel (Gil-Ad 2021). Add to that the radical homophobic political agenda of the “Noam” party, which does not hide its opinion on the matter, following in the steps of its spiritual leader Rabbi Tao: “*the gays, these sex perverts, miserable people and instilling forbidden values in the Ministry of Education*” (Sherki 2021). The LGBTQ community has been targeted for years by radical individuals influenced by existing notions like Rabbi Tao, the Lehava organisation’s spiritual leader.

Here we found that threats against the participants and organisers have occurred almost annually since its first march in 2002. The parade’s opposition is based on the ideal structure of the family, bound with the ‘duty to the holiness of Jerusalem’ for the Jewish people. The data below show selected content from the analysis of the past twenty years (including ten parades in total), presenting the following: type of activity and estimated amount of participants; main agenda via quotes used by the objectors to the parade, as appeared in posters, news interviews and YouTube videos; stakeholders taking part in the annual parade as its objectors (see Table 1).

Though Schlissel identifies as an Ultra-orthodox, as do his few supporters that championed the same “will” in the 2022 parade via social media (Chalabi 2022), the presence of extremists from the religious Zionism stream was found to be constant over the years. Lehava organisation protested against the pride parade in parallel to other extremists noticed as one of its main objectors and shared a joint view with the religious Zionism parties and organisations.

4.2. The Flag Parade

During 2011–2013, Israel Security Association (ISA) reported an increase in hate crimes against Palestinians through 52 Jewish terror attacks, calling the phenomena secretive price-tag actions perpetuated by radical right-wing settlers (Levinson 2014). From 2013 to 2014, there was an uptick in the growth of Jewish terrorism. Even though violent Jewish acts

were investigated by the police, most of them ended with no indictments and remained open, as opposed to thousands of cases of terrorism by Palestinians against Jews ([Ministry of Justice 2014](#)). Accordingly, in these years, over 850 cases of Jewish terrorism occurred, while there were more than 10,000 cases of jihadist terror ([Levinson 2014](#), pp. 2, 16). The offences were divided into property damage (the majority), actions against public order, and physical harm (p. 7).

In 2016–2017, a decrease was reported in the number of attacks; but in 2018, nationalist Jewish crime was reported as three times higher than the year before, including 482 violent incidents involving sabotage of houses, price-tag graffiti, tree clearing, and more ([Harel 2019](#)). The practices of price-tag retaliation acts have spread and infused among far-right wing extremists affiliated with religious-Zionists agendas. In parallel, a new dispute was established about the definition of the extreme right. Even though price-tag acts were eventually outlawed, the political environment also includes disagreement to perceiving it as an act of terrorism. ‘Tag Mechir is not terrorism, period,’ said the head of the far-right party Hatziyonut Ha’Datit (see [Gal and Solomon 2021a](#), pp. 12–14).

The data extracted above go simultaneously with occurrences from far-right-wing religious activists participating in the flag parade, adopting similar vandalism and intimidation against Muslims. The flag parade is inherent today as part of Jerusalem Day’s national holiday celebrations ([IDI 2022](#)) and is operated by Am Kelavie, a registered non-profit whose agenda is as follows: *“To act on the public, political, cultural and social level for the realisation of the idea of the revival of the people of Israel in their country—according to the teachings of Israel, in the way of religious-national Zionism”* ([GuideStar 2022](#)). AK’s primary financial support comes from the municipal authority of Jerusalem, where it is most active, and expanded to include additional funds from the Ministry of Education. One of its committee members, Baruch Kahana, has multiple roles in more foundations, such as publishing the writings of Rabbi Kahana ([GuideStar 2022](#)).

For years, AK has led the push to expand the route of the march (which once used to be a dance) to intentionally pass through the Muslim quarter and East Jerusalem streets. In 2008, the High Court of Justice rejected AK’s petition, adding to the verdict that the police failed to present evidence against the path extension ([AK v Franco 2008](#)). In 2010, the police informed AK that the demonstrators would not be able to pass through certain gates, clarifying that no directive had been received from the political level regarding the march route. Eventually, it was cancelled. This decision followed the attacks carried out during the march the previous year in East Jerusalem and caused great anger among politicians of right-wing parties ([Rahav Meir 2010](#)).

In 2011, the police tried again to restrict the passage of the parade in the Muslim quarter ([AK v Shacham 2011](#)). In that year’s parade, extreme violence was carried out by some participants, both in the Sheikh Jarrah (East Jerusalem) and in the old city’s Muslim quarter. Therefore, in 2012 the police rejected AK’s license request and demanded that the parade be held primarily in West Jerusalem. Organisers launched a public campaign claiming the police encouraged the division of Jerusalem and educated the youth *“that the place of the Jews is in the west of the city and not in the east”*. The police retracted and announced that the march could occur again in the Muslim Quarter ([Hasson 2012](#)). Despite the severe violence on the part of some participants, authorities decided in 2013 to allow full passage through the Muslim quarter, possibly affected by political pressure, similar to the parade of 2014.

The police “giving up” their opposition had several stages. Initially, it approved the passage of the parade through the Nablus Gate of a few hundred demonstrators and opposed the path through the Flower and Lion Gate. Later, given the incidents of violence, the police tried to prevent the parade from passing through the Muslim quarter (2010–2012), including the Nablus Gate, but eventually succumbed to the pressure. Starting in 2013, it allowed the passage of all the demonstrators who wanted to do so, limiting the residents’ mobility and subjecting them to repeated violence.

In the case of the flag parade, the same commitment to Jerusalem by increasing Jewish presence in all its parts was central, expressed by vandalism and verbal violence against Arabs that live along the route of the parade. The parade is accompanied almost constantly by songs that are taken from fanatic football fans that contain anti-Muslim agendas (e.g., “may your villages burn”; “Muhamad is dead”). Unsurprisingly, it was found that Ultra-Hooligan fans of the “La Familia” racist far right wing organisation have been attending the parade for several years alongside radical Lehava activists. The presence of allegedly “random” violence against the residents of east Jerusalem parts and the Muslim quadrant raises the question of whether it is more regular and planned than ad-hoc. Table 2 shows the change in actors that joint over the years the parades in parallel to samples of the type of violence that occurs (see Table 2).

4.3. The Flower Parade

“Tag Meir” (TM) is an NGO that recognised the vacuum created between national conflict, oriented policy, and rejection of fundamental human rights by radical groups (Tag Meir 2019). Through its name (“Tag of light” in Hebrew), it aims to expose and act against ethno-religious based Radicalisation led by political entities that target youths and promote racism instead of inclusion (Tag Meir 2022a). Established in 2011, TM is following the increasing violence carried out by price-tag actions. It operates within schools and youth movements and, as such, is pursuing an integrative approach, cooperating with official establishments as part of a normative framework (Gal and Solomon 2021c).

The organisation is active in several fields, including the legal system, assisting case laws of Jewish terrorism, human rights offences, and religious incitement (Bloch 2020). One of its counter-acts is participating annually in the Pride Parade of Jerusalem to express support and tolerance toward the LGBTQ+ community. In addition, it produced the flower parade in 2014, including a march that delivers flowers to Muslim/Arab businesses and residents offended by the flag parade’s violent acts and incitement (Tag Meir 2019).

Since then, the flower parade has been an annual event taking place simultaneously alongside the flag parade (Tag Meir 2021), with the exception of the 2020 march due to COVID-19 limitations. What started as a local event with a few dozen participants seems to slowly consolidate to a persistent hundreds in response to the flag parade expansion. With more than 39K members, TM’s Facebook page is an active platform for publishing activities, revealing information on hate crimes and raising public support. In the 2022 event, youths and adults from across the country were marching, handing out flyers, buying merchandise from retailers in the market, and supporting local Jewish–Arab partnerships (Tag Meir 2022b).

TM has been actively fighting Lehava and AK activities over the years, not just by producing counter-parades. They are joined in their opposition by “Ir Amim” (IA—meaning “city of nations”), a non-profit foundation that wishes to apply an inclusive plan in light of Jerusalem’s socio-political raptures, as follows:

“Ir Amim is a non-partisan Israeli association that deals with the complexities of life in Jerusalem in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the city’s political future. Ir Amim works towards making Jerusalem a normal and equal city while promoting the conditions for a more stable political future in Jerusalem.” (IA 2022)

IA has been documenting the violence in the flag parade for years. In 2015, TM and IA filed a petition to the High Court demanding to eliminate the passage of the parade within sensitive streets due to the ongoing violence against the Muslim residents of east Jerusalem. Though admitting that the parade contains vast violence, harsh incitement in the form of chants (“death to the Arabs”) and vandalism, the Court has rejected the petition, explaining the police need to rule order (Ir Amim v Jerusalem Police District 2015).

Local and international donations fund TM; their largest source of funding is “the New Israeli Foundation” (NIF), a roof-top organisation for dozens of Israeli NGOs (NIF 2022). Radical Religious Zionists see NIF as a progressive left-wing association seeking to demolish Israel’s Jewish identity. As such, TM’s attempts to insert deradicalisation

initiatives face objections from radical religious Zionists. In a booklet published by the NGO “Chotam”—an activist organisation working to preserve and cultivate the Jewish character of the State of Israel—TM’s objection to religious extremism is captured as an attack on religion itself. The writings under “The Thwarting of Religious Zionism” were published in 2018, describing TM’s work as an ‘opposition to Judaism’. It resents the flower parade, IA and TM alongside other organisations, claiming the latest is twisting the real meaning of Jerusalem Day by denouncing the parade as racist and that Tag Meir is identifying more with the local Arabs than the local Jews (Chotam 2018, pp. 30–31).

5. Discussion

When observing Radicalisation processes connected to violence, it is essential to differentiate between them and legitimate and healthy radicalism, defined as “*political activism that society needs to reform and renew itself*” that can assist people in engaging in political and community activity (Lowe 2017, p. 925). The observation of extremism “*is controlled by those in a place of power and privilege, as they dictate to society what is normal and what is extreme.*” (Williford 2018, p. 939). As “extreme” refers to deviations from the norm, Radicalisation refers to the process of developing extremist ideologies and beliefs. Alongside various reasons and grounds for its appearance, the main component of the process is its end fulfilment long-term commitment to violence (Borum 2011, pp. 9–17). Radicalisation might also be seen as opposed to democratic values (Baugut and Neumann 2020), including extreme elements of exclusion from the mainstream. The empirical attention here was directed to precursors of home-grown Radicalisation (Striegher 2015) derived from religious and socio-political raptures. The process of violence appearing on both parades by similar stakeholders emphasise the paradigm that Radicalisation and extremism do not simply happen but are explained throughout their development (Beelmann 2020, pp. 2–4).

John Stuart Mill ([1859] 2002) defined in his essay “On Liberty” the fundamental role of the law in securing civic freedoms:

“[...] It is not enough to have protection against the tyranny of the official. There is also a need for protection against the tyranny of the ruling opinions and feelings [...] It is forbidden for the collective opinion to collide with the independence of the individual beyond a known limit; and the determination of this limit, as well as its preservation by the withdrawer, are conditions—First, let’s not move to a reformed life, no less than the protection against the political tyranny [...] It is, therefore, necessary that the rules of conduct be established firmly, first of all by the law” (pp. 10–11).

Mill refers to the necessity of limiting the tyrannical capacity of imposing opinion on the majority and the majority on the individual. Conflict arises when there is a clash between the possibility of presenting an idea (freedom of speech and expression) and imposing it on the rest through the tyranny of the majority (collective association). In a broader sense, this can be attributed to an opportunity for the authoritarian leader and a group whose views challenge the individual’s independence. When a collective organisation uses the freedom given to it by the state to the point of harming another, the same contradiction arises:

“[. . .] Also the permission of association: freemen are to unite for any purpose that does not cause harm to others, provided that those who unite are all adults, and that they do not come to this through coercion or deception” (Mill [1859] 2002, pp. 25–26).

The theoretical assumption is that violence constitutes a line that freedom of expression cannot cross due to the violation of another. The desired organisation in the democratic regime is that of people who come of their own free will and do not cause harm to others. However, the public does not have the same ability as the regime. Therefore, according to Mill, when it comes to the use of forced violence, captured as a type of additional freedom from the basket of liberal values, the exploitation of this freedom into a harmful act not by the regime itself constitutes a violation of the democratic values which the state seeks to preserve. According to Mill, what can govern the order in this kind of conflict, are

the laws. Hence a violent collective that exploits these values is acting simultaneously as the legislator and the regulator. Suppose you treat any organisation as a collection of individuals seeking to unite under a common idea. In that case, it is difficult to prevent their natural desire to continue on their way according to their worldview, even if it includes negative values (such as violence) that are not perceived in this way. It can be interpreted as the usage of collective rights under the virtue of liberty. How will one know to recognise such utilisation of freedoms?

The democratic government gives citizens the right to freedom of expression and opinion, including on political issues and in public places subject to restrictions from the necessity to maintain public order and general freedom (Tilly 2000). It follows basic assumptions, such as those of Mill. A ‘by-product’ of freedom of expression is the transition to a presentation that is a disturbance of public order through violence. The freedom to associate depends on the support of the state, which allows associations the right to exist as part of the concept of freedom to the democratic regime applies (p. 12). Groups exist in the grapevine because they can and have the right to organise together; hence, it is impossible to manage a ‘non-transparent’ group without the support of the state.

The practical conflict is between the borders of freedom of expression and association and organisations’ exploitation of these concepts. The role of the state institution is to guard against the hostile exploitation of liberty and to establish ways to resolve it when it appears frequently. The distinction between violent and non-violent interactions in society also depends on a moral boundary. In addition to physical violence, it encompasses hate speech, pornography, poverty, unemployment, and more. As a phenomenon, Tilly claims, violence also means to say that something of value is damaged even if it does not produce physical damage in the short term. Collective violence, among other things, is “*an episodic social interaction that causes physical damage to a person and/or objects*” (Tilly 2000, p. 4). Therefore, it includes various social interactions—from minor quarrels over a different political opinion to civil war.

Collectively speaking, ethnic origin within a divided society is of great importance. It constitutes a fertile ground for diversity that creates conflicts and rivalries between minority groups by uniting an ethnic or nationalist collective. Ethnic ties breed nationalism and lay the foundations for “ethnic violence” between at least one party that is not a state (Brubaker and Laitin 1998, pp. 446–47). Violent ritualism can be part, by extension, of local youth age grading, organised gangs, sports teams, fans of famous or influential figures, electoral factions, and fraternal orders that nominate new members—all of whom sometimes come into contact with violent games played for public displays of welfare, power and patronage (Tilly 2000, p. 8). Since there is no possibility of a ‘non-transparent’ organisation within a democratic state, public violence interacts closely with non-violent politics in all its forms. Violence as an organisational product lead to struggles for power, often combined with or merges into other forms of public violence (Tilly 2007). Tilly suggests looking at cases of the use of violence by groups with a common identity as a phenomenon that must be addressed within the framework of democratic government.

From this, we draw a connection to the element of a collective organisation via the mechanism of parades, considered a civic and political fundamental tool (Tilly 1995) as a precondition for the extensive phenomenon of the radicalisation process. When a political viewpoint is combined with a movement of participants, parades can be understood as protest marches. Street demonstrations are a common form of political action, as are religious festivals, since they all hold a political agency (Lazar 2015, pp. 242–245). The most dominant international parades expressing a protest are the pride parade marches, functioning as such since the 1970s worldwide (Holmes 2021). As such, they naturally hold the possibility of a counter-reaction from opposing entities while demonstrating in central metropolises (Tomsen and Markwell 2009), as seen globally within the past two decades.

Let us consider several examples, such as the first pride parade in 2002 marched along the streets of Zagreb, Croatia, where participants were attacked by many anti-Pride protestors (Ejdus and Božović 2019, p. 496). Similarly, in Bucharest, Romania, the parades

have witnessed constant counter-marches since the beginning of the 2000s, using the LGBTQ+ community gathering as a hub for violence. “The Normality March”, or as named by Woodcock (2009) “The anti-GayFest” (Noua Dreaptă) marches on the route that the fascist movement used for popular public rallies, promoting the idea that homosexuality is a threat to family values. In the 2006 parade, 51 extremists were arrested after Orthodox priests, nuns, and uniformed members carried incitive religious icons, neo-fascist symbols and anti-homosexuality posters. During the 2007 parade, the LGBTQ+ participants were told to restrict their reaction to the violence of extremists (Woodcock 2009, pp. 12–15). In the case of Serbia, the violence was derived from ideas of football hooliganism or right-wing extremism, as well as anti-democratisation and alarmingly committed by some of the security forces themselves (Ejdus and Božović 2019, p. 494). The LGBTQ+ community struggles to exercise its freedom of public assembly, claiming discursive shift and intense EU pressure on one hand and resistance on the other. Indeed, scholars claim that parades were non-peaceful until 2014, lending credence to the idea that “the history of Pride Parades in Serbia is actually one of violence, intimidation and bans” (p. 498).

As mentioned, not all public parades are intended to express a protest. Many public processions fulfil their purpose of connecting without carrying a protestation agenda or experiencing objections from others (Brucher 2016; Saint-Blancat and Cancellieri 2014). In contrast, political parades have a role in democracy, alternating between the dual capacities of order and contention, shaped by participants, opponents and other factors. Familiarity makes parades normative or unthreatening but simultaneously provides a social platform for ideas that can present a collective challenge (Smithey and Young 2010, pp. 393–395). Parades raise national identity needs and hold the glue of “we” via their practices and participants’ identity (Leal 2014). Therefore, parades can be considered a significant ritual within the civic ‘religion’ of democracy. Religion, known to affect collective identity tremendously, provides social order centred on a supernatural being, whereas civic religion depends on the notion of the sacred nature of humans. Each system offers legitimisation for its values. National parades and marches usually contain a national history basis that might contain both systems. One example is the annual “Orange parades”, celebrating the victory of the Protestant king over the Catholic one in 1690 in Northern Ireland, until today (Ducourtieux 2022). In this case, traditional national parades are an essential expression of identity and belong to participants and objectors. The opposition to these parades became a prominent element of a religious-based internal conflict between Protestants, expressing their national belonging to the British crown, and the Catholics seeking an independent Ireland. Hostility and violence accompany those parades on different scales, while the importance of its route in the heart of Belfast raises objections as an eminent component of the violence from opposers (Jarman 2007, pp. 264–267).

The tension in the case of Jerusalem parades also emphasises a profound conflict between two reverse movements of secular civic plurality and religious conservatism, carried out by civic and political actors. Jerusalem’s status both as state capital and religious center is a space that amplify contemporary debates. Most Jewish streams in Israel share a common perception: a state vision of Zionism and preservation of its Jewish identity, challenged by secular and de-politicisation processes, asking to separate religion and state (Don-Yehiya 2018, pp. 189–90). In contrast, the Ultra-orthodox sector sometimes portrays itself as a persecuted minority. It often expresses tension and holds confrontations against the state derived from fear of the breakdown of Ultra-orthodox identity. Within a collective action, the public voices its claims before the authorities under the tremendous political power of protests, affected by modernisation, which made collaborative organisation and public struggles more accessible (Guzmen-Carmeli 2013, pp. 33–34). Protests in Jerusalem are an acceptable cultural arena within the Ultra-orthodox society, used against the state’s secular practices (e.g., Sabbath desecration, non-kosher technology and food sales, etc.), like the pride parade. It has become a vital component in the orthodox identity combined with written announcements (e.g., pasquils) embracing the public space to pass on their agenda (pp. 39–42).

With that said, the findings show that the Rabbis of the Ultra-orthodox community have abandoned the counter-protest against the pride parade over the years. Some assume it has occurred because it draws the opposite effect—exposing Ultra-orthodox youths to the very notion of the LGBTQ+ community. Even though an Ultra-orthodox fanatic committed the most violent attacks on the pride parade in 2005 and 2015, it serves a separatist agenda and does not apply to most community members. The actors that continue to fuel a collective, organised, and consistent resentment of the parade are the far-right-wing religious Zionists extremists, who took the lead on the struggle. In addition, the same groups are attending the flag parade under the pretense of supporting Zionism while practising violence against local Arab residents. According to [Shalhoub-Kevorkian \(2017\)](#) national public parades in Jerusalem lean on national symbols that emphasise the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The flag parade in particular is recognised as part of the “aesthetic violence” of the dispute. It serves the sovereignty of Israel when supported by the government and municipal authority (p. 1283), containing price-tag actions (p. 1289). The march reproduces these practices of violence, ultimately becoming part of a daily performance to assert exclusivity of Jews (p. 1296). In this way, social polarisation is deepening from two ends—the national one and the domestic one.

Here we observe how violence is expressed under extremists’ self-attachment of civic freedoms to ethno-religious nationalism, using the mechanism of public gatherings to further political agency. The debate regarding the safety of the parades occupies the police each year, facing extreme agendas under the freedom of movement, religion and speech. The Israeli democratic state tries to mediate between its liberal laws and aspirations and the religious practices of Jews, Christians and Muslims, who have sacred monuments, mosques, synagogues and monasteries within the city. Even though some profound religious-based elements in Israeli state laws favour the Jewish majority, the municipality of Jerusalem has to allow all other actors to express themselves. Otherwise, it can lead to tension and violence.

Groups are the central actors that can create and sustain notions of segregation based on “us vs. them,” increasing perceptions of polarisation alongside the level of internal group homogeneity in light of heterogeneity across the outside groups. Hence it encourages the risk of mutual conflict ([Esteban and Schneider 2008](#), pp. 133–139). Relying on the paradigm that exclusionary policies flatter racism and xenophobia while fueling differences between collectives ([Carter 2018](#), p. 164), the Jerusalem municipality’s indirect financial support of AK through the Ministry of Education creates a conflict. AK’s repeating demands and succession to expand the parade’s route is critical to the flag parade’s current structure. As such, the state needs to re-examine whether it can continue allowing these consistent clashes.

As one can see, the flag parade has gradually changed participants and practices, with the morphing of the flag dance into a violent march and the expansion of the parade route to include traditionally Arab neighborhoods. The legal struggle of Tag Meir and Ir Amim in 2015, the creation of the flower parade and its participation in the pride parade emphasise the dominance of religious-based extremism as part of a radicalisation process. Tag Meir holds a religious philosophy of acceptance and tolerance towards others, opposite to the exclusive ideology that appears in the extremist’s actions. Doing so shows an inclusive approach derived from an exclusive one that radical religious Zionists offer and initialising the deradicalisation process in parallel. The public parade mechanism, initially oriented to a peaceful gathering of collective ideas of various publics, provides a dual benefit of religious exclusion and inclusion fueled by contemporary stakeholders.

6. Conclusions

Parades and marches are part of the democratic construction, part of the civic-political order. Religion asks to build a different order while also containing the element of gathering collectively. Over the past two decades, radical religious actors have had an almost stable presence within two main parades involving the delicate matter of religion and state,

allegedly seeking to insert an exclusive agenda against gender and ethnic-based minority groups. The connection between a religious-based agenda and public parades is fulfilled Jerusalem, Israel's most religious-based disputed space. Sacred to all three monotheistic religions, Jerusalem sometimes accumulates bonfires of struggles "on her behalf". The radicalisation process identified within the parades underlines Jerusalem's challenge of repeated violence based on racism and ethno-religious radical perceptions—and in this case, pure hatred of otherness.

Here we showed that parades could serve simultaneously as an arena for inclusive and exclusive purposes. Reactive acts are good for pluralism and reflect the state's discursive borders between freedom of speech and association. In this case, the exploitation of freedoms serves violent goals, clarifying that the state needs to mediate better between the two. By law, the presence of radical stakeholders in these public parades is legal. And yet—time and space should also be taken into account by state officials. When opponents clash within an authorised setup, it might inflame further inherently sensitive relations.

Pluralism of opinions, as a fundamental right, sometimes serves extremism by riding upon existing occurrences such as public parades. Hence, parades as a platform of pluralism are a tool for all actors, radical or not. The parades reflect a religious, ideological struggle in the public sphere, enhanced by political actors. Similar actors participate in both parades, binding exclusive religious agenda to territory and personal life. The exploitation of the democratic space for radical activity by groups is receiving a response, mostly from the civic sphere.

The counter-act of Tag Meir shows that democracy is active but also emphasises that one person's freedom can be captured as another one's limit, *vis a vis*. And so, even though both parades were compound in celebrating civic and national independence, they are now also grounds for dispute. While radical religious Zionists attend the parades legally and preserve their objection, their objectors increase deradicalisation activities and keep the opposite discourse. The public parade mechanism plays a dual role, simultaneously hosting radicalisation and deradicalisation initiatives. Therefore, parades can unite and separate.

Here, religion and holy places—the heart of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict—also reflect the raptures within its divided Jewish population, a clash between holy space and secular rituals. "Jerusalem day" celebrations and the Pride Parade were originally non-religious parades. Extremists bind Judaism as religion and nationality together while excluding others, deepening polarisation and somewhat normalising it into a routine existence. It pinpoints how incitement is an elusive tool used too often and might almost look like a normal reaction when polarisation is already in process. Polarisation within divided societies comes to a peak when violence appears, carrying out the risk of being reproduced. National holidays and festivals can become the locus of insurrection by groups and individuals when containing mass gatherings in times of profound political disputes.

Finally, although the Jerusalem case is unique in its complexity, it can be considered a reference point to other occurrences of public parades that are hindered widely by violence. The latest gun control and rising gun violence issues in the US democracy might illustrate this point. In 2022, at least 11 different LGBTQ pride events across the country have been harmed or delayed due to threats of violence by right-wing protesters (Carlisle 2022). A month later, a mass shooting towards the "Fourth of July" parade in Highland Park, Illinois, cost the lives of seven people and injured 30 (Axelrod 2022). As a reaction, a deradicalisation parade was organised by the 'March Fourth'—an NGO formed after the shooting, which led hundreds of protestors from the Chicago area to march against assault weapons in Washington, D.C. (ABC7 2022). Respectively to the Jerusalem case, both demonstrate the significance of the public parade mechanism in the age of freedom of speech, movement and collective organisation, which serves dually as an arena for (de)radicalisation performances.

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