

Symposium program:

- 09:45 – 10:00 Symposium opening
- 10:00 – 10:30 **Prof. Quassim Cassam** (University of Warwick, UK)
Extremism: A Philosophical Analysis
- 10:30 – 11:00 **Prof. Richard Jackson** (University of Otago, New Zealand)
Radicalization: A Critical Perspective
- 11:00 – 11:30 **Prof. Rita Floyd** (University of Birmingham, UK)
Hate, Fear and the Ethics of Speaking Security
- 11:30 – 12:00 **Prof. Boris Vezjak** (Faculty of Arts, University of Maribor, Slovenia)
Radicalization of Hatred: On Some Similarities Between Anti-Semitic and Anti-Muslim Discourse
- 12:00 – 12:30 **Prof. Vittorio Bufacchi** (University College Cork, Ireland)
Radicalization as a Virtue
- 12:30 – 13:00 **Prof. Nenad Mišćević** (Faculty of Arts, University of Maribor, Slovenia)
From Polarization to Violence: Epistemic Aspects of Radicalization and Violent Extremism
- 13:00 – 14:00 Lunch Break**
- 14:00 – 14:30 **Prof. Michael Hand** (University of Birmingham, UK)
Education, Extremism and the Refusal to Compromise
- 14:30 – 15:00 **Prof. Laura D'Olimpio** (University of Birmingham, UK)
To Fear or Not to Fear: Educating the Emotions and Building Resilience to Extremism
- 15:00 – 15:30 **Prof. Friderik Klampfer** (Faculty of Arts, University of Maribor, Slovenia)
Terrorism(s) and (Other) Extremism(s)
- 15:30 – 16:00 **Prof. Fathali M. Moghaddam** (Georgetown University, USA)
Mutual Radicalization and Political Plasticity
- 16:00 – 16:30 **Dr. Mitja Sardoč** (Educational Research Institute, Slovenia)
The Trouble with Violent Extremism
- 16:30 – 16:45 Symposium closing

ABSTRACTS

RADICALIZATION AS A VIRTUE

Vittorio Bufacchi, University College Cork, Ireland

After Post 9/11, the term ‘radicalization’ has become synonymous with callous terrorism and brutal violence. The implication is that anyone who is a radical, or harbours radical beliefs, is seen as a threat to human decency and dignity. This is unfortunate, and regrettable. The way the term ‘radicalization’ is used today in politics is highly misleading, and the trigger for all sorts of implicit or unconscious biases.

Today ‘radicalization’ is a term that is increasingly used to reject anything or anyone who refuses to defend the status quo. Any person or group who is not politically and socially moderate becomes an enemy; any attempt to enforce substantial changes to the system is frowned upon. I will argue that, to the extent that the status quo is the source of many of our modern problems, as well as the cause of what Johan Galtung referred to as ‘quiet violence’, radicalization is to be welcomed. In fact, radicalization is a virtue. The persistent use of terms like ‘radicalization’ to refer to the biggest threat to civilization has turned into a very effective mechanism for silencing and delegitimizing much-needed progressive change.

EXTREMISM: A PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS

Quassim Cassam, University of Warwick, UK

Methods extremists use, or endorses the use of, extreme methods in pursuit of their political objectives. The key issues here are how to understand the notion of an ‘extreme’ method, and the relationship between methods extremism and violence. Ideological extremism is a position in ideological space, and ideological extremists are those who endorse an extremist ideology. Ideological space is multi-dimensional, and a distinction needs to be drawn between the sense in which ideological extremism is ‘relative’ and the sense in which it is not. Extremism in the psychological sense consists in possession of an extremist mindset, that is, extremist attitudes, preoccupations, emotions, and ways of thinking. After explaining the notion of an extremist mindset and discussing the relationship between extremism in the three senses, I will conclude by considering the aphorism that extremism is defence of liberty is no vice and moderation in pursuit of justice is no virtue.

TO FEAR OR NOT TO FEAR: EDUCATING THE EMOTIONS AND BUILDING RESILIENCE TO EXTREMISM

Laura D'Olimpio, University of Birmingham

Educating against extremism doesn't just involve seeking to prevent individuals from becoming extremists or radicalised, although that, of course, is a significant concern. There is also an important role for education in teaching the rest of us, the general populace, the best way to react and respond when we learn of a terrorist attack or consider the potential risk of violent extremism in our community, or even worldwide, given we are connected globally via technology. I argue that educators have a central role to play in teaching young people to respond to the news of violent extremism and the worry about terrorists and terrorism in ways that support our sense of community and personal well-being. Among the ways in which educators may support such aims is by educating the emotions. Drawing upon Patricia Greenspan's distinction between representational and practical rationality, I claim that our best response to extremism, both circumstantially and practically, is to refuse to be terrified. By not being overwhelmed by fear or altering our day-to-day activities, we not only better support a well-functioning democracy and our own happiness or flourishing, but we also disempower rather than empower extremists.

HATE, FEAR AND THE ETHICS OF SPEAKING SECURITY

Rita Floyd, University of Birmingham, UK

How should liberal democracies deal with public expressions of Islamophobia? One solution favoured by a number of states is to categorize them as incidents of hate speech which— in many states — is classed as a criminal offence. But what if islamophobic remarks and deeds are uttered/made not because of hatred of the other but because of fear of the other. Specifically fear that the other poses a real threat to national, human or societal security. And furthermore what if the extreme/offensive choice of words is used also to underscore the urgency of the matter? That is, to get oneself heard among relevant policymaking elites? Does this change the equation? Although fear of the other is likely to be groundless (the label phobia suggests as much); fear perception is often subjective. If this is so, why should citizens in free societies not be permitted to express their fears and request securitizing action in whichever way they want? What effects on social cohesion are legal protections against harmful securitizing requests likely have? For example, are they likely to reduce radicalisation and terrorism? This presentation examines the pros and cons of legal protections against harmful and offensive securitizing requests. The weight of the evidence presented finds against legal protections. In its place I advocate that requests for securitization are made in an ethical and not overtly offensive manner.

EDUCATION, EXTREMISM AND REFUSAL TO COMPROMISE

Michael Hand, University of Birmingham, UK

Following Quassim Cassam, I take extremism to be a family resemblance concept whose defining features include beliefs with certain kinds of ideological content, some familiar epistemic vices, a range of associated preoccupations, emotions, attitudes and thinking styles, and a readiness to

resort, or incite others to resort, to violence. One of the attitudes integral to the extremist mindset is refusal to compromise. Extremists, says Cassam, ‘are not prepared to compromise on their dreams, and would rather die than compromise even on relatively trivial matters’. If this is right, then one contribution educators might make to the enterprise of fortifying children against extremism is to cultivate in them a willingness to compromise. Here I will sketch an account of the attitude of willingness to compromise, explain why it is desirable, and indicate some educationally appropriate ways of cultivating it.

RADICALIZATION: A CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE

Richard Jackson, University of Otago, New Zealand

Similar to the term ‘terrorism’, radicalisation is today much more than an analytical concept; it is a wide-reaching and powerful global discourse constituted by its own specialised terminology, models and theoretical assumptions, increasingly large bodies of scientific research, a network of recognised experts, national and international countering violent extremism (CVE) programmes, new institutions and actors, huge amounts of investment, and ubiquitous media and political speech. Additionally, the global radicalisation discourse has a set of measurable real-world impacts on individuals, communities and societies, most frequently in ways that undermine the protection of human rights, democratic norms and social integration. Importantly, there is to date little evidence that this vast enterprise has made a measurable difference to real-world levels of political violence, and some evidence that it is actually making things worse. At the very least, it functions to obscure other forms of direct, structural and epistemic violence. From this perspective, it is important that scholars subject the radicalisation discourse to critical analysis to assess whether it remains fit for purpose.

TERRORISM(S) AND (OTHER) EXTREMISM(S)

Friderik Klampfer, Faculty of Arts, University of Maribor, Slovenia

The aim of the present article is threefold: a) to offer and briefly defend a working definition of terrorism, b) to critically evaluate argumentative strategies in support of its (almost) unconditional moral condemnation; and c) to assess the implications of this revisionist moral account for the relatively common labelling of terrorism as uniquely extremist. With respect to the first, the author defines terrorism as (a sincere threat of) non-discriminative use of violence with the aim of spreading fear and intimidation in the public and blackmailing authorities into enacting targeted political, social, cultural, or economic changes. With respect to the second, the author acknowledges the heavy moral burden imposed on terrorists by the deliberate use of non-discriminative violence against, mostly, civilians, but denies that this feature makes terrorism significantly different from other, often tolerated and sometimes even encouraged, forms of politically motivated violence, from violent demonstrations and revolutions over armed insurgency to civil and interstate wars. Or, for that matter, from less visible forms of structural violence that have often prompted terrorist violence in the past. This, the author argues, has implications for the third issue – the nowadays popular singling out of terrorism as a uniquely extremist political ideology and/or method is unjustified.

FROM POLARIZATION TO VIOLENCE: EPISTEMIC ASPECTS OF RADICALIZATION AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM

Nenad Miščević, Faculty of Arts, University of Maribor, Slovenia

The topic are epistemic aspects of polarization and radicalization, that guide the polarization process, and the main accent is put on epistemic vices participating in the guidance; all this is done in discussion of the relevant views of C. Sunstein, Q. Cassam as well as F. Broncano-Berrocal & J.A. Carter. Is polarization itself an epistemic vice, as some of the authors listed claim, or not? Some political epistemologists claim that confrontation enhances good epistemic features, like vigilance; how does this fit with the overall negative views on polarization? The example to be used are episodes of nationalistic polarization and violent radicalization that have been taking place in Yugoslavia and then in post-Yugoslav countries in three decades from 1970ties on, till the culmination in local war(s) and massacres. They are briefly compared to present-day populist adventures in promoting enmity and hatred, and common epistemic patterns are identified. The paper ends with some proposals concerning remedial possibilities, so much needed in present populist times

MUTUAL RADICALIZATION AND POLITICAL PLASTICITY

Fathali M. Moghaddam, Georgetown University, USA

Radicalization never happens in a vacuum, it always takes place as mutual radicalization, when two groups take increasingly extreme positions against one another, reacting against real or imagined threats, moving further and further apart in points of view, mobilizing their resources to launch attacks, and finally attempting to destroy one another (Moghaddam, 2018). Mutual radicalization is a collective process that seems to be present in all major societies. Also, as a collective process mutual radicalization is so powerful that even when individuals can rationally recognize that their group is headed in the wrong direction, they are powerless to prevent the collective surge toward further radicalization and intergroup violence. The universality and rigidity of mutual radicalization raises questions about to what extent it can be re-shaped, re-directed and prevented. This question falls under the umbrella of recent discussions about political plasticity (Moghaddam, 2019): to what extent and how fast can behavior in the political domain be changed. For example, the rise of authoritarian strongmen in major societies has reminded us that certain features of human leader-follower relations have low plasticity – a characteristic shared by at least certain stages of mutual radicalization.

THE TROUBLE WITH VIOLENT EXTREMISM

Mitja Sardoc, Educational Research Institute, Slovenia

This paper critically engages with post-9/11 scholarship on radicalization and violent extremism. Its overall aim is to move beyond the ‘conventional wisdom’ associated with radicalization and violent extremism best represented by many of its well-known slogans, metaphors as well as various

thought-terminating clichés. In fact, despite the consensus that radicalization and violent extremism represent a major challenge to political, economic and social security of contemporary societies, the field of ‘radicalization research’ is characterized by the absence of a fixed definition of radicalization and violent extremism as well as a significant degree of conceptual confusion. While the post-9/11 scholarship on these issues brought to the forefront problems previously either compartmentalized in specialized courses on intelligence and security studies or at the very fringes of scholarly interest, several conceptual issues have been either neglected or outrightly ignored. This presentation aims to identify some of the most pressing conceptual problems and challenges plaguing the field of ‘radicalization research’ including the status of violent extremism and its securitization.

RADICALIZATION OF HATRED: ON SOME SIMILARITIES BETWEEN ANTI-SEMITIC AND ANTI-MUSLIM DISCOURSE

Boris Vezjak, Faculty of Arts, University of Maribor, Slovenia

If anti-Semitism is characterized by a well-known Nazi contempt for Jews, anti-Muslim and Islamophobic emotions contain a number of very similar cultural, religious, economic and conspiratorial motives for hatred and fear of the Other. My presentation will try to show what are the similarities of the two public discourses and how anti-Islamism today has sometimes taken over the linguistic apparatus developed by anti-Semitism, especially after the beginning of the European refugee crisis after 2015, refreshing and also radicalizing it. The concrete analysis of the refugee and the Jew in the language of hatred points to many analogies: just as we presumably need an awakened leader (Führer) to deal with Jews, now it is time for Hitler to deal with refugees. From this we can conclude that islamophobic discourse is fundamentally overlapping with antisemitic one: a refugee today is occupying the position of a threatening Jew. The relatedness of both discourses contributes to the consolidation and normalization of Islamophobia in the public space as a form of new racism and thus provides some kind of rationalization of a belief system that unambiguously triggers sympathy for the Holocaust, genocide and killing, this time based on anti-Islamist prejudices against refugees.