

Extreme Belief and Behavior Series

A 7-Volume Series by Oxford University Press

Main ed. Rik Peels, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, the Netherlands, h.d.peels@vu.nl
December 2023

I. Series Overview

An insufficiently explored paradigm

This series aims to study extreme action and particularly extreme belief as found in fanaticism, fundamentalism, extremism, conspiracy theorizing, and terrorism. Each of these five notions is conceptually complex and each definition of them will be highly controversial. Let me give some provisional definitions, though, to give the reader an idea of what I have in mind. *Fanaticism* can be defined as the identity-defining, wholehearted affective devotion to an absolute value that motivates uncompromising action (see the work of Paul Katsafanas). *Fundamentalism* can be defined as a response to modern developments, such as liberal ethics, evolutionary theory, and historical-biblical criticism, that seeks certainty by literalism and by formulating fundamentals, that maintains clear ingroup and outgroup distinctions, that desires to return to an alleged previous ideal state, and that maintains a strongly morally dualistic picture of the world (see the work of Martin Marty and Scott Appleby). *Extremism* is the belief that one's in-group can never be healthy or successful unless it is engaged in hostile action against an out-group (see the work of J.M. Berger). *Belief in conspiracy theories* can be defined as belief in a secret arrangement between two or more actors to usurp political or economic power, violate established rights, hoard vital secrets, or unlawfully alter government institutions (see the work of Joseph Uscinski and Joseph Parent). And *terrorism* can be defined as the use or threat thereof of violence to further some political, social, religious or other ideological aspiration (see the work of John Horgan).

Third-person explanations of fundamentalism, extremism, and terrorism have been common in the literature since the onset of academic terrorism and radicalization research in the sixties and seventies. These are explanations in terms of economic circumstances, neuro-psychological deficiencies, psychiatric disorders, and social-political factors. The failure of various attempts after 9/11 to explain these phenomena in terms of *ideology* (religion, or Islam specifically) have made such third-person approaches even more prominent [as Dawson 2021a points out]. One of the most influential studies, by Louise Richardson, posited the '3 R approach': terrorists aim at revenge, renown, or reaction [Richardson 2006]. Adam Lankford claims that people turn to terrorism because they suffer from psychological trauma [Lankford 2013], Manni Crone defends the view that most terrorists have a criminal background [Crone 2016], and Sara Savage has championed the view that terrorists and extremists have various medical defects [Savage 2011]. Of course, these are rough characterizations that cannot do full justice to the complexity of their accounts.

Yet, these explanations as such pay little attention to motivational agency, i.e., to the beliefs, religiosity, and other subjectivities of those engaged in extreme actions. In other words, the focus has often been on explaining extreme action from a *third-person* viewpoint (economic, social, political, psychiatric factors), with less attention for the *first-person* perspective of extreme actors: their beliefs, reasons, narratives, desires, hopes, and so on. Many of the third-person perspective explanations mentioned above have been severely criticized, among others by John Horgan [2003; 2005], especially for lack of empirical

adequacy and predictive power. Some leading scholars, like Marc Sageman, even speak of a ‘stagnation’ in these fields [Sageman 2014].

A minority of researchers have begun to develop a somewhat different approach by taking extreme actors seriously. By that, I mean that (i) they work from the so-called ‘normality hypothesis’: they approach and study extremists, fundamentalists, even terrorists, as usually relatively normal, healthy, rational (that is, reason-responsive) human beings, albeit with clearly problematic ideas and harmful behavior, and that (ii) they take these individuals’ reasons, beliefs, narratives, and religiosity as indispensable for an explanation of their behavior. They, therefore, argue that in qualitative, quantitative, historical, and theoretical research on these phenomena, this first-person perspective ought to be taken seriously. They also take it that there are further reasons for doing so: among other things, how people experience and interpret what goes on in their world can yield an important basis on which to analyze what happens when people radicalize and what can be done in terms of prevention and de-radicalization.

If they are right, we cannot explain extreme behavior merely by appeal to circumstantial factors, such as economic situation and social status. Nor can we explain it in terms of pathological disorders, at least not any more than the behavior of average citizens [Thijssen et al. 2021]. Rather, we can explain it only if we also appeal to factors that figure in the subject’s perspective: their beliefs, their religiosity, their narrative about their lives, their desires and goals, or, as some call it, their subjectivity [e.g. Jackson 2015]. This trend bases its ideas on already existing data (such as first-hand accounts in biographies and autobiographies), but also on new data that have often been collected with an eye on this new approach, particularly in interviews and in ethnographic studies [e.g. De Graaf 2021; Harambam 2020]. Of course, this trend towards the first-person perspective takes it that third-person socio-political-economic elements *also* factor into a proper explanation. But they suggest that the first-person perspective approach has been insufficiently developed yet. We, therefore, need a more articulated first-person approach and a synthesis of first- and third-person perspective explanations.

The approach has had some early defendants. Russell Hardin, for instance, argued that extremists have a crippled epistemology [Hardin 2002]. And in earlier decades, historians such as Martha Crenshaw and Bruce Hoffman, pioneers in modern, academic terrorism scholarship, also published qualitative accounts of terrorist biographies, albeit not in a systematic fashion. Over the last few years, though, a systematic application of the first-person perspective has truly gained a foothold. It takes many different shapes due to its variation in topic (extremism, conspiricism, terrorism) and disciplinary background (law, sociology, psychology, etc.). Quassim Cassam has argued that the extremists’ *beliefs* crucially factor in explaining extremism [Cassam 2018; 2021b] and I have argued that the same holds for fundamentalism [Peels 2020]. Lorne Dawson defends the view that academics in these fields have wrongly neglected the explanatory power of individuals’ *religiosity* [Dawson 2021a; 2021b]. Michael Baurmann has argued that we should understand fundamentalists’ *beliefs and preferences* in order to explain and potentially even predict their behavior [Baurmann 2007; Baurmann et al. 2018]. Beatrice de Graaf [2021] has recently interviewed a significant number of terrorists and developed a model, the so-called Radical Redemption Model, in which their *beliefs, reasons, narratives, and orthopraxis* play a crucial role [see also De Graaf, Van den Bos 2021]. Similarly, Mark Juergensmeyer has interviewed terrorists from a large number of different religions [Juergensmeyer 2017] and explained in detail why and how we should enter terrorists’ minds [Sheik and Juergensmeyer 2019]. Arie Kruglanski has defended across a wide variety of extremisms that we should take *motivations* for extremism seriously [Kruglanski et al. 2021]. Kees van den Bos has defended the view that a crucial explanatory factor for radicalization consists of (ultimately subjective) *perceptions of and*

judgments about unfair treatment, deprivation, and immorality [Van den Bos 2018]. Many have stressed that fundamentalists and terrorists act in various senses *rationally* [Crenshaw 2011; Horgan 2005; Sageman 2004; 2014].

Over the last few years, conspiricism has increasingly been related to extremism and the trend that we observed can be noted here as well: Jaron Harambam has done extensive ethnographic work on what conspiricists actually *believe*, without assuming them to be irrational in holding such beliefs [Harambam 2020], and Matthew Dentith has defended the view that belief in various conspiracy theories can be *rational* even to such an extent that we should reject the principle of guilty until proven innocent for conspiracy theories [Dentith 2014].

The trend towards the first-person perspective and the frame of the extreme actor as a normal, healthy, rational person with problematic behavior can be perceived in research in the fields of fanaticism, terrorism, extremism, fundamentalism, radicalism, and conspiricism studies. But the authors of such research are in different disciplines and publish largely in different journals, employing different methods and perspectives. Awareness of this development is, therefore, limited. The purpose of this book series is to bring these divergent analyses into dialogue, explore the strengths and weaknesses of this trend, and further *develop* it into a full-fledged paradigm, not one that is meant as a rival to third-person approaches but one that has been insufficiently explored so far and that can be *combined with* third-person approaches.

This requires exchange amongst its proponents and between proponents and critics. Conversation with those who are critical of it is needed, of course, because they firmly disagree or have strong hesitations. But we also need a conversation amongst its proponents, because this approach is not without its challenges. Apart from those already mentioned (topic isolation, disciplinary alignment and comprehension gaps, and methodological diversity), there are deep content-related challenges. First, respondents and subjects' reports on beliefs and narratives are no guarantee that those are indeed their beliefs and narratives that explain their actions (the same holds for their affections), as has been pointed out [e.g. Cassam 2021a; Dawson 2019]. There are of course methods for triangulation, but they go only so far. The issue of whether self-reported beliefs and other self-reported states can truly explain extreme actions also raises important philosophical questions about the extent and limits of first-person authority in social epistemology, about self-knowledge, and about the relation between belief and action as explored in the philosophy of action and experimental social psychology. Second, even if one agrees that the first-person perspective is relevant, there can be disagreement on exactly which first-person factors are relevant. Some, for instance, explicitly discard various extreme beliefs and ideology as explanatorily irrelevant [e.g. McCauley and Moskalenko 2017, 279-280]. How important are cognitive factors (beliefs, ideology, etc.) in comparison with more affective factors (emotions)? How can we move forward here? Third, crucial concepts for first-person perspectives, such as belief, rationality, and religiosity, are used in many different senses and are hard to conceptualize and operationalize: do we focus on the religious community, on the doxology, on the 'image of God', on the 'mindset' of the pious, on extreme religious behavior, on extreme religious ideas, or yet something else? Fourth, it is clear that the importance of the first-person perspective does not make the third-person perspective irrelevant, but it is less clear how they are to be integrated with one another. For instance, Clark McCauley and Sophia Moskalenko have argued that people radicalize because of a whole host of factors identified by social-psychological theory, such as group grievance, status, and intergroup competition, but they also acknowledge elements that are relevant from a first-person point of view as explanatorily relevant, such as radical intentions and emotions [McCauley 2012; McCauley and Moskalenko 2011]. How can these two kinds of explanations be synthesized? Fifth and finally, some have questioned whether it

is ethically desirable or even permissible to try to understand, say, terrorists from the inside, as that seems to require some sort of *Verstehen* or even empathy for terrorists [Morton 2011; Dershowitz 2002] and some consider it contaminating [as Stampnitzky 2013, 189, points out].

Why we need a series

The idea of this series is *not* a collection of loosely or just thematically related volumes. Rather, the idea is to develop this insufficiently explored *paradigm* for approaching and studying extreme belief and extreme behaviour, one that takes seriously the first-person perspective of extreme actors. The aim then is to publish a series of volumes that jointly explore, defend, and apply this paradigm. This can only be done if theoretical, empirical, and historical work is combined and if scholars both from different fields (e.g. law, sociology, psychology, religious studies, and philosophy) and from different research topics (e.g. fanaticism, terrorism, and conspiricism) closely work together. The workshops and conferences in Rik Peels' ERC project Extreme Beliefs will provide valuable opportunities to carry out this interdisciplinary conversation and provide feedback on early drafts of various chapters and parts of monographs. What will be new about this series can be summarized as follows:

- It provides the first in-depth exploration, defense, and critique of the turn towards first-person research on extreme belief and extreme behavior, an approach that takes the beliefs, reasons, and narratives of the subjects seriously.
- It does so by adopting a truly transdisciplinary approach: combining insights from, among other things, historical, social-psychological, and religious studies on terrorism and radicalization – with a focus on the qualitative method (rather than just the quantitative method that is popular among psychologists these days). It contains work from philosophers, theologians, scholars in religious studies, historians, anthropologists, psychologists, psychiatrists, lawyers, criminologists, and political scientists. Creating the framework for this joint endeavor is hard, as even basic concepts and the semantics of terms tend to vary from one discipline to another.
- It seeks a synthesis of first- and third-person explanations of extreme belief and extreme behavior. Such a synthesis is needed not only for purely academic reasons (understanding these phenomena), but also for prevention and de-radicalization.
- It combines theoretical (particularly conceptual and normative) work on the one hand with empirical (both qualitative and quantitative) and historical work on the other. There has been some philosophical attention for fanaticism and conspiricism, but hardly any for extremism, fundamentalism, and terrorism [Cassam's work is a notable recent exception]. Philosophical resources are needed, for instance, to conceptually map the relations among these extreme phenomena, to profit from insights in social and political epistemology (e.g. regarding authority, disagreement, group belief, epistemic vices, and hermeneutical injustice), and to provide tools and methods, such as reflective equilibrium, for the ethical evaluation of extreme behavior and extreme belief.
- Rather than zeroing in on, say, terrorism, it looks at a wide variety of closely related phenomena that show important similarities, but also crucial differences, namely conspiricism, extremism, fanaticism, fundamentalism, radicalism, and terrorism. This matters because there is overlap (e.g. conspiracy theories are part and parcel of many fundamentalisms) and various logical and probabilistic relations between these phenomena hold (e.g., many terrorists are fanatics; but then not all of them are).

II. About the series editor

Dr. Rik Peels is an Associate Professor of Philosophy and Religion & Theology at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. He studied philosophy and theology at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, the Theological University of Apeldoorn, the University of Notre Dame (IN, USA), and Merton College, Oxford University (UK). In 2012, he obtained his PhD from Utrecht University (the Netherlands) on the ethics of belief. His research interests are the ethics of belief, ignorance, philosophy of religion, and the epistemology and ethics of extreme beliefs. The latter has become the main focus of his research over the last few years, culminating in his current ERC project *Extreme Beliefs*.

He is the author of *Ignorance: A Philosophical Study* (Oxford University Press, 2022) and *Responsible Belief: A Theory in Ethics and Epistemology* (Oxford University Press, 2017) and (co-)edited *The Cambridge Companion to Common-Sense Philosophy* (Cambridge University Press, 2020), *Scientific Challenges to Common Sense Philosophy* (Routledge, 2020), *Scientism: Prospects and Problems* (Oxford University Press, 2019), *Perspectives on Ignorance from Moral and Social Philosophy* (Routledge, 2017) and *The Epistemic Dimensions of Ignorance* (Cambridge University Press, 2016).

He published in leading philosophy journals such as *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, *Philosophical Quarterly*, *American Philosophical Quarterly*, *Australasian Journal of Philosophy*, *Philosophical Studies*, and *The Journal of Philosophy*. He is now increasingly publishing in various empirical and historical journals, such as *Nature*, *Palgrave Communications*, *Research Integrity and Peer Review*, *History of Humanities*, and *Critical Studies on Terrorism*.

III. Overview

The series combines five edited volumes with two monographs. These two monographs, by Beatrice de Graaf and Rik Peels, are needed to respectively show in detail how the new approach works in practice and to develop a theoretical unified articulation of the new paradigm. Of course, the current set-up of the series is only provisional.

1. *Radical Redemption: What Terrorists Believe*, by Beatrice de Graaf

In this volume, historian and terrorism researcher Beatrice de Graaf looks beyond acts of terrorism and their consequences and explores how convicted terrorists narrate their extreme beliefs. To discover what terrorists believe and how those beliefs bring them to commit their deeds, she recorded the life stories of almost thirty convicted terrorists, that were in prison over the past ten years. Most were Dutch detainees convicted for jihadist terrorism, but she also includes accounts by non-Western terrorists (Indonesian, Syrian and Pakistani jihadists and Boko Haram members in Cameroon) and Western right-wing extremists – all in jail over the past decade. First of all, she unpacks how their stories are all unique, but how there is one common denominator: a desire for significance, sense and meaning in lives that are often lacking in prospects and fulfilment. Yet, rather than focusing on orthodoxy (right belief), it is their lived orthodox *praxis* (right practice) that they mostly speak about—which, it is argued, does not mean that their beliefs are irrelevant. The study then continues and combines a historical perspective with qualitative radicalization studies and concepts from the sociology of religion and social psychology (‘quest for significance’, ‘the redemptive self’), to identify and analyze how convicted terrorists developed 1) *narratives* of radical personal *redemption*, where 2) *ideology and praxis* (the whole of actions and words) were combined, and were

3) *validated* by a perceived group or support base – or, instead, became *contaminated* in the course of time.

2. *Extreme Beliefs: Mapping the Terrain*, eds. Rik Peels and John Horgan

This first volume covers various conceptual issues surrounding extreme beliefs and extreme behavior. The focus here is theoretical, but the work is firmly empirically embedded. It explores four crucial conceptual questions. How should each of the extreme phenomena be defined in a fruitful manner and what are the desiderata in seeking definitions of each of them? How should the project of defining these phenomena be undertaken: in terms of necessary and sufficient conditions, or family resemblances, or INUS conditions, and based on data sets, or intuitions about particular cases, common understandings in the public debate, or yet something else? What is the role of normativity in defining these extreme phenomena, that is, the proper place of normative or even pejorative concepts and the normative framework of the researcher? Finally, how do the phenomena of extremism, fanaticism, fundamentalism, terrorism, and conspiricism relate to one another and to things such as apocalypticism, charisma, and state terror?

3. *Explaining Extreme Belief and Extreme Behavior*, eds. Rik Peels and Lorne Dawson

This volume takes a step back from the many specific explanations of extreme belief and extreme behavior that we find in the literature, and explores the very project of explaining these phenomena. The first part of the volume concerns various theoretical and contextual issues. What is it about extreme beliefs that challenges our capacity to explain them? What are the pitfalls of current approaches and why are explanations so urgently needed (e.g., rational choice theory on the one hand, psychopathological approaches on the other, or the role of normative assumptions)? The second part then moves on to explore methodological issues. What does providing an explanation entail? What are the desiderata for viable explanations – including what is the relationship between understanding and explaining, qualitative and quantitative data, first-person and third-person accounts, attitudes and behaviors or beliefs and actions? The third part explores related empirical issues and challenges. How should we conceive and integrate insights into such related phenomena as the turn to extremism in a particular context (e.g., a country or historical circumstance, such as a conflict), the rise of extremist movements, and the turn to extremism by individuals? In other words, how do we interrelate developments and studies focused on the macro, meso, and micro levels? What conceptual, theoretical, and methodological resources are available or can be created? What, for example, is the value of talking about push and pull factors?

4. *Responsibility for Extreme Beliefs*, eds. Rik Peels, Naomi Kloosterboer, Chris Ranalli

This volume explores various issues in the relations between extreme beliefs and extreme behavior on the one hand and responsibility on the other. The first part concerns the issue of who is responsible. Should we target the individual, the community, or none, i.e., are structural factors to blame? To what extent does one manifest one's epistemic or moral agency in forming or keeping extreme beliefs? What role do group dynamics play? Which environments foster extreme beliefs and behavior? The second part concerns what kind of responsibility is at issue. For instance, how do legal, moral, and epistemic responsibility relate to each other with respect to extreme beliefs? To what extent is responsibility for extreme belief and extreme behavior culture- and time-relative? The third part concerns when responsibility attributions are appropriate and when not. What are excusing or exculpating conditions of individual or group responsibility for extreme belief? How does epistemic agency depend on cognitive and affective capacities, (self)knowledge and (self)ignorance, as well as on intellectual self-trust, self-esteem, and self-respect? How should we understand

indoctrination and how much room does it leave for responsibility? Can peer pressure or group ignorance excuse? Do circumstantial factors, such as being in an epistemic bubble or echo chamber, or living in a society dealing with fake news, propaganda, censorship, polarization, suppression, war, etcetera, excuse? And which conditions are particularly salient for, say, conspiracy theorizing or fundamentalism?

5. *Extremism and Subjectivity*, eds. Rik Peels and Quassim Cassam

This volume zooms in on the subjectivity of individual extremists, conspiracy thinkers, fundamentalists, terrorists, and fanatics. ‘Subjectivity’ is a widely used but poorly understood notion in the literature, so this volume aims to get a firmer grip on it. Among other things, it answers such questions as: what constitutes a person’s subjectivity? Why is it theoretically and practically important to engage with the subjectivity of extremists? What is the role of their affections, passions, and beliefs in causing and sustaining their extremism? How should we construe religiosity and what work can it do as an explanatory factor for extreme beliefs and extreme behavior? What role do cognitive and moral virtues and vices play in a person’s subjectivity and how do these notions help us to understand, say, fundamentalism and terrorism? Finally, which senses of ‘rationality’, ‘justification’, ‘reasonableness’ and similar terms can be applied to individual extremists and groups of extremists and conspiracy thinkers and what does that mean for studying their subjectivity?

6. *Resilience to Extreme Beliefs and to Extreme Behavior*, eds. Rik Peels, Michelle Grossman, Elanie Rodermond

An important idea in the literature on prevention is that we should aim to make communities and individuals resilient towards extreme beliefs and extreme behaviour. But what exactly does that amount to, how should we conceptualise resilience? What role do cultural, political, and economic factors play in resilience and how do they relate to beliefs and character traits of individuals that constitute the community? Is resilience compatible with the radicalisation of some members in a community? How do moral, political, and religious resilience relate to one another? Can it be operationalised and measured? How does resilience relate to de-radicalization? Are there specific best practices for building resilience towards, say, right-wing extremism and Salafi Jihadism that can be implemented elsewhere? What is the role of education in creating resilience?

7. *Synthesizing First- and Third-Person Perspectives on Extreme Belief and Extreme Behavior*, by Rik Peels

This monograph draws various threads of the series together and focuses on synthesizing first- and third-person explanations of extreme belief and extreme behavior as found in extremism, fanaticism, fundamentalism, conspiricism, and terrorism. It uses various notions in the existing empirical literature, like that of orthopraxis and religiosity, but also philosophical concepts that have not yet been employed in the empirical literature on extreme belief and extreme behavior, such as Lisa Bortolotti’s concept of epistemic innocence, to show how various third-person approaches, in terms of social, political, cultural, and economic factors, can be combined with first-person approaches, in terms of the subject’s beliefs, reasons, and narratives. In doing so, this volume will shed light on how understanding and explaining extremism, fundamentalism, and the like relate to one another. Finally, it reflects on various normative issues that come with first-person explanations, third-person explanations, understanding, and explaining, such as the positionality of the researcher, and various epistemic and moral challenges regarding the empathy required for understanding.

The seven volumes are related to one another as follows. The first volume provides relevant empirical data and a model – the Radical Redemption Model – that can be used to interpret the data. The second volume provides the conceptual groundwork for the other six volumes. The third volume, given the theoretical and empirical groundwork in volumes 1 and 2, then moves on to explore *explanations* of extremism, fundamentalism, etc. The fourth volume uses the theoretical insights from volumes 1-3 and the empirical insights from volumes 2 and 3 in moving from the descriptive to the normative: it tackles various issues regarding responsibility for extreme beliefs and extreme behavior. Volumes 5 and 6 take up these issues related to responsibility by zooming in on the subjectivity of extreme believers and extreme actors (volume 5) and exploring how individuals and communities can *take* responsibility for their beliefs and actions by becoming more resilient (volume 6). Volume 7 synthesizes first- and third-person explanations and in doing so sheds light on the relation between understanding and explaining extreme beliefs and extreme behavior.

IV. Support for the Series

Dr. Amarnath **Amarasingam**, School of Religion, Queen’s University in Ontario (Canada)
“This is an immense undertaking - aimed at interdisciplinarity and synthesis - and will be a huge benefit to a variety of ongoing debates in the field. Dr. Rik Peels should be commended for conceiving of and moving this project forward. The resulting publications will be an important contribution.”

Dr. Lisa **Bortolotti**, School of Philosophy, Theology, and Religion, University of Birmingham (UK)
“This book series is unique in offering a new way of thinking about fundamentalism and attempting to integrate first- and third-person perspectives. This is a very important project: recent conspiricism has shown that we are not very successful (as individuals and as a society) at responding to competing concerns and weighing up different forms of evidence when evaluating controversial views. The book series could fill this gap.”

Dr. Michael **Baurmann**, Sociology Department, Scientific Director of the Center of Advanced Internet Studies (CAIS), University of Düsseldorf (Germany)
“Extremism is one of the most dangerous threats to democracies and free societies today. Publishing excellent research on extremism jointly in a series of competently edited volumes will strengthen the impact of scientific findings on this topic and will create significant synergies by producing a valuable pool of interrelated knowledge.”

Dr. Quassim **Cassam**, Philosophy Department, University of Warwick (UK)
“It is hard to think of a timelier series or a better cast of editors and contributors. Rik will do a brilliant job as series editor and impresario. Each of the seven volumes addresses a central question, and I expect this series to become an invaluable resource for political scientists and theorists, sociologists, theologians, terrorism scholars and, of course, philosophers. I hope that OUP will feel able to commission this major series.”

Dr. Lorne **Dawson**, Department of Religious Studies and the Department of Sociology and Legal Studies, University of Waterloo (Canada):
“Clear progress has been made in the last few decades in understanding the driving forces behind an ever-widening array of movements promoting extreme beliefs, but as this series will uniquely highlight, we are just beginning to develop crucial insights into the motivational reasoning of the exponents of these views and how this information can be systematically integrated into a more comprehensive multi-disciplinary and multi-level understanding of these phenomena. The series

will provide a remarkable resource for those seeking to grasp and overcome the many relevant epistemological, methodological, and ethical challenges of such an undertaking.”

Dr. Beatrice de Graaf, Department of History, Utrecht University (the Netherlands)

“This book series is a crucial addition to the field of terrorism/radicalization/political violence studies: its qualitative and transdisciplinary perspective, the focus on first person perspective, motivational beliefs and agency make it an urgent and extremely welcome contribution to the conundrum of trying to make sense of terrorism and violent extremism.”

Dr. John Horgan, Department of Psychology, Georgia State University (USA)

“Novel, timely, urgent and ambitious - what is proposed here is nothing less than the catalyst for a major shift in our understanding of extreme beliefs and those who embrace them.”

Dr. Mark Juergensmeyer, professor emeritus, Sociology Department, University of California Santa Barbara (USA)

“Given the recent rise of extremist movements around the world the time has come for an in-depth survey of such movements, analyzed from the perspectives of the participants themselves. This is why this series is much needed and will be widely discussed. Before these movements can be countered they have to be understood, and this requires entering into the mindset and worldviews that animate such strident alternative visions of social reality.”

Dr. Samuël Kruizinga, Department of History, University of Amsterdam (the Netherlands):

“This book series promises to break new ground by providing a multi-disciplinary perspective on what drives those that hold, propagate, and/or act on extreme beliefs. And given our contemporary society’s ongoing struggle to understand and cope with extremism, this book series is both timely and urgent.”

Dr. Arie Kruglanski, Psychology Department, University of Maryland (USA)

“The Extreme Beliefs” series proposed by Rik Peels is timely and important. It is likely to contribute to highlighting the topic of extremism as an important uniform theme to which different social science disciplines offer insights and methods of study.”

Dr. Elanie Rodermond, Department of Criminology, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (the Netherlands):

“This book series has the potential to provide a new framework for our understanding of and dealing with terrorist offending. By aiming to unravel first-person experiences the series is scientifically innovative, while it also holds great promise for policy and practice.”

References

- Baurmann, Michael. (2007). “Rational Fundamentalism? An Explanatory Model of Fundamentalist Beliefs”, *Episteme* 4.2, 150-166.
- Baurmann M., Betz G., Cramm R. (2018). “‘Führer befehl, wir folgen dir!’ Charismatic Leaders in Extremist Groups”, in T. Christiano, I. Creppell, J. Knight (eds.), *Morality, Governance, and Social Institutions* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan).
- Berger, J.M. (2018). *Extremism* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press).
- Cassam, Quassim. (2018). “The Epistemology of Terrorism and Counterterrorism”, *Royal Institute of Philosophy*, Supplement 85, 187-209.
- . (2021a). *Extremism: A Philosophical Analysis* (London: Routledge).
- . (2021b). “Epistemic Vices, Ideologies and False Consciousness”, in Michael Hannon and Jeroen de Ridder, *The Routledge Handbook of Political Epistemology* (London: Routledge).
- Crenshaw, Martha. (2011). *Explaining Terrorism: Causes, Processes, and Consequences* (London: Routledge).
- Crone, Manni. (2016). “Radicalization Revisited: Violence, Politics and the Skills of the Body,” *International Affairs* 92.3, 587–604.

- Dawson, Lorne L. (2019). "Taking Terrorist Accounts of their Motivations Seriously: An Exploration of the Hermeneutics of Suspicion", *Perspectives on Terrorism* 13.5, 65-80.
- Dawson, Lorne. (2021a). "Bringing Religiosity Back In: Critical Reflection on the Explanation of Western Homegrown Religious Terrorism (Part I)", *Perspectives on Terrorism* 15.1, <https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/binaries/content/assets/customsites/perspectives-on-terrorism/2021/issue-1/dawson.pdf>.
- . (2021b). "Bringing Religiosity Back In: Critical Reflection on the Explanation of Western Homegrown Religious Terrorism (Part II)," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 15.2, <https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/binaries/content/assets/customsites/perspectives-on-terrorism/2021/issue-2/dawson.pdf>.
- De Graaf, Beatrice. (2021). *Radicale verlossing: Wat terroristen geloven* (Amsterdam: Prometheus).
- De Graaf, Beatrice, Kees van den Bos. (2021). "Religious Radicalization: Social Appraisals and Finding Radical Redemption in Extreme Beliefs", *Current Opinion in Psychology* 40, 56-60. 10.1016/j.copsyc.2020.08.028.
- Dentith, M.R.X. (2014). *The Philosophy of Conspiracy Theories* (London: Palgrave Macmillan).
- Dershowitz, Alan M. (2002). *Why Terrorism Works: Understanding the Threat, Responding to the Challenge* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press).
- Harambam, Jaron. (2020). *Contemporary Conspiracy Culture Truth and Knowledge in an Era of Epistemic Instability* (London: Routledge).
- Hardin, Russell. (2002). "The Crippled Epistemology of Extremism", in Albert Breton et al. (eds.), *Political Extremism and Rationality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 3-22.
- Horgan, John. (2003). "The Search for the Terrorist Personality", in A. Silke (ed.), *Terrorists, Victims, and Society* (Chichester: John Wiley), 3-27.
- . (2005). *The Psychology of Terrorism* (Abingdon: Routledge).
- Jackson, Richard. (2015). "The Epistemological Crisis of Counterterrorism", *Critical Studies on Terrorism* 8.1, 33-54.
- Juergensmeyer, Mark. (2017). *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*, 4th ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press).
- Kruglanski, Arie W., Catalina Kopetz, Ewa Szumowska, eds. (2021). *The Psychology of Extremism: A Motivational Perspective* (London: Routledge)
- Lankford, Adam. (2013). *The Myth of Martyrdom: What Really Drives Suicide Bombers, Rampage Shooters, and Other Self-Destructive Killers* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan).
- McCauley, Clark. (2012). "Testing Theories of Radicalization in Polls of U.S. Muslims", *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy* 12.1, 296-311.
- McClauley, Cark, Sophia Moskalenko. (2017). *Friction: How Conflict Radicalizes Them and Us*, revised and expanded edition (New York: Oxford University Press).
- Morton, Adam. (2011). "Empathy for the Devil", in Amy Coplan and Peter Goldie (eds.), *Empathy: Philosophical and Psychology Perspectives* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 318-330.
- Peels, Rik. (2020). "Responsibility for Fundamentalist Belief", in Kevin Ray McCain and Scott Stapleford (eds.), *Epistemic Duties: New Arguments, New Angles* (Oxford: Routledge), 221-238.
- Richardson, Louise. (2006). *What Terrorists Want: Understanding the Enemy, Containing the Threat* (New York: Penguin).
- Sageman, Marc. (2004). *Understanding Terror Networks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press).
- . (2014). "The Stagnation in Terrorism Research", *Terrorism and Political Violence* 26.4, 565-580.
- Savage, Sara. (2011). "Four Lessons from the Study of Fundamentalism and Psychology of Religion", *Journal of Strategic Security* 4.4, 131-150.
- Sheikh, Mona Kanwal, Mark Juergensmeyer, eds. (2021). *Entering Religious Minds: The Social Study of Worldviews* (London: Routledge, 2019).
- Stampnitzky, Lisa. (2013). *Disciplining Terror: How Experts Invented "Terrorism"* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
- Thijssen, G, E. Masthoff, J. Sijtsema, S. Bogaerts. (2021). "Understanding Violent Extremism: Socio-demographic, Criminal, and Psychopathological Background Characteristics of Detainees Residing in Dutch Terrorism Wings", *Criminology and Criminal Justice*. October. doi:[10.1177/17488958211049019](https://doi.org/10.1177/17488958211049019).
- Uscinski, Joseph E., and Joseph M. Parent. (2014). *American Conspiracy Theories* (New York: Oxford University Press).
- Van den Bos, Kees. (2018). *Why People Radicalize: How Unfairness Judgments are Used to Fuel Radical Beliefs, Extremist Behaviors, and Terrorism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).