



INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

“In Search of the Radicalized Mainstream:
Mobilizing, normalizing and normativizing far-right
ideologies from the centre”

9-10 November 2023

Program



The international conference on November 9 and 10, 2023 aim to explore, discuss, and redefine the relationship between the radicalized margins and the mainstream across different social, regional and historical contexts.

Radicalized actors/ideologies and the mainstream are usually considered opposing poles. The mainstream is often portrayed as moderate and centrist in terms of its convictions and policies and placed in opposition to the far-right and far-left. However, with the recent rise of the far-right in many countries and regions worldwide, a rapidly growing body of research is exploring how the electoral successes of the far-right are enabling parties, social movements, agendas, and discourses to move from the fringes to the mainstream. This body of research focuses predominantly on far-right actors and how they strategize, in other words on whether and how far-right parties and movements adapt their narratives, rhetoric and repertoires of action to move closer to mainstream norms in order to appeal to the majority. In this context, the mainstream is predominantly seen through the lens of its interaction with fringe ideologies being adopted or absorbed, which Wodak (2020) has dubbed “shameless normalization”. However, findings from the German National Racism Monitor, for example, have shown that attitudes like racism, antisemitism and Islamophobia are deeply rooted within society and are not only held by radical far-right actors – a phenomenon that has been observed in many countries around the globe. In spite of that, the mainstream is only rarely considered as an agent beyond the conceptual framework of an interaction with the far-right. Research on radicalization, in turn, draws often on the concepts of terrorism and violent extremism, focuses on the social and psychological transformation of the individuals that adopt extremist belief systems. The symposium and workshop aim to bring together research that pays particular attention to “the mainstream” as a (heterogeneous) agent accommodating, aligning, justifying, and normalizing far-right actors, actions, and attitudes, as well as the reasons why and the circumstances under which, this happens.

Interdisciplinary contributions using different methodological approaches have been selected to respond to key questions related to:

- the conceptualization of a radicalized mainstream and what implications does it have for our understanding of the relationship of far-right actors/attitudes to the centre.
- which local, national, or transnational networks (including discursive networks) trigger the radicalization of the mainstream, and what new configurations of actors and issues arise from it.
- what are the specific mechanisms and influencing factors from within the mainstream through which radicalization occurs and how can we empirically identify and measure these phenomena, both qualitatively and quantitatively.
- what philosophical and identity-forming concepts are present in far-right and mainstream discourses today and how these concepts are historically situated.
- what are the consequences of radicalized mainstreams for society and specific social groups within it, and how discrimination against specific groups can be more effectively.
- which strategies there are to prevent processes of radicalisation of the mainstream.
- what extent social conflicts and forms of discrimination intertwine across issues (e.g., climate crisis and racism, racism and antisemitism) for the radicalized mainstream.

In Search of the Radicalized Mainstream: Mobilizing, Normalizing and Normativizing Far-Right Ideologies from the Centre

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE: 9-10 NOVEMBER 2023

Day 1: Thursday, 9 November - 10:30 – 18:30

| Time | Program |
|---------------|---|
| 10:30 – 11:00 | Welcome. <i>Mirjam Weiberg-Salzmann & Emanuele Toscano</i> |
| 11:00 – 13:00 | <p>Introduction, Keynote speakers & Discussion <i>(Chair: Mirjam Weiberg-Salzmann)</i></p> <p>In search of the radicalized mainstream? <i>Sabrina Zajak, Anna-Maria Meuth & Liriam Sponholz</i></p> <p>The Centrality of Mobilization against Migration in Europe: Why, How and to What Effect? <i>Kristian Berg Harpviken</i></p> <p>Discursive Shifts, Mainstreaming of the Far-Right, and the Normalization of the Politics of Exclusion. <i>Michal Krzyzanowski</i></p> |
| 13:00 – 14:00 | Lunch Break |
| 14:00 – 16:00 | <p>Panel 1: Varieties of Radicalized Mainstream in Europe <i>(Discussant: Dietmar Loch)</i></p> <p>Beyond Civilizationism: Ethnonationalist Identity Politics of the New Right. <i>Max Brunner</i></p> <p>Anatomy of a Mainstreaming Moment: Inside the Prime Time Television Appearance that Precipitated the Rise of Jean-Marie Le Pen and the French Far Right. <i>Therese Mager</i></p> <p>The “democracy paradox” and its historical roots in the Peaceful Revolution of 1989. <i>Sophie Lange</i></p> <p>The missing link: Using an analysis of place to understand the relationship between margins and mainstream. <i>Viktoria Kamuf</i></p> |
| 16:00 – 16:30 | Coffee Break |
| 16:30 – 18:30 | <p>Panel 2: Far-right narratives in media and social media ecosystems <i>(Discussant: Noa Milman)</i></p> <p>Far-Right Agenda Setting: How the Far Right drives the Political Mainstream. <i>Teresa Völker & Daniel Saldivia Gonzaetti</i></p> <p>Mainstreaming racism and far-right attitudes through mainstream and social media. <i>Damla Keşkekci, Sünje Paasch-Colberg & Sabrina Zajak</i></p> <p>From discursive alliances to narrative communities. <i>Felix Schilk</i></p> <p>The mainstreaming of the far right and the media: reporting, enabling or countering? <i>Katy Brown & Aurelien Mondon</i></p> |
| 18:30 | Dinner |

Day 2: Friday, 10 November 2023 - 09:30 – 18:00

| Time | Program |
|---------------|---|
| 09:30 – 10:00 | Warm-up, Coffee & Special Issue discussion |
| 10:00 – 12:00 | <p>Keynote Speakers & Discussion (Chair: Sabrina Zajak)</p> <p>“Driving on the Right”: The Shameless Normalization of Far-Right Discourses. <i>Ruth Wodak</i></p> <p>The distant middle. How the middle becomes more radicalized. <i>Andreas Zick</i></p> |
| 12:00 – 13:30 | Lunch Break |
| 13:30 – 15:30 | <p>Panel 3: Radicalized Mainstream beyond the European context (Discussant: Julian Junk)</p> <p>Social overflow and devices for normalising far-right ideology in Latin America. <i>Breno Bringel</i></p> <p>The new disinformation ecosystem: an analysis of the reconfiguration of the new narratives of the brazilian far right without Bolsonaro. <i>Karoline Maria Fernandes da Costa e Silva, Nadi Helena Presser & Luciana Monteiro-Krebs</i></p> <p>Ordinary Violence and the Mainstreaming of the Right in India. <i>Surya Ghildiyal</i></p> <p>Constructing the Normality of Radicalism: The Ethno-Religious Nationalist Worldview of Turkish Primary School Books. <i>Deniz T. Kılınçoğlu</i></p> |
| 15:30 – 16:00 | Coffee Break |
| 16:00 – 17:30 | <p>Panel 4: Climate, gender, migration intersecting far-right narratives and ideologies (Discussant: Max Brunner)</p> <p>Far Right (AI) Images, Radicalised Mainstream, and gendered Mobilisation of Distrust toward Climate Activists and Liberal Democrats. <i>Nicole Doerr</i></p> <p>Does salient threat to control fuel the radicalization of climate activism – or not? Empirical findings from three social psychological experiments on the threat–radicalization hypothesis. <i>Fabian Hess & Wanda Drabon</i></p> <p>Strategic gatekeepers: how mainstream parties accommodate anti-migration discourses in parliamentary debates. <i>Luke Shuttleworth</i></p> <p>Reactionary feminism and the mainstreaming of the far right: a case study of the German magazine. <i>Dominika Tronina & Luke Shuttleworth</i></p> |
| 17:30 – 18:00 | Closing Remarks. <i>Liriam Sponholz</i> |

Keynote speaker sessions are open to interested persons and can be attended remotely. To access the link, please contact rami@dezim-institut.de.

List of participants

Keynote speakers

Kristian Harpviken, *Peace Research Institute Oslo, Norway.*

Michał Krzyzanowski, *Uppsala University, Sweden.*

Andreas Zick, *Bielefeld University, Germany.*

Ruth Wodak, *University of Vienna, Austria.*

Presenters and discussants

Breno Bringel, *State University of Rio de Janeiro, Brasil.*

Katy Brown, *Maynooth University, Ireland.*

Max Brunner, *Ruhr University Bochum, Germany.*

Nicole Doerr, *University of Copenhagen, Denmark.*

Wanda Drabon, *Leipzig University, Germany.*

Karoline Maria Fernandes da Costa e Silva, *Federal University of Pernambuco, Brasil.*

Surya Ghildiyal, *University of Bern, Switzerland.*

Fabian Hess, *Leipzig University, Germany.*

Julian Junk, *Hessian School of Public Management and Security, Germany.*

Viktoria Kamuf, *Institute for Democracy and Civil Society, Germany.*

Damla Keşkekci, *Scuola Normale Superiore Firenze, Italy.*

Deniz T. Kiliņođlu, *Leibniz-Zentrum Moderner Orient, Germany.*

Sophie Lange, *University of Erfurt, Germany.*

Dietmar Loch, *University of Lille, France.*

Therese Mager, *Leipzig University, Germany.*

Anna-Maria Meuth, *Münster University, Germany.*

Noa Milman, *DeZIM Institut, Germany.*

Aurelien Mondon, *University of Bath, UK.*

Luciana Monteiro-Krebs, *Oswaldo Cruz Foundation, Brasil.*

Sünje Paasch-Colberg, *DeZIM Institut, Germany.*

Nadi Helena Presser, *Federal University of Pernambuco, Brasil.*

Daniel Saldivia Gonzatti, *WZB Berlin Social Science Center, Germany.*

Felix Schilk, *Technische Universität Dresden, Germany.*

Luke Shuttleworth, *Humboldt University of Berlin, Germany.*

Liriam Sponholz, *University of Brasilia, Brasil.*

Emanuele Toscano, *University G. Marconi Rome, Italy.*

Dominika Tronina, *Humboldt University of Berlin, Germany.*

Teresa Völker, *WZB Berlin Social Science Center, Germany.*

Mirjam Weiberg-Salzmänn, *DeZIM Institut, Germany.*

Sabrina Zajak, *DeZIM Institut, Germany.*

