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# **Political Extremism: An Argumentative Approach**

By

**Hareim Hadi Hassan**

A Dissertation  
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies  
through the Department of Philosophy  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for  
the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy at  
the University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, Canada

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# Political Extremism: An Argumentative Approach

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### **DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY**

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## ABSTRACT

Many disciplines have studied political extremism, but studying it argumentatively is yet to be explored. This project develops a novel approach to extremism by defining it in neutral terms and suggesting a typology of extremism as the following: civil extremism, critical extremism, uncritical extremism, violent extremism, justified violent extremism and unjustified violent extremism. These terms show the novelty of this dissertation's approach to extremism. Throughout this dissertation, I will refer to political extremism as a political position with a controversial nature aiming at a radical replacement of a political status quo. I call this definition 'a neutral definition.' The typology of extremism suggested here is not merely theoretical but will be evaluated through the growing literature on extremism and with empirical cases.

In this project, I argue against the common understanding of extremism as an inherently negative phenomenon. I make a case against this negative approach and argue that, at times, extremism could be the push needed for democratic development.

In the first chapter, *Towards a Neutral Account of Extremism*, I present a case in defence of a neutral definition of extremism. In chapter two, *Extremism and its Dimensions*, I support the neutral definition of political extremism and depict the differences between extremism and concepts with which it is often mixed such as terrorism, fundamentalism, fanaticism, and radicalism. In chapter three, *How Do Jihadis Argue? ISIS, as a Case of Unjustified Violent Extremism*, I examine a case of the most problematic type of extremism: unjustified violent extremism. I will provide answers to these questions: how do jihadis argue? What were the main rhetorical strategies used by al-Baghdadi, the leader of ISIS, to make a successful case for joining ISIS? The title of chapter four is *Expanding Argument from Authority: Argument from Charismatic*

*Authority and the Case of Donald J. Trump*. This chapter contributes to the literature on arguments from authority by introducing arguments from charisma. Here, I aim to conceptualize an argument from charisma and then apply this conceptualization to a case study. I analyze the Save America speech by Trump on January 6, 2021. The main research questions of this chapter are as follows: what is an argument for charisma? How is charisma related to extremism? How do we identify an argument from charisma and charismatic elements in argumentation? In chapter five, I study the extremist arguers' vices and virtues: *Extremism's Vices and Virtues: Towards a Consequentialist Virtue Argumentation*. The approach that I use is a pluralist approach to virtue. This means that I examine the virtues and vices of extremists from a consequentialist approach, virtue argumentation theory, and vice epistemology. In this chapter, I examine cases of civil and uncivil extremism. Cases of civil extremism are from the suffragist movements and the anti-slavery movements. The case of violent extremism is from the anti-colonial violent struggles. The main research questions are: what are the vices and virtues of extremist arguers? How does a consequentialist approach to virtue study differ from virtue argumentation and vice epistemology? In chapter six, *Lessons and Challenges*, the concluding chapter, I reflect on this question: what can we learn from extremism, and why should we worry about it? In the process of answering this question, I reflect on a problematic account of civility, which I call 'pro-status-quo civility,' and suggest a different account as a remedy, which I call 'argumentative civility.'

**Keywords:** argument from sacred authority, argument from charisma, argumentative civility, civil extremism, extremist virtues and vices, neutral definition, political extremism, religious logic, typology of extremism

## **DEDICATION**

To my beloved parents

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A good indicator of living a good life is missing an experience while having it. I am already missing my experience at the University of Windsor, the place that produced towering argumentation thinkers. Thank you for all of you!



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## **Chapter One: Introduction: Towards a Neutral Account of Extremism**

### **1.1 General Remarks**

Naturally, we disagree over epistemic statements (what is true or reasonable) and ownership claims (who is entitled to what and how to get it). We join like-minded individuals to form groups. Joining a group is useful mainly for two reasons. First, to gain better bargaining power to secure and increase political and economic goals against other groups. Second, to gain affirmation and a sense of belonging: psychological gains. Because we see the usefulness of groups, we form group identities and protect them. The fact that individuals and groups have different views makes disagreements unavoidable. Political argumentation is about individuals and groups trying to make a successful case for what they see as right (legitimate, reasonable, or simply justifiable) and how to protect and advance their interests. The intensification of disagreements may lead to polarization and extremism with mostly negative but sometimes positive and even necessary outcomes. Thus, polarization and extremism are natural outcomes of consolidating group identity, which is manifested and partly formed through political argumentation.

Political argumentation can be about a practical issue and a theoretical issue. While some philosophers argue about the nature of liberty, fairness, and justice, some politicians are arguing about practical proposals on how to do X, Y, and Z. Political argumentation in the domain of practicality has distinctive features. What makes it distinctive, among other features, is what is called “legitimate dissensus” (Kock, 2017). What causes dissensus in political argumentation, among other reasons, is that political argument is not usually about matters of truth and falsity (what is valid/true logically/scientifically). Political arguments are mainly about proposals that

have practical consequences on public life. Disagreements about those proposals are expected since they represent conflicts of interest, which is why legitimate dissensus is one of the core features of political argumentation. Usually, what happens is a proposal might serve the interests of different groups differently (does this mean the domain of political argumentation is necessarily a domain of relativism in which there is no room for truth? This is a question for a different project).

Another essential feature of political argument is its public dimension. Neta Crawford, classifies political arguments into four ideal types “practical/instrumental, ethical, scientific and identity” (2004, p. 23). The political dimension of these types of arguments becomes vivid when they affect the public. For example, a scientific argument about global warming becomes political when it affects economic policies. An economic policy affects the public, for example, increasing the carbon tax. One reason political differences escalate to political extremism is that dissensus becomes more radical and intense.

Extremism does not have a homeland except for human minds. Whenever and wherever a human feels strongly about a position and wants to advocate for it, extremism may result, and it “is not the province of any single race, religion, or political school. Extremism can be profoundly consequential in societies” (Berger, 2018, p. 23). Extremism is one of the most frequently used words in political discussions whenever the tension is high, yet its meaning is far from clear. In some of its usage, extremism is treated as a tool to delegitimize legitimate concerns between parties of disagreement. In the Canadian context, for example, many senior officials, such as the

Minister of Public Safety Marco Mendicino, described the Freedom Convoy<sup>1</sup> as “flagrant extremism” (Tunney, 2022). A case could be made that, by calling the protesters extremist, the minister and other senior officials, including the prime minister, portrayed themselves as having a political and even ethical obligation to disregard the protesters’ primary demand, which was removing all the restrictions of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The water gets muddier when extremism is associated with terrorism. Although this association is common, it could be dangerous. If we label those with whom we disagree as extremists, we may delegitimize their concerns. However, if we associate our opponents with extremism and then associate extremism with terrorism, then we will demonize them and delegitimize their concerns and demands. Having said this, one of the central claims of this dissertation is that portraying extremism as having a necessarily negative core is lazy, wrong, and historically inaccurate.

Extremism is often associated with an inherently negative position, such as terrorism. However, as the saying goes, sometimes ‘one man’s terrorist is another man’s freedom fighter.’ One man’s extremist is another person’s true believer, a believer in a position worth advocating, fighting for, and even dying for. Associating extremism with terrorism is frequently done not just by the media but also by academic scholars. For example, Zartman and Faure write, “how synonymous the two terms are is a matter for a not-too-interesting debate” (2011, p. 3). I disagree: terrorism should not be tolerated; however, political extremism, at times, could be the

---

<sup>1</sup> Freedom Convoy was a manifestation of growing concerns against the ongoing COVID-19 safety protocols. The movement was sparked by a vaccine mandate for truckers crossing the US-Canada border, implemented under the leadership of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. The convoys began their journey from various points in the country, and the movement arrived in Ottawa on Friday, January 28, 2022.

only right way to go. Martin Luther King Jr. is a significant case in hand. He was accused of being an extremist in his struggle for racial equality. King rightly adopted the term and said, “The question is not whether we will be extremists, but what kind of extremists we will be” (1963, p. 4). If not for King’s extremism, racial equality might have taken longer to reach the point that it has. So clearly, there is a need for a neutral definition of political extremism. Definitions could have real-life consequences, and in this project, I approach definitions of extremism with this in mind.

My approach aims at neutralizing extremism and identifying its different manifestations. This is an attempt to facilitate a new debate around extremism to differentiate its wheat from its chaff. My approach, however, is not to portray extremism solely in positive terms but rather to shed light on both its negative and, at times, positive manifestations. A definition, when presented as a public argument, can “revitalize a political community” around the subject of the definition, as David Zarefsky writes:

Public argument revitalizes a political community by coaching public judgment. Engaging in the argument changes the participants and the listeners. They engage in the act of shaping their world as they shape their language—even though, paradoxically, they are constrained by the very culture they create (Zarefsky 1990, as quoted by Schiappa, 2003, p. 180).

Defining extremism as a neutral concept and identifying its positive and negative types, although it happens in a discourse at first, can later encourage an open-minded mindset towards extremism and change our attitude toward extremist cases.

Some of the essential features of contemporary liberal democracy are achieved through political extremism, such as women's suffrage, racial equality, and homosexuality rights, just to name a few. However, this is not to say political extremism is always healthy. In some of its forms, political extremism also represents significant challenges to societies' stability and security—for example, extremist political Islam, such as the views associated with ISIS.

In this dissertation, I study political extremism from the perspective of Argumentation Theory—a multidisciplinary theory that studies argument and argumentation logically, rhetorically, and dialectically. This research differentiates itself right from the beginning from a hasty and fallacious equation of political extremism with negative ideologies such as nazism, fascism, and terrorism, which is a dominant view in the current literature on the subject. For example, Midlarsky (2011) associates the murderous ideologies of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, such as nazism and fascism, with political extremism (see chapter two).

I am not arguing that political extremism has nothing to do with dangerous ideologies in some of its forms; however, this work aims to provide a neutral account of extremism and identify both its negative and positive aspects. Legitimate dissensus as a core feature of political argumentation is helpful in appreciating this neutral understanding of extremism because it explains why political differences, even radical ones, are expected in the domain of politics.<sup>2</sup> In what follows, I will introduce my definitions of the types of extremism. In chapter two, further support for these definitions will be provided.

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<sup>2</sup> There will be more discussion in chapter two on legitimate dissensus.



## 1.2 Extremism Definitions

Because different and, at times, contradictory examples are associated with extremism throughout this dissertation, the need for a neutral definition and the identification of different types of extremism becomes an apparently logical and socio-political need.

Time and context are important factors in understanding extremism and who is regarded as an extremist. Edward Schiappa's approach to definitions, which focuses on the context, is useful here. He writes:

Instead of posing the questions in the time-honored manner of "What is X?" [...] I suggest that we reformulate the matter as "How *ought* we use the word X?" given our particular reasons for defining X. Specifically, I advocate that we think of one appropriate form of definition as "X counts as Y in context C." (2003, p. xi).

This approach could be called a 'context-based definition' approach. This approach is helpful in facilitating thinking about a 'time-based definition' of extremism. Suppose a political position (X) counts as extremist (Y) only in context (C). In that case, X also only counts as Y in time (T). Context/place and time necessarily exist in each other. There is no place without time, nor time without place (quantum physics might challenge this, but it is irrelevant to extremism as a socio-political phenomenon). By a time-based definition of extremism, I simply mean a political position X might be extremist Y in a certain time T1 but not at another time T2. Why might this be the case? In T1, X has just been introduced into the cognitive environment, and it is seen as a challenging force against the status quo; therefore, it is considered Y, but in T2, X has already

achieved a degree of adherence that made it an accepted part of the status quo. Therefore, it is no longer considered Y.

To understand the time-based approach to extremism, let us consider two cases: women's suffrage in Canada and the civil rights movement in the United States. In the case of Canada, there are important feminist figures such as Nellie McClung (1873-1951),<sup>3</sup> who, in advocating women's right to vote, radically challenged male-dominated politics. In the US, Martin Luther King Jr. was accused of extremism because of the methods he used and allowed against racism. When accused of extremism, as I mentioned before, he responded by saying: "The question is not whether we will be extremists, but what kind of extremists we will be" (1963, p. 4). What is essential here is to stress the dimension of time: both McClung and King were accused of extremism in their time, T1, but now, T2 (current time), their positions are not considered extremist but rather essential and inseparable elements of the status quo of a democratic country. What is considered an extremist in T1 might be considered normal in T2; therefore, a person or social movement that challenges women's and blacks' rights would be considered extremist now because those rights are very much at the core of the current democratic political system.

Throughout this dissertation, I will refer to political extremism as a political position with a controversial nature aiming at a radical replacement of a political status quo. I call this definition 'a neutral definition.'

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<sup>3</sup> More on Nellie McClung in chapter five.

Political extremism, as defined neutrally, can be classified into two main types: (A) civil extremism and (B) violent extremism<sup>4</sup>:

A: Peaceful political extremism, or simply civil extremism is defined as: A political position with a controversial nature aiming at a radical replacement of a political status quo by means of public argumentation.

B: Violent political extremism, or simply uncivil extremism, is defined as a political position with a controversial nature aiming at a radical replacement of a political status quo by means of coercion, violence, and/ or terror.

Civil extremism can be classified into two subtypes: A1, critical extremism, and A2, uncritical extremism.

A1: Critical civil extremism, or simply critical extremism, is a subtype of civil extremism in which two conditions of 'argumentative discussion' are respected in advocating or achieving radical change in a status quo.

A2: Uncritical civil extremism, or simply uncritical extremism, is a subtype of civil extremism in which two conditions of 'argumentative discussion' are not respected in advocating or achieving radical change in a status quo.

Moreover, violent extremism (B) can be subdivided into two subtypes: B1, justified violent extremism and B2, unjustified violent extremism<sup>5</sup>.

---

<sup>4</sup> These types are suggested for conceptual clarity. Although we can sometimes use them rigidly, extremism's types could also exist at a scale: A political movement may move from one type to another throughout its history. For example, Mandela used both violent and peaceful means of advocacy in his struggle against apartheid.

B1: Justified violent extremism is a subtype of violent extremism in which violence is justifiably used, i.e., 'conditions of justifying violence' are met, in advocating or achieving radical change in a status quo.

B2: Unjustified violent extremism is a subtype of violent extremism in which violence is unjustifiably used, i.e., 'conditions of justifying violence' are not met in advocating or achieving radical change in a status quo.<sup>6</sup>

My approach to defining political extremism neutrally and identifying its types and subtypes is an attempt to present a novel definition via dissociation. First, I detach extremism from the negative core that is inaccurately attached to it. Then, I attach a neutral value, which, depending on specific details, could have positive or negative values and outcomes. Schiappa writes, "Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca observe that a dissociative definition is at work when a characteristic becomes the criterion for the correct use of the concept" (2003, p. 38). In my approach, for each type of extremism, there is a key concept that acts as a criterion for correctly identifying that type of extremism. For example, this criterion for civil extremism is the non-violence method of advocacy, and for uncivil extremism is using violence. Moreover, this criterion for critical extremism is respecting the principle of 'argumentative discussion,' while uncritical extremism violates those principles. As for justified violent extremism, the criterion is respecting 'conditions of justified violence,' while unjustified violent extremism violates those conditions.

---

<sup>6</sup> The key concepts of these definitions will be explained later in this chapter.

These definitions can be called advocating and stipulative definitions. According to David Hitchcock, “To advocate by means of a definition is to take a position on an issue. These acts [for example, advocating or stipulative definitions] are not mutually exclusive” (2021, p. 4). My definitions are making a case of what extremism and its types are; therefore, they are definitions by advocating. A definition is advocative: “If it *proposes a new meaning* for the term, or *introduces the term for the first time*, or shifts the boundaries of the class of things currently labelled by the term, it is advocating that the term should be used in a specified context with the proposed meaning” (Hitchcock, 2021, pp. 53-54 my italics). I introduce new terms and attach new meanings to extremism. They are advocative and stipulative definitions since I advocate for a neutral and comprehensive account of extremism in disagreement with the literature on extremism, which almost always defines extremism in negative terms. In my account, extremism can also be positive or even necessary at times. Stipulative and advocating definitions are especially common in academic work. On this point, Hitchcock writes:

In general, authors have the right to stipulate how terms that they use in their own work are to be interpreted. Stipulations of meaning in scholarly and scientific works often implicitly advocate that the term whose meaning is stipulated be used in this way in other contexts, especially when a new term is being introduced or a new meaning is being assigned to an existing term (2021, p. 29).

Before I proceed, I need to explain the key terms used in these definitions, such as status quo, radical change, conditions of argumentative discussion, and conditions of justified violence.

The concepts of status quo and radical change are common in all types of extremism. Status quo is generally defined as the existing or dominant state of affairs, whether social, political, or economic. I define political extremism as a radical change of a political status quo (not an incremental change within the same framework). Not just any demand for changing a status quo is extremist. For example, suppose a group of people demands improvements in workers' conditions in a capitalist society and asks for a raise in the minimum wage from \$18 to \$20/hr. In that case, this is indeed a request to change the status quo in relation to minimum wage. Is it an extremist request? I would argue no because the economic framework and arrangement are intact, i.e., it is still a capitalist framework. What if another group of people, in their advocacy for improving workers' lives, demanded abolishing private property and suggested that worker cooperatives should replace it? This is also a change in the status quo. However, this one is a radical change of the status quo because it is outside the capitalist economic system where private property is the heart. My understanding of radical change is that it is different from the incremental changes within the existing framework. For example, Martin Luther King Jr. was an extremist because he was not advocating for black people to have access to a certain right, for example, the right to choose a seat of their choosing on a bus or the right to dine in a restaurant of their choosing. He did not even argue for a group of black people, for example, highly educated ones, to be treated equally as white people. What he was arguing for was racial equality of all black and white people in all aspects of life. In his *I Have a Dream* speech, he passionately asserted that "we hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal" (2017, 2:07). Thus, his demands were extremist against a racist status quo.

It is also important to pay attention to the phrase ‘aiming at radical replacement’ in the definition. ‘Radical replacement’ is always relevant to a context. Extremist ideas, especially in a political context, are action-orientated. Those who hold extremist ideas often cannot help but act out their extremism. So, what might be considered a radical proposition in context 1 and time 1, might not be radical in context 2 and time 2. For example, consider the women’s suffrage movement when it first emerged and now. In most of the world, women’s right to political participation is now part of the status quo. Nevertheless, for a country like Afghanistan under the rule of the Taliban, since the status quo is against women’s political involvement, any demand by women is considered radical.

To make sense of different types of civil extremism, principles of argumentative discussion need to be explained. By argumentative discussion, I mean two argumentative activities. The first one is to respect political rights, such as freedom of conscience and expression of those whom we disagree with and engage in argumentation with them.<sup>7</sup> Scott Aikin and Robert Talisse’s principle of political equals is relevant here. Among other features, according to Aikin and Talisse (2020), proper argumentation means employing second-order vocabulary and avoiding first-order vocabulary when evaluating our opponents’ arguments. First-order vocabularies are used to attack the arguer, while second-order vocabularies are used to evaluate the argument. So, in short, the first condition of argumentative discussion is about respecting the dignity of our opponent. The second condition of argumentative discussion is related to certain argumentative virtues, such as open-mindedness. The virtue of open-mindedness makes the arguer’s epistemic

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<sup>7</sup> I will further elaborate on this idea in chapter five under the concept of the ‘minimum principle.’

state modifiable based on engaging in argumentation with their opponents. Since it is part of human nature to protect our beliefs, a relevant epistemic virtue is courage. It takes courage for someone to be open-minded. All in all, a critical extremist is someone who argues against a status quo and advocates for a radical replacement while using second-order vocabularies with his opponents, respecting their dignity, and being open to considering their arguments. I acknowledge that this is a high bar to achieve, but theoretically and, at times, empirically, it is possible, as will be apparent throughout the course of this dissertation.<sup>8</sup>

These principles are significant because even in the case of disagreement, we can be mindful of our opponents' political equality and respect their dignity and innate human value even when we reject their arguments. In advocating for a radical alternative, we can still argue properly and civilly: after evaluation, we can freely reject our opponents' arguments as weak, false, unreasonable, or unjustifiable without labelling them as evil or stupid and, most importantly, without questioning their stands as political equals.<sup>9</sup>

At this point, I can imagine doubt emerges in the minds of readers about the possibility of this type of extremism, critical extremism: How can someone who respects conditions of argumentative discussions be an extremist? A reader might also ask: Is critical extremism just a theoretical possibility or a historical fact? Critical extremism is not only conceptual and theoretical possibilities but also practical possibilities. Significant historical figures such as King Jr., Mandela<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> More on argumentational virtues and vices in chapter five.

<sup>9</sup> More on civility and extremism in chapter six.

<sup>10</sup> This judgement does not apply to Mandela's short-lived armed struggle in South Africa.



and Gandhi were extremists, yet they were peaceful and supported their positions against their opponents with reasonable arguments. In our time, we can find members of social movements with extremist demands that can be categorized under critical civil extremism. For example, an influential figure who was accused of extremism to delegitimize his demands against animal cruelty was an American philosopher and pro-animal activist Tom Regan. In response to accusing animal rights activists of extremism, Regan responded, “This either means that animal activists will take any means to further their ends – which isn’t true – or else that their views are uncompromising and unqualified (Case, 2020, p. 615). The phrase ‘which is not true’ could mean extremist advocates of animal rights are not using violence, which is an essential condition for civil extremism. Moreover, given the fact that Regan is a philosopher, it is only reasonable to expect him to be willing to engage in critical discussion with those with whom he disagrees. Otherwise, we would have a dogmatic and fanatic philosopher who is not open to considering counterarguments. But is not ‘dogmatic and fanatic philosopher’ oxymoronic? So, it is more reasonable to conclude that Regan is an example of critical civil extremism.<sup>11</sup>

The rationale for classifying violent extremism into justified and unjustified violent extremism is that sometimes, using violence in advocating for a radical change is justified, but often, it is not. An example of the former is armed conflict against colonialism and apartheid (for example, Mandela’s short-lived armed struggle in South Africa); an example of the latter is terrorism.<sup>12</sup> Of course, not every extremist is a terrorist, but every terrorist uses violence

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<sup>11</sup> As an example of uncritical civil extremism, see my analysis of Garrisonian abolitionists in chapter 5.

<sup>12</sup> More on anti-colonialism in chapter five.

unjustifiably. Hence, when violence is necessary, it is justified violent extremism, but when it is unnecessary, it is unjustified violent extremism.<sup>13</sup> In a democratic society, when political rights such as freedom of conscience, freedom of expression, and freedom of assembly are respected, then using violence to change a status quo radically is unnecessary; therefore, it is unjustified; thus, we would have unjustified violent extremism if violence was used. However, when an undemocratic political regime violates these rights, then using violence to change a status quo becomes necessary and thus justified. Quassim Cassam (2022a) proposes a set of criteria to decide where using violence is unjustifiable and where it is not, which can be called ‘conditions for unjustifiable violence.’<sup>14</sup>

In the absence of these conditions, then we would have ‘conditions of justifiable violence.’ In other words, to distinguish unjustified violent extremism from justified violent extremism, we need to ask: What is the end goal (is it a just cause or not)? Is using violence necessary (is it the only way to achieve the goal?), is it used carefully (is it used proportionally?) and who are the targets (were innocent people targeted in the process) (Cassam, 2022a)? The key idea is that even though using violence is a useful indicator to identify extremism and its types, its normative dimension, whether justified or not, is not that easy to pin down. However, at least, we should be careful not to hastily dismiss a social movement’s legitimacy which has extremist demands just because violence is used.

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<sup>13</sup> An example of unjustified violent extremism is ISIS, see chapter 5.

<sup>14</sup> For details on ‘conditions for unjustifiable violence,’ see chapter two.

In the rest of the chapter, I will briefly answer three questions: What are this dissertation's research objectives and questions? Why are they important? And what are my research plans to achieve them? Then, I will discuss the research methodology. I will end the chapter by providing a brief outline of the following chapters.

### **1.3 What, Why and How**

This research is an argumentative study of extremism. Argumentation Theory is a complex and interdisciplinary study of argument and argumentation. Extremism is also a complex phenomenon and is studied by different disciplines. To make this project achievable, I need to limit both the perspectives of argumentation that I apply and the dimensions of extremism that I intend to study. From Argumentation Theory, I will mainly use rhetorical and virtue argumentation approaches (see Theoretical Framework section).

Why is this research significant? Many disciplines have studied political extremism, but studying it argumentatively is yet to be explored. By studying political extremism from the perspectives of Argumentation Theory, this project aims to expand our understanding of extremism in four ways. Firstly, it provides a conceptual clarity of extremism. Extremism is a controversial concept and is often mixed with other related concepts such as terrorism, fundamentalism, fanaticism, and radicalism (see chapter two). Clearing the mess around extremism is the first objective of this work. As part of the conceptual clarification of extremism, this project develops a novel approach to extremism by defining it in neutral terms and coming up with a typology of extremism (see chapter two for further analysis of types of extremism).

Secondly, this project aims to contribute to an area of argumentation studies which, according to Ladd and Goodwin (2022), is understudied: the discourse of extremists (see chapter three). Analyzing negative extremist discourse argumentatively is significant in producing counter-discourse. The third goal of this research is to examine the role of charisma in political extremism. In political argumentation, there is a power that goes above and beyond the force of an argument. However, as we will see in chapter four, argumentation scholars almost completely ignore charisma. So, this research examines the role of charisma as a way to explain that force and how charisma is related to extremism. Fourthly, this research provides an original argumentative understanding of cases of political civil extremism. I will investigate different argumentative strategies used by extremist arguers. Moreover, I will investigate the virtues and vices of civil and uncivil extremists (see chapter five). Lastly, as part of reflecting on lessons and challenges of extremism to democracy, this project examines civility in relation to extremism in three ways. Firstly, I will identify the possible misuse of civility as an oppressive discourse tool. Secondly, I will discuss the dangers extremism poses to civility. Thirdly, I will propose two accounts of civility to make sense of the problematic relations between extremism and civility: 'pro-status quo civility' and 'argumentative civility' (see concluding chapter).

Now, let us briefly discuss how I will achieve these research objectives. Objective number one, which can be called a 'new conceptualization of extremism,' is achieved through critically studying the existing literature on extremism and identifying problems with the current approaches, then employing argumentation concepts and methods on definition and argument schemes. Object number two is achieved through critically studying Jihadism literature and

applying a rhetorical study of the famous speech by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the caliph of the ISIS caliphate, titled *A Message to the Mujahidin and the Muslim Ummah in the Month of Ramadan*. Objective number three, which can be called ‘introducing argument from charisma,’ is achieved by applying a theoretical investigation to a case study. I will make a case for the relevancy of charisma to Argumentation Theory. First, I will locate the argument from charisma within the literature of argument from authority in Argumentation Theory by examining the relevancy of charisma to two argument types: argument from ethos and argument from deference (“deferential authority”).<sup>15</sup> After developing criteria for identifying arguments from charisma, I will examine Trump's Save America speech, which he made on January 6, 2021, to identify elements of extremism and charisma in his speech. The fourth objective will be achieved through investigating virtues and vices of civil and uncivil extremist arguers by applying virtue argumentation theory, vice epistemology and consequentialism. I will examine arguments from suffragist movements, anti-slavery movements and anti-colonialism. The last objective will be achieved by reflecting on a problematic account of civility, which I call ‘pro-status-quo civility,’ and suggesting a different account as a remedy, which I call ‘argumentative civility.’

#### **1.4 Theoretical Framework**

The general framework is Argumentation Theory. With this theory, I will mainly employ a rhetorical approach to argumentation. Rhetorical study of arguments here means the modification of ideas through discourse (Tindale, forthcoming a). I will employ a rhetorical

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<sup>15</sup> By argument from deference or “deferential authority” I mean Whately’s approach of argument from authority. Deference is what is produced or resulted based on the recognition of particular authority in Whately’s understanding of argument from authority.

approach to different case studies. For example, in chapter three, I will analyze a famous speech by Abubakir Al-Baghdadi, the first Caliph of ISIS. In the fourth chapter, I will analyze a controversial speech made by the former US president, Donald J. Trump, on January 6, 2021. In chapter five, I will analyze speeches and arguments by key figures in suffragist movements, anti-slavery movements and anti-colonialism. In addition to the rhetorical approach, I will also use virtue argumentation theory, vice epistemology and consequentialism to identify the virtues and vices of extremist arguers. Having said that, whenever appropriate, I will engage in argument reconstruction and scheme analysis. All in all, my aim is to make sense of extremist argumentation, and for that, despite the heavy usage of rhetorical analysis, I will be open to using any applicable tools that I find in the rich multidisciplinary toolbox of Argumentation Theory.

### **1.5 Chapter Outlines**

In this section, I will briefly introduce each chapter, starting from chapter two. I will introduce the main research questions of each chapter.

Chapter two, Literature Review: Extremism and its Dimensions, aims to support the neutral definition of political extremism and its types that I have introduced in this chapter. This is difficult but not impossible. According to Douglas Walton and his co-authors (2008), “Definitions, especially of ethical terms, are rarely, if ever, argumentatively neutral. Defining almost always means advancing an opinion about a situation, often one that is not explicitly formulated” (p. 67). Extremism is usually used in an emotionally charged environment, which adds to the difficulty of a neutral definition. Another difficulty for a neutral definition of extremism is the common association that I discussed earlier between extremism and an

inherently negative position such as terrorism. In this chapter, I will answer the following questions: What are the differences and similarities between extremism and related concepts such as terrorism, fundamentalism, fanaticism, and radicalism? What challenges and supports does the present literature on extremism pose to the neutral account of extremism? In answering these questions, I will conduct a comprehensive literature review on extremism.

Chapter three is titled: How Do Jihadis Argue? ISIS, as a Case of Unjustified Violent Extremism. This chapter is about an example of the most problematic extremism type: unjustified violent extremism. I will try to answer this question: how do jihadis argue? To answer this question, I will approach jihadism from three angles. First, I will examine the socio-political factors in Iraq that facilitated the birth of ISIS. Second, I will provide a summary of what Salafi-Jihadism is as an ideological infrastructure of ISIS. Thirdly, I will provide a detailed analysis of Baghdadi's speech, which played a crucial role in ISIS recruitment of thousands. The research questions relevant to this chapter are: what were the main socio-political factors that facilitated the movement's birth? What is jihad, jihadism, and Salafi-jihadism? These two main questions provide both historical and theoretical frameworks that are helpful in answering the third question: how did Baghdadi argue?

The title of chapter four is Expanding Argument from Authority: Argument from Charismatic Authority and the Case of Donald J. Trump. This chapter contributes to the literature of argument from authority by introducing argument from charisma. In this chapter, I aim to conceptualize an argument from charisma and then apply this conceptualization to a case study. As part of the conceptualization, I will investigate argument types close to charisma, such as

argument from ethos and deference. Moreover, I will use literature on charisma to define argument from charisma. Furthermore, I will suggest a list of criteria to identify arguments from charisma. Then, I will analyze the Save America speech by Trump on January 6, 2021. The main research questions of this chapter are as follows: What is charisma? What is an argument for charisma? How is charisma related to extremism? How do we identify an argument from charisma and charismatic elements in argumentation? What role did charisma play in argument adherence in the Save America speech?

In chapter five, I will study the extremist arguers' vices and virtues: *Extremism's Vices and Virtues: Towards a Consequentialist Virtue Argumentation*. The approach that I use is a pluralist approach to virtue. This means that I will examine the virtues and vices of extremists from a consequentialist approach, virtue argumentation theory, and vice epistemology. This approach to virtue is not unique, and other theorists have used it. For example, Heather Battaly has a pluralist approach: virtues can have good motives, good consequences, or both (2015). Other scholars also have studied virtues from a consequentialist perspective; for example, Cassam calls his account of vice epistemology *Obstructivism*, which he defines with consequentialist terms (Cassam, 2019). In this chapter, I will examine cases of civil and uncivil extremism. Cases of civil extremism are from the suffragist movements and the anti-slavery movements. The case of violent extremism is from the anti-colonial violent struggles. The main research question is: what are the vices and virtues of extremist arguers?

In chapter six, *Lessons and Challenges*, the concluding chapter, I will reflect on the main findings and provide a list of further research on argumentation and extremism. The key question



I will answer in this chapter is: What can we learn from extremism, and why should we worry about it?

## **Chapter Two: Literature Review: Extremism and its Dimensions**

### **2.1 General Introduction**

Even though the argumentative approach to extremism is just beginning to emerge, there is already a rich literature on extremism from other disciplines. This chapter is divided into four parts to make sense of extremism in the literature and to make a case for the significance of this research.

Part one focuses on the definitions/ explanations of extremism, the negative aspects of extremism, and the possible positive aspects of extremism. This part consists of nine sections. Each section will discuss some of the essential technical concepts coined by scholars in theorizing extremism, and their relevancy to the typology of extremism will be examined. Some of the key concepts that I will study in part one are the following: ideological extremism, method extremism, mindset extremism, goal-divisible extremism, goal-indivisible extremism, ephemeral gain, mortality salience, moral extremism, tunnel viewing, sinister attribution, crippled epistemology, extreme rhetoric, a social identity theory approach to extremism, and some others. In part two, through four sections, I will develop a case for the differences between extremism and often interchangeably used concepts such as terrorism, fundamentalism, fanaticism, and radicalism. In part three, I will review some of the concepts from argumentation theory that are useful for this project. In part four, I will use two schemes of argument from classification to elaborate on the typology of extremism endorsed in this project.

These organizational steps help make sense of the growing literature on extremism and identify why this research is different and what gap in the literature it can address. Moreover, it enables the reader to see the multidimensionality of this phenomenon, which is often

normatively depicted as a one-dimensional phenomenon, an inherently negative one, in the media and even in some scholarly works.

## **2.2 Definitions, Negative and Positive Consequences of Extremism**

### **2.2.1 Nozick's Eight Features of Extremism**

It could be argued that one of the most systematic works written on extremism is a three-page document by Robert Nozick (1997).<sup>16</sup> These pages could be read as a useful introduction to some of the ideas decades later explained in the rich philosophical study of extremism by Quassim Cassam: *Extremism: A Philosophical Analysis* (2022a). Nozick starts by acknowledging the difficulty of providing a straightforward definition of extremism (1997, p. 296). However, he suggests eight features to identify and make sense of extremism. Depending on the case at hand, we may witness one or more of these criteria (ibid). Therefore, an extremist would be “someone who has enough of these features. It needn't be each and every one of the eight” (ibid). Nozick's approach, it can be argued, is a logical support of the need for extremism classifications: if there are eight features of extremism, yet an extremist can have one or more of these features, then it logically follows that there is more than one type of extremism depending on the features involved.<sup>17</sup> So, what are those features?

The first feature is about the goal and doctrine of extremism. Extremists' goals have two features: they “claim or purport to have a certain objectivity, an impersonal validity,” and their

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<sup>16</sup> See Robert Nozick (1997).

<sup>17</sup> As a reminder, in this project, a neutral definition of extremism is advanced, and two types and four subtypes of political extremism are argued for. Political extremism is defined as a political position with a controversial nature aiming at a radical replacement of the political status quo either by means of public argumentation or violence and terror. The two main types are civil extremism and uncivil extremism. Civil extremism can be subdivided into critical and uncritical extremism. Uncivil extremism can be subdivided into justified and unjustified violent extremism.

“position falls somewhere near the end or fringe of something close to a normal distribution” (ibid). The extremist goal is different from, if not opposite, the status quo because it sits at the fringe of the political spectrum. For extremists, their goals have more legitimacy than non-extremist goals since they are impersonal and objective. This is similar to Cassam’s definition of ideological or positional extremism. For Cassam, ideological extremism or positional extremism “is a matter of moving in the political sense from the centre to the far left or right” (2022a, p. 14). Because of how important it is, I will reference Cassam’s approach to extremism throughout this chapter.

The second feature of extremism concerns extremists’ hostile views against opponents: “Anyone who is not with me, is against me” (Nozick, 1997, p. 297). This feature of extremism poses a serious obstacle to argumentation because if an extremist sees the opponent as “absolutely evil, with no shred of right or justice on their side,” then it is very unlikely for extremists to consider argumentation as a way to come to an agreement with anyone who disagrees with them. Suppose this hostile view against the opponent generates a violent method. In that case, this feature of extremism is only a necessary condition for uncivil extremism, which lacks principles of argumentative discussion and sees violence as a necessary method to achieve desired goals.<sup>18</sup> Therefore, argumentation is still relevant to other types of extremism.

The third feature of extremism, according to Nozick, is the non-compromising nature of the extremist mindset, which is a logical outcome of the last feature since “if the opponents are evil, as they [extremists] believe, then no compromise is possible” (1997, p. 297). Cassam’s

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<sup>18</sup> For discussion on ‘argumentative discussion,’ see chapter one.

psychological account of extremism is similar to this feature because “extremists in the psychological sense are especially fervent and uncompromising in their beliefs” (2022a. pp. 4-5). Is it possible for someone to be ideologically extremist yet not be extremist psychologically? I agree with Cassam when he writes, “It seems that a [an ideological] centrist can be a psychological extremist and a positional [ideological] extremist can be a psychological moderate” (ibid). For example, someone can rigidly and uncompromisingly believe in an ideologically moderate idea: democracy is the best form of government, and they will not consider any argument against their belief because they simply do not think there is one. Even though for Cassam, extremism is necessarily negative, his observations open the possibilities of having different types of extremism.

Nozick implicitly acknowledges the category of civil and critical extremism, even though he is not using these terms as I do. He writes, “[o]ne diagnostic criterion of extremism, therefore, is to hold no brief whatsoever for an opposing view. [However, it is possible for someone to be extremist without exhibiting this diagnostic criterion because] if one has principles and is convinced that they are right, there can be a *non-authoritarian* way of maintaining them; *one can still be willing to listen to and consider counter-arguments* [thus be critical]” (Nozick, 1997, p. 297, my italics). The phrase “non-authoritarian way,” could mean in a non-violent way, which is a necessary condition of civil extremism; moreover, the phrase “*willing to listen to and consider counter-arguments*” is a necessary condition for critical extremism. Therefore, Nozick’s observations also encourage classifications of extremism since extremism has different manifestations.

The fourth feature is about using a violent method. For Nozick, the clearest manifestation of an extreme method is terrorism. However, violence can be used both against others and against oneself as an extreme method to achieve one's goal, "for example, the self-immolation of Buddhist monks to protest the war in Vietnam" (Nozick, 1997, p. 298). Since Nozick argues right from the beginning that these eight features do not necessarily have to coexist, it follows that we may have extremists without the use of an extreme method, i.e., violence; hence, civil extremism becomes a possible manifestation of extremism. Cassam identifies the extreme method as a type of extremism: "A methods extremist is an individual or group that uses extreme methods [...] in pursuit of its objectives. The methods used by ISIS justify its classification as extremist (Cassam, 2022a. p. 12). So, the extreme method for both of them is defined by using violence.

The fifth feature is about the temporal dimension of extremism: extremists want to achieve their goal as soon as possible; therefore, "delays and gradual evolution are unacceptable" (ibid). In other words, extremists' goals are 'indivisible': they cannot be divided into smaller goals, and extremists cannot wait to achieve part of it now and the other parts later. The 'divisibility' and 'indivisibility' of goals are useful analytical tools to better understand extremism and its types, which I will explore later in section I: Understanding Extremist's Goals: Divisible and Indivisible Goals.

This sixth feature is the group dimension of extremism, "we are dealing here with organized movements that attempt to put their goals into effect" (Nozick, 1997, p. 298). Yet this feature is neither a necessary nor sufficient condition of extremism. Nozick's use of the Buddhist example shows that not all extremist actions are parts of movements. There are other cases of

individual extremism. One famous case is Theodore John Kaczynski, a mathematical genius known as the Unabomber. Kaczynski believed that the ongoing industrialization and technological progress would obliterate individual freedom and destroy the environment. He abandoned his academic life and lived in a small cabin in Montana without electricity and running water. He also engaged in violent extremist actions, such as distributing mail bombs that killed three people and injured twenty-three more, targeting people he believed were working for further technological progress. Kaczynski advocated for his position in a manifesto titled *Industrial Society and Its Future*, first published in September 1995 (Hassan et al., 2022). So, extremist ideas can be manifested by individuals at times, and the group dimension of extremism is not always a necessary condition for extremism.

The last two features of extremism concern the personality and psychology of extremists. According to Nozick, the psychology of an extremist is such that it prevents personality change: if X is extremist once, X is extremist forever. According to this account, extremism is like a chronic disease, and there is no treatment for it. This is a controversial claim, I must say; the literature on deradicalization shows that, indeed, personality changes are possible. For example, Ed Husain authored a famous book on his deradicalization journey: *The Islamist: Why I Joined Radical Islam in Britain, What I Saw Inside and Why I Left* (2007). On the fixed-extremist-personality, Nozick writes:

Although I am not a psychologist, I suggest that there is a determinate extremist personality. In looking over the terrain we find people often moving easily from one extremist group to another. For example, in Germany, there were those who shifted from

the Communist party to the Brownshirts without blinking an eyelash. In the United States, the Lyndon LaRouche group moved from the fringes of the extreme left to their present fascist posture, apparently without losing many members along the way. Extremists appear able to shift their loyalties at will; it would seem that the content of the extremist doctrine is not what counts, so much as the importance of remaining at the extreme of some salient dimension (1997, p. 298).

Thus, according to this feature, the precondition of extremism is not ideological extremism but psychological extremism: an extremist cannot help but be extremist, and even if he has to abandon his extremist ideology, his mindset is soon attached to another extremist ideology.

### **2.2.2 Extremist and Extreme Rhetoric**

Amy Gutmann's concept of 'extremist rhetoric' is useful in seeing the multidimensionality of extremism regarding who can be extremist and whether extremism can be positive. She defines extremist rhetoric as rhetoric with two conditions: "First, it tends toward single-mindedness on any given issue. Second, it passionately expresses certainty about the supremacy of its perspective on the issue without submitting itself either to a reasonable test of truth or to a reasoned public debate" (Gutmann, 2007, p. 71). So, extremist rhetoric can be defined as arguing with certainty and passion for or against a position with a single-minded attitude. These features pose a serious obstacle to political argumentation. Political issues are often complex and cannot be solved with a single-minded attitude. The subject of political arguments is often about interests, and different groups could have different interests. Therefore, public argumentation is



needed to reach compromised agreements. Extremist rhetoric leads to “blocking constructive compromises that would benefit all sides more than the status quo would” (Gutmann, 2007, p. 70). Having said that, what she identifies as extremism mainly captures one type of extremism in my typology: uncritical extremism. Thus, argumentation is still relevant to understanding and challenging the negative aspects of extremism and promoting a positive extremist idea, as has happened throughout history, for instance, extremist arguments against racism.

Is it possible for someone to use *extreme* rhetoric yet not be *extremist*? I agree with Gutmann when she argues that: “extreme rhetoric often is hard to distinguish from extremist rhetoric because it takes its language out of the same rhetorical playbook, but those who speak the words do not [necessarily] subscribe to an extremist ideology” (p. 71). Therefore, it can be argued that an extreme rhetorician is different from an extremist rhetorician because the former uses extreme rhetoric only as a rhetorical technique to gain adherence, but the latter wholeheartedly believes in her side of the argument. Since extreme rhetoric arguers might not hold an extremist ideology, it is reasonable to assume that they do not believe in using violence; therefore, they fall under the category of civil extremism. Moreover, extreme rhetoric arguers might also not share extremists' uncompromising state of mind since they do not approach arguments with a single-minded attitude; therefore, they could be categorized as critical extremists.

But why would someone who does not hold an extremist ideology use extreme rhetoric? The simple answer to this question is that extreme rhetoric could be more persuasive than non-extreme rhetoric. As Aristotle reminds us, people are not always convinced by the force of a

logical argument. To Aristotle (2007), in addition to logos, pathos and ethos are also sources of persuasion. An extremist, Gutmann argues, misuses the power of rhetoric because, in interpreting Aristotle, she writes, “the “proper task” of rhetoric is to drive home the logic, the truth, and the evidence of an argument” (p. 72). Instead, the extremist uses the persuasive force of rhetoric for “manipulation and deception in order to divide and conquer the democratic populace” (ibid). No wonder rhetoric is misused because in political argumentation, “it is often easier to speak in extreme sound bites than in moderate ones. Politicians can use extreme rhetoric in a calculated way to capture the public’s attention, [...] and to mobilize voters. [...] it is easier to believe passionately in a value or cause without regard to subtlety, reasoned argument, probabilistic evidence, and vigorously tested scientific theory or fact” (Gutmann, 2007, p. 71). Thus, it can be argued that the misuse of extreme rhetoric by politicians, at least partly, is caused by the lack of appreciation by the public for sophisticated argumentation. This also explains the significant role that slogans, as simple and passionate arguments, play in political argumentation.

According to Denton, “The public will seldom tolerate lengthy explanations or justifications of political attitudes and world views. [...] ‘Intolerance for depth’ by the public forces social and political leaders to simplify and package their ‘picture of the world,’ which must produce ‘impressions’ of action, direction, and thoroughness” (1980, p. 13). Slogans, in a sense, are spoon-feeding the public in plain and clear language: here is what we believe in and strive for (Hassan et al., 2022). This view is not always true, but it offers some explanation as to why sometimes politicians can mobilize the public with empty and exaggerated promises expressed through slogans.

Nevertheless, these analyses also lead to a positive account of extreme rhetoric: if extreme rhetoric can be misused, then it can also be used properly. Throughout this dissertation, we witness examples of positive extremism. On the positivity of extremist rhetoric, Gutmann writes, “we rightly applaud those who, when confronting slavery in antebellum America, called for its abolition *with certainty and single-mindedness* and defended liberty as the supreme value<sup>19</sup>” (Gutmann, 2007, p. 74 my italic). This shows that extremism as a method of argumentation can be put to the service of just as well as unjust causes; therefore, attaching a fixed and negative core to extremism is problematic.

Extremist rhetoric is a relevant argumentative tool across the board: democratic and republican; religious and secular; believers and atheists (Gutmann, 2007). An example of extremist rhetoric used by the Republicans is when Pat Buchanan, during the 1992 Republican National Convention, labelled values advocated by Democrats as a sign of religious war: “My friends . . . there is a religious war going on in our country for the soul of America. It is a cultural war, as critical to the kind of nation we will one day be as was the cold war itself” (2007, p. 73). Democrats also use extremist rhetoric. For example, in the 2004 campaign, then president of the United States, Bush, was compared to Hitler. One of the ads by democrats said, “[a] nation warped by lies. Lies fuel fear. Fear fuels aggression, [i]nvasion, [o]ccupation. What were war crimes in 1945 is foreign policy in 2003” (ibid). An example of extremist rhetoric in environmental argumentation is used by Mike Roselle. Roselle speaks with war-advocate and Islamist jihadist vocabularies: “[t]his is Jihad, pal. There are no innocent bystanders, because in these desperate

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<sup>19</sup> For more discussion on the argumentative virtues of extremists, see chapter five.

hours, bystanders are not innocent” (p. 74). Another example of extremism is what Gutmann calls ‘scientism,’ which expresses “an equal and opposite certainty [opposite to religious certainty], which also defies reason, that all human understanding derives from the comprehensive rational value of scientific inquiry” (ibid). In the current literature on the atheism and theism debate, there are famous names on the atheist front, referred to as the ‘Four Horsemen.’ They are Richard Dawkins, Christopher Hitchens, Sam Harris, and Daniel Dennett. According to Gutmann, by labelling faith as “one of the world’s great evils” and accusing “all organized religions for inciting hatred,” these philosophers and scientists are guilty of “single-minded fury.” What they are doing, she writes, is “[t]rading one kind of extremism in for another: creationism for scientism (p. 76). These examples, among many others, show that extremism has no homeland except human minds, and this is just one fact about extremism, which makes it a complex and multidimensional phenomenon.

### **2.2.3 Social Identity Theory Approach to Extremism**

One of the interesting theoretical frameworks for understanding extremism is social identity theory [SIT]. The basic theme of SIT is about in-group versus out-group mentality and how it transforms from healthy pluralism to extremist hostility. It is only natural for individuals to seek group identity across race, religion, nationality, and so forth. This identification becomes problematic when two groups blame each other for their own problems based on group identity differences. In other words, the problem arises when Group A holds Group B responsible for issues Group A faces just because Group B subscribes to a different group identity. Group mentality is a collectivist mentality in which individuals are not seen as individuals but as

members of a group; therefore, they are either members of an in-group or an out-group. According to Henri Tajfel and John C. Turner (1979), SIT demands the classification of people as belonging to two groups: us versus others. We are members of an in-group who share an identity. Others are members of an out-group who share an identity that is different from ours, i.e., the in-group. The differences in group identity generate the exclusion of other group members. In short, SIT is about the rationalization behind the us versus them mentality. This mentality can be fallacious. Walton identifies a fallacy which is relevant to SIT. According to Walton, one fallacious manifestation of ad populum “occurs where a speaker tries to shut off reasonable dialogue by dividing the world into us [in-group] and them [out-group]. The fallacy here is the attempt to exclude or prematurely close off reasonable argument” (2008, p. 134). Even though many authors explain extremism from a group identity framework, J.M Berger’s approach is most relevant here (2018). Berger defines extremism from the framework of SIT as the following:

Extremism refers to the belief that an in-group’s *success or survival can never be separated from the need for hostile action against an out-group*. The hostile action must be part of the in-group’s definition of success. Hostile acts can range from verbal attacks and diminishment to discriminatory behaviour, violence, and even genocide (Berger, 2018, p. 44, my italics).

Argumentation is useful for understanding the mentality of group thinking and the formation of group identity politics. Because individuals must be persuaded by the legitimacy or usefulness of group identity discourse in order to join the group voluntarily, we can investigate the discourse through rhetorical analysis. Moreover, the role of argumentation as a discursive

activity is not just limited to describing what is out there as external reality, for example, an out-group, but it also changes our perception of the external reality, for example, of how to deal with an out-group. According to Norman Fairclough, “language has an internal and dialectical relationship with society; ‘whenever people speak or listen or write or read, they do so in ways which are determined socially and have social effects’” (Fairclough 1989, p. 23 as quoted by Lahlali, 2014, p. 7). For Berger, writing and other communication tools play a significant role in transforming extremist ideas, which are *scattered* among individuals, into ideas that are *shared* by a group of individuals and form and strengthen group identity. Once extremist ideas are shared by groups, then we will have an extremist ideology. Extremist ideology is explained by Berger as the following:

Ideas and concepts are contained in texts, and a movement cannot adopt an ideology unless and until it is transmitted in a text. Without transmission and narrative, there would be no extremist groups, only individual extremists separately following their own self-designed beliefs. In addition to highlighting the importance of transmission, a focus on texts makes it easier to systematically analyze the contents of an ideology and track its evolution over time (2018, pp. 26-28).

This is an interesting account of extremist ideology, but it can be improved. Argumentation is not just a communicative tool through which ideas are exchanged. In addition to transferring ideas, argumentation also modifies those ideas because no audience is just a blank page. Thus, extremist ideology is not just collecting extremist ideas at individual levels but also modifying those ideas throughout the process of collecting them. An audience in any argument, including

an extremist argument, is not a passive receiver. However, since there is group identity, there should be a common reaction to an argument: a reaction that matches the in-group collective identity. But this common reaction happens after receiving and modifying extremist arguments.

We all have tendencies, strong or weak, for group identity, and not all group identity is necessarily problematic. One of the essential features of a democratic society is pluralism, and pluralism is manifested in individual and group forms. We may sharply criticize other political parties, religions, or other ethnic groups for issues a society faces, but these critiques are not necessarily problematic. To Berger (2018), even if violence is used, it does not always make a group extremist because two conditions have to be met in order to label a group that uses violence an extremist group. These conditions are “the need for *harmful activity* [i.e., violence] must be *unconditional and inseparable* from the in-group’s understanding of *success* in order to qualify as extremist” (Berger, 2018, p. 45 my italics). So, group A becomes extremist when the existence of Group B is unconditionally considered by Group A to be the preventative factor for the unsuccessfulness of Group A. Moreover, the only way for an extremist group to deal with a rival group is through violence. For example, the Jewish genocide in Germany can be analyzed through the lens of SIT: for Nazis, Jews were responsible for Germany’s issues, and the only way to solve these issues was by annihilating the Jews.

In this context, Nazism can be defined as an extremist ideology. For this anti-Jewish thinking to become an ideology, a discourse of propaganda against Jews had to be shared in German society through various communicative tools. According to Berger, extremist ideology in the context of SIT is: “...a collection of texts that describe who is part of the in-group, who is part

of an out-group, and how the in-group should interact with the out-group. Ideological texts can include a wide range of media types, including books, images, lectures, videos, and even conversations” (Berger, 2018, p. 26). Extremist ideology, in this sense, can be analyzed from the perspectives of multimodal argumentation<sup>20</sup> because different methods of communications are used to exchange arguments.

A key feature that stands out from Berger’s approach to extremism is that extremism has different manifestations. If in-group versus out-group thinking makes people hostile to each other and this hostility is expressed through a wide range of activities, from verbal attack up to engaging in genocide, then extremism could have different manifestations and types: a type that engages in verbal attacking (uncritical, yet civil extremism); a type which engages in violence and even engages in a genocidal activity (unjustified-violent extremism). Because extremism has different manifestations, then what follows is that “not all violence is extremist, and not all extremists are violent” (Berger, 2018, p. 28).

Based on this discussion of the social identity theory approach to extremism, I suggest the following scheme for the uncivil extremist argument.

Premise 1: our group (in-group) differs from their group (out-group).

Premise 2: out-group (their group) is an existential threat to our group (in-group).

Premise 3: our group (in-group) has a legitimate right to defend itself from their group (out-group).

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<sup>20</sup> Multimodal argumentation studies communicative tools which are not necessarily textual but visual, yet they affect arguments, for example, pictures and videos. See Jens E. Kjeldson, *The Study of Visual and Multimodal*, 2015.



Premise 4: the best strategy (or the only effective strategy) to defend our group against their group is violence.

Conclusion: Therefore, using violence (terror, for example) by our group (in-group) against their group (out-group) is legitimate.

The usefulness of this scheme should be tested in different cases, but for the time being, it seems to provide an explanation of anti-Jewish thinking during the emergence of Nazism in Germany.<sup>21</sup>

Premise 1: Our group (Nazis) is different from their group (Jews)

Premise 2: Jews are an existential threat to our group (Nazis).

Premise 3: our group (Nazis) has a legitimate right to defend itself from their group (Jews).

Premise 4: the best strategy (or the only effective strategy) to defend our group is violence.

Conclusion: Therefore, using violence (genocide, for example) by our group (Nazis) against their group (Jews) is legitimate.

This pattern of thinking might strike some people as too simplistic. It is hard to imagine the brutality of unjustified-violent extremism, for example, Nazism, with this scheme. But, in some circumstances, individuals' judgments are bound by what their group considers legitimate or not: if for in-group X is expected, then doing X is legitimate, no matter how audacious X might be for the general public. Russel Hardin, on this point, writes:

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<sup>21</sup> We will see the applicability of this scheme in the discussion on Salafi-Jihadism as a case of unjustified-violent extremism in chapters three and five.

Members of isolated extremist groups can do things that seem extraordinary to others, as though they were audacious beyond measure. But the individuals in an isolated group are not so clearly audacious in their actual context. *They merely do what people in their groups do.* Such action, if undertaken by an ordinary person whose life is wholly within the larger community, would be audacious (2002, p. 15, my italics).

Thus, it can be suggested that inter-group argumentation is one of the fundamental mechanisms to combat the formation of violent extremist ideology. If we are left alone to only interact and argue with like-minded people in our group, we may develop an epistemology that is crippled.<sup>22</sup> When members are only interacting with the members of their group, then a harmful extremist idea spreads like a plague; the vaccine that is needed is an external idea: an idea from an out-group.

#### **2.2.4 Extremism as Anti-constitutional Democracy: Historical Roots**

Generally speaking, the first impression of extremism is negative, and in the history of Western thought, extremism has been used to label non-democratic actors (Backes, 2016 & Canetti, 2005). The negative impression of extremism has a long history—as long as the ancient Greek’s impression of the concept. In ancient Greece’s ethical understanding, extremism is, by definition, opposite to the ethics of moderation; therefore, it is undesirable. According to the ethics of moderation, “in every action situation, there is a midpoint (mesotes) between the too-great (hyperbole) and the too-little (elleipsis), a distinction between the excessive and the moderate,”

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<sup>22</sup> More on crippled epistemology in section E: On the Psychological Approach, and chapter five.

what is desirable is neither too-great nor too-little, but that exists between them (Aristotle as explained by Backes 2006, p. 242).<sup>23</sup> Therefore, extremism, i.e., excessiveness, is, by definition, wrong, ethically speaking.

It can be argued that Plato's classification of types of governments is a reflection of the ethics of moderation. On both sides of the spectrum, there is excessiveness: excessive control, i.e., tyranny/despoteia, and excessive chaos, therefore lawless democracy/ anomia. In between, there are many options, such as oligarchy, aristocracy, and legal democracy. Aristotle developed this line of thinking and suggested: "politeia," a mixture of "oligarchic" and "democratic" elements, as the relatively best form of government, in which the maxim of avoiding extremes was to lead to a constitution at the same time it guaranteed *stability* in such matters as the *liberty* of citizens" (Backes, 2016, p. 243, my italic). Avoiding extremism here means a system of government in which citizens enjoy organized liberty: neither sacrifice order for liberty nor liberty for order. At the individual level, extreme behaviour is unvirtuous because, for Aristotle, virtue exists between two extremes. Being extremist, it follows, is against a good life because only "a moderate and virtuous life allows for eudemony, the unfolding of human happiness" (Backes, 2016, p. 245).

Following Karl Loewenstein (1969), Backes (2016) connects the classical understanding of extremism to the modern classification of political systems. The key issue here is power, and the key question is whether it is divided. Extremism is understood as undivided power, which is the antithesis of constitutionalism, as a system in which power is divided among different institutions.

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<sup>23</sup> More discussion on the Aristotelian position on virtue in chapter five.

Therefore, extremism is striving for total control of power; thus, it is defined as autocracy or dictatorship (Loewenstein, 1969 & Backes, 2016). In distinction to autocracy or monarchy, Robert Dahl, one of the major theorists of constitutionalism, uses the polyarchy term to refer to “a system in which a competition for influence, power and positions is carried out by peaceful means” (Dahl, 1971, p. 5). So, polyarchy, as a constitutional state, is opposite to an extremist state in two essential ways: power is distributed among different layers, and struggles to gain power are conducted peacefully, i.e., elections, among other means. Backes uses Dahl’s polyarchy theory to provide an interesting definition of extremism as the following:

Extremism [is a regime type which] aims at “monism” and “monocracy” in the sense of the enforcement of a bundled claim to power which – if at all possible – eliminates any competition, does not tolerate variety and opposition [... It] obstructs and suppresses the autonomous commitment of groups and individuals [...] (2016, p. 249).

After this discussion, we may be inclined to conclude that extremism is always anti-constitutional, thus always violent and negative, yet this conclusion is not accurate. Backes provides an analogical argument to make a point against the essentialist view of extremism, i.e., extremism is always negative. In comparing extremism with poison, Backes writes: “above all, political extremisms that act within the framework of legality [ i.e., civil extremism] may, in such a way – like poisons that, in small doses, develop healing effects – give an impetus to course corrections, point to neglected problem areas and, lastly – aside from their disintegrating effects – bring about integrative effects” (2016, p. 260). Therefore, it can be argued that extremism has different types, and civil extremism, at times, is beneficial. Moreover, what previously was

considered extreme, might be “golden middle” now (Backes, 2016, p. 247). The cases of women’s suffrage and racial equality were considered extreme, yet today, they are golden middles for democracy.<sup>24</sup>

Here, it can be argued that civil extremism is a mixture of extremity and moderation: ideologically speaking, it is extreme, meaning it is not in the middle of the political spectrum; however, methodologically speaking, it is not extreme: it uses a moderate means, i.e., legally allowed means of public argumentation and civil disobedience.

### **2.3 Psychology, Ideology, and Method of Extremism**

In the section about Robert Nozick, I briefly mentioned Quassim Cassam’s understanding of extremism. In this section, I will introduce him further, and because of the richness of his account, some of his analysis will be explained in the later sections and chapters. Cassam (2022a) ends his important book by suggesting a philosophy of extremism. He criticizes philosophers for not taking the subject of extremism as worthy of their attention and encourages the philosophical study of the subject. As part of his justification for the necessity of the philosophical study of extremism, he writes:

[...] extremism in its different forms is not a peripheral phenomenon in the world today. Extremist thinking, attitudes and preoccupations are depressingly common, extreme methods continue to be used in many places as a substitute for politics, and extremist ideologies are gaining in popularity. The question is whether philosophy has anything to

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<sup>24</sup> In chapter five, I will provide a study of the argumentational virtues and vices of these movements.

say about any of this. [...] there are [...] questions about extremism that are plainly philosophical. That is the case for a philosophy of extremism, [...] (2022a. p. 222).

Cassam (2022a) distinguishes between three forms of extremism: methodological, ideological, and psychological. The psychological form of extremism refers to the strength with which the extremist ideology is defended. The methodological form refers to the extremist methods used to achieve the stated ends, and the ideological form refers to an extremist ideology that is adopted within a multi-dimensional spectrum (political, religious, or pro-violence). In this section, each form will be discussed briefly.

### **2.3.1 Psychological Approach**

On the psychological approach to extremism, the key question is not what X, an individual or a group, believes but how X believes in terms of the intensity of the belief. An extremist here is someone who lacks moderation in their position, and “they are *fervent* believers in their own ideologies, *whatever those ideologies* are, and this is the key to their extremism” (Cassam, 2022a. pp. 17-18 my italics). The phrase ‘whatever those ideologies are’ accurately implies people could be extremist in mindset across the board: from left to right; from far right to far left; from atheists to religious, etc. All of us, regardless of who we are and what we stand for, hold some beliefs fervently, don’t we? I think we do.

Having said that, because of the often causal relationship between what one thinks and how one acts, to anticipate the possible harmful or useful implications of an extremist mindset, we have to consider both *what* idea one holds and *how* he holds it. It is something if X fervently believes in animal rights; it is quite something else if X believes in the legitimacy of bombing

slaughterhouses, even though the end goal is the same: put an end to animal cruelty. Nevertheless, for Cassam, regardless of the nature of the belief, an extremist mindset might still be problematic because “they are motivated to commit acts of violence *by the sheer intensity* of their convictions” (2022a. p. 18, my italics). But ‘the sheer intensity’ of a belief is not a necessary condition of violent extremism; for example, an extremist pacifist is someone who uncompromisingly stands against any violent means. This is one of the reasons why in my classification of extremism, we have critical and uncritical extremism as two subtypes of non-violent extremism, i.e., civil extremism. Anyway, in psychological extremism, “extremists are people who believe uncompromisingly, in the sense that they are unwilling to revise their beliefs or consider the possibility that they might be wrong” (Cassam, 2022a. p. 19). In my typology of extremism, this definition catches mainly one type of extremism: uncritical extremism.

Moreover, not all forms of psychological extremism, i.e., holding a position uncompromisingly, are necessarily bad morally speaking: Nelson Mandela’s position against apartheid, King’s position against anti-black racism, and so on. This conclusion seems to be in line with Cassam’s view on the differences between being an extremist on sound and unsound principles: if you are extremist (unwilling to compromise) on a sound principle (for example, that racism is wrong), then you are not a “true psychological extremist”; if you uncompromisingly hold an unsound principle (for example, apartheid is legitimate) then you are a dogmatic and true psychological extremist (2022a. p. 20). Cassam seems to be not using the term sound and unsound in a strictly logical sense, i.e., deductively sound, but rather in an ethical sense: a sound

principle is a morally justifiable principle, and an unsound principle is a morally unjustifiable principle.

The most problematic feature of an extremist mindset on an unsound position is the preoccupation with purity, which is: “the [...delusion] of the religious, ideological, or ethnic purity of one’s in-group” (Cassam, 2022a, p. 23). This preoccupation provides extremists with justification to do whatever they are capable of to serve their interests. This mindset is fundamental to uncivil extremism. Yet, it is not just how pure one thinks a position is but also what the position is that should be taken into consideration. Pacifists might believe in the purity of pacifism yet clearly do not engage in violence; otherwise, they would no longer be pacifists. Therefore, “it is not out of the question that a person or group might be preoccupied with persecution, purity, and myths about the past or future, but not be Pro-Violence” (Cassam, 2022a, p. 24). A person who believes in the purity of their position without engaging in violence to change the status quo according to their view falls under the category of civil yet uncritical extremism. Cassam also acknowledges the possibility of civil extremism, even though it is just a theoretical possibility for him. What I call civil extremism, he calls ‘armchair’ extremism: “the armchair extremist has extreme views but is unwilling to impose them on others, least of all to impose them on others by force” (ibid, p. 137).

One of the major causes of an extremist mindset is group identity. Russell Hardin (2002), in an interesting piece, “The Crippled Epistemology of Extremism,” explains the role of group identity through two concepts: paranoid cognition and sinister attribution. When individuals interact with like-minded individuals in the group they identify with, they become less and less



aware of how actually other individuals and other groups think. As a result, individuals begin to develop paranoid cognition “in which individuals begin to suppose the worst from those they do not know or even from those with whom they are not immediately in communication” (2002, p. 11). Sinister attribution is related to paranoid cognition in which individuals “attribute unduly personalistic motivations to others and become increasingly distrustful of those others” (ibid). Although Hardin argues that these phenomena have been addressed by psychologists, “they may primarily be simple matters of the *skewed epistemology* that comes from lack of contact with and, hence, lack of accurate knowledge of relevant others” (ibid., my italic).<sup>25</sup> These explanations clearly show how vital it is to have intergroup discussions. The other group/s could be a political party, a different ethnic group, or simply colleagues of a different department.

### **2.3.2 On Method Extremism**

What method for changing the political status quo is extremist? The straightforward answer is the method of using violence (Cassam, 2022a). Above all, using violence is what makes extremism problematic for those who do not share the extremist goal, i.e., changing the status quo radically. Often, but not always, using violence is what connects psychological, ideological, and method extremists: an extremist mindset believes in using violence, ideological extremism justifies/rationalizes it, and method extremism uses it. However, what is violence, and is using violence always negative? Slavoj Žižek’s classification of types of violence is useful here. Žižek (2009) identifies three types of violence: subjective, symbolic, and systematic. The fundamental

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<sup>25</sup> In chapter five, I will return to the extremist crippled epistemology and identify its argumentational vices and virtues.

differences between these types are whether the violence is physical and whether it is group-based. Subjective violence is physical, for example, killings; symbolic violence is non-physical, for example, hate speech; and systematic is where another group exploits a group, and this exploitation is built into how a political system works, for example, apartheid, racism, and so on. The agent of subjective violence is identifiable, unlike systematic violence, since violence is spread across the system.

This classification still does not answer the question of the justifiability of violence. Under what circumstances, if ever, is using violence justifiable? Cassam proposes a set of criteria to decide where using violence is justifiable and where it is not. For a violent act to be considered extremist, thus unjustifiable, Cassam argues, an agent or group should be guilty of one or more of the following. These conditions can be called ‘conditions for unjustifiable violence:’

- using violence for unjust causes;
- using violence when there are viable alternatives;
- using disproportionate violence;
- using violence against innocents. (2022a, p. 64)

In other words, for Cassam, in order to label a violent method extremist, we need to ask, what is the end goal (is it a just cause or not?), is using violence necessary (is it the only way to achieve the goal?); is it used carefully (is it used proportionally?) and who are the targets (were innocent people being targeted in the process?). Exploring these dimensions would require a

whole chapter, but the key idea is that even though using violence is a useful indicator to identify extremism and its types, the normative dimension of it is not that easy to pin down.<sup>26</sup>

In Cassam's thinking, if a social movement uses violence, then either it is justifiably used, thus, the social movement is not extremist, or violence is unjustifiably used, thus, the social movement is extremist. In other words, the label of extremism is always used to describe the bad guys because good guys cannot be extremists even if they use violence to achieve their just goals. Nelson Mandela is an important empirical case to understand this argument. Mandela, in his long political struggle against apartheid, advocated both violent and non-violent methods. In both cases, Mandela, for Cassam, was not extremist: "the ANC's violence did not make them violent methods extremists because they had no choice. Extremists use violence when there *is* a choice when non-violence is a realistic alternative" (2022a, pp. 64-65). For Cassam, because Mandela and other members of the ANC used violence for a just cause, and they could not avoid using it; therefore, they were not method extremists.

I think instead of arguing that the ANC struggle to radically change the political status-quo of South Africa, i.e., to end apartheid, was not extremist, just because we generally agree with the cause, it is more neutral and systematic to identify what type of extremist it was. In my classification, the ANC struggle and other anti-colonial liberatory movements through armed struggles are categorized under justified-violent extremism.<sup>27</sup> This is because they used violence to change the status quo radically, and their struggle was morally superior to the status quo they

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<sup>26</sup> Using violence as a criterion for identifying types of extremism is useful in my typology of extremism, otherwise, for Cassam, extremism is almost always negative.

<sup>27</sup> In chapter five, I will examine the argumentational virtues and vices of violent anti-colonial struggles.

opposed; for example, racial equality is morally superior to apartheid. A clear example of a violent extremist method that violates the criteria Cassam puts forward to justify using violence is ISIS. ISIS can be the archetypal example of a method extremist because they used “unnecessary or disproportionate violence in pursuit of an unjust but hopeless cause, and direct[ed] their violence against illegitimate targets” (p. 80). ISIS is indeed a significant case to understand unjustified-violent extremism in recent history, and I will dedicate a chapter to it.

### **2.3.3 On Ideology**

The ideological approach to extremism completes Cassam’s triangle theory of extremism: psychological, method, and ideological extremism. In simple terms, “one’s ideology tells one what to do as well as what to think” (Cassam, 2022a. p. 14). What makes an ideology extremist? Cassam uses the political spectrum to answer this question. An extremist ideology is located at the end of the political spectrum: far-right ideology and far-left ideology. This understanding can also be called a positional approach to extremism. According to Cassam, “moving from left to right [on the political spectrum], there is communism, socialism, social democracy, liberalism, conservatism and fascism” (ibid. p. 14). What follows from this positional approach of extremist ideology is “that social democrats and liberals are not ideological extremists” (ibid. p. 14). Even though the positional approach is particularly useful, it is problematic: where should we locate ISIS on the political spectrum, far-right or far-left? Having identified ISIS as the archetype of extremism, Cassam needs to make sure there is a place for ISIS in his positional approach to extremism. In the previous section, we discussed relations of *using* a violent method to

extremism; here, what we need to note is that for Cassam, “any party or group that *advocates* the use of violence is, by definition, extremist in an ideological sense” (ibid. p. 16 my italic).

One of the interesting observations of Cassam is the possibility of extremism neither on the far-left or far-right spectrum nor on the spectrum of pro or against violence. How might this even be a possibility? This is possible because even though an extremist mindset might lead to extremist methods, there is a possibility for one to cling to an idea fervently and uncompromisingly; thus, be a psychological extremist without being a method extremist in advocating for that idea. On this point, Cassam writes:

Someone whose beliefs are in the middle of the left-right spectrum is a centrist. The opposite of a psychological extremist is a moderate. It seems that a centrist can be a psychological extremist and a positional extremist can be a psychological moderate. An extreme centrist would be someone whose centrist, middle-of-the-road views are uncompromisingly and fervently held, while a moderate positional extremist would be someone with extreme views that are weakly held (2022a. pp. 4-5).

Even though, for Cassam, extremism is inherently negative, his reasoning seems to support the classification of extremism since we can have a centrist position with an extremist mindset and an extremist position with a moderate mindset. However, if extremism can be classified among psychological, method, and ideological lines, what makes all of them ‘extremist’? The answer is what Cassam calls ‘extremist style,’ which is “a way of thinking and acting that one finds in extremists with very different political agendas” (2022a. p. 21). Extremist style is what makes people who hold opposite ideologies, i.e., far-right and far-left, extremist because both of

them share some mental preoccupation. Examples of these mental preoccupations are believing in the purity of one's belief and in superiority in one's position, including ethical superiority. The purity preoccupation helps us understand the uncompromising nature of an extremist mindset and their willingness to engage in atrocities with a clear conscience: "[that] people who massacre large numbers of innocents can think of themselves as morally virtuous is startling, but it explains the extremists' sense of absolute certainty and unwillingness to compromise" (Cassam, 2022a, p. 5). Having said that, it is important to see a possibility of extremism without the purity preoccupation mindset: a philosopher who argues against animal cruelty might still seriously consider counterarguments without advocating violence; thus, she would be a critical extremist.

#### **2.4 Extremism as a Moral Vice**

Moral convictions are necessary; otherwise, we would be wandering around with no ground to act and judge. We need moral conviction to guide how we interact with others and ourselves. Sometimes, the lack of conviction in supporting a worthy cause because the logical scrutiny of that cause delays the support; as William Yeats said, "the best lack all conviction, while the worst are full of passionate intensity" (as quoted in Case, 2020, p. 615). One common feature of dictators is their passionate intensity in their speeches. This reminds us of the need for passionate rhetoric in good and just arguments: sometimes, extreme rhetoric is needed to give good arguments teeth. Senator Barry Goldwater's famous saying is relevant here: "I would remind you that extremism in the defense of liberty is no vice. And let me remind you also that moderation in the pursuit of justice is no virtue" (Goldwater, 1964). Having said that, conviction, generally, and moral conviction, in particular, could be problematic. Does this mean that conviction in itself

is neither good nor bad? Does it all depend on the subject of the conviction? This section is a brief investigation of moral conviction that is connected to extremism.

For Spencer Case, a moral conviction becomes extremist when three conditions are met: “(1) [an agent] has a moral conviction; (2) her conviction is strongly and [emotionally] invested; (3) on account of this, she is unable or unwilling to take competing moral considerations into account in her thought or behaviour or to consider evidence that might lead her to qualify her conviction” (2020, p. 617). Being convinced of a moral position is different from being persuaded in the sense that the former leads to action, but the latter does not necessarily. Conviction is what bridges thought to action. Case writes, “if someone told you that he had a conviction that eating meat was wrong but took no steps to minimize his meat consumption, you’d reasonably doubt his sincerity” (2020, p. 617). So, moral conviction is sincere to the degree of generating actions in alignment with that conviction. But what is wrong with a person’s moral conviction, for example, that one shall not kill innocent people? I would argue nothing is wrong. However, Case might respond that regardless of the subject of the conviction, extremist moral conviction is problematic because it generates zealotry, as the result of condition number 2, and tunnel vision, as the result of condition number 3.

Tunnel vision is problematic because it prevents the believer of a moral conviction from critically considering the counterarguments to that conviction. Zealotry is also problematic because it may generate overreactions instead of equal reactions in response to an unjust act. The combination of these conditions, Case argues, is that moral conviction generates extremism in the sense of “moral motivation unmoored from circumspection, humility, and self-

reflectiveness, which can make people like blind horses, running without seeing where they are going” (2020, p. 619). Extremism, in this sense, is similar to uncritical extremism if advocating violence is not an internal part of the conviction. However, if violence is an internal part of the conviction, then it will fall under the category of uncivil extremism. In any case, we should not be quick in dismissing the possible usefulness of moral conviction because, in the history of argumentation, we can find examples in which strong convictions worked as a positive force in giving spirit to social movements. For example, women’s suffrage movements had a moral conviction in the right of women to vote because they acted upon their conviction and were unwilling to compromise it.<sup>28</sup> Yet, we all agree now that it was a justified moral conviction. Even today, if we honestly examine our stands on various moral questions, we easily see we have moral convictions: genocide is wrong, rape is wrong, etc. Thus, extremism, in general, and moral conviction, in particular, are not necessarily negative, as the literature on extremism often assumes.

## **2.5 Understanding Extremist’s Goals: Divisible and Indivisible Goals**

Ronald Wintrobe (2012) provides several interesting insights on extremism by focusing on extremists’ goals. His classification of goals into ‘divisible’ and ‘indivisible goals’ shows useful technical concepts to understand the nature of extremism, even though, at first, they seem self-explanatory. A social movement with a grand goal that it is willing to divide into smaller and incremental goals is quite different from a social movement that is unwilling to compromise on

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<sup>28</sup> See Chapter Five for an extended version of this argument.



its grand goals. The possibility of using an extremist method, including violence, is much higher in a group with an uncompromising and indivisible goal. For Wintrobe (2012), understanding the nature of a social movement's goal is crucial in terms of policy implications of how a state should respond because knowing the goals of extremist groups will provide an understanding of their actions.

For Wintrobe, "the simplest way to think of an extremist is [as] someone whose views are outside the mainstream on some issue or dimension" (2012, p. 6). This definition does not say anything about the nature of extremist views or goals except their being outside the mainstream; thus, extremism could be positive and necessary at times. Therefore, Wintrobe concludes, "a society that tries to stamp out extremism is trying to stamp out its capacity to dream" (2012, p. 260). So far, his approach, to a great extent, matches the approach of this dissertation. Yet, Wintrobe, like most researchers on extremism, generalizes the negative aspect of extremism: "the similarities among extremist movements make it worthwhile to investigate them as a *single phenomenon*" (ibid. p. 6 my italics).

Wintrobe (2012) identifies three features that are common in all extremisms, which, in his mind, make all extremism 'a single phenomenon.' These features are all negative: destructive outcomes, single-mindedness of extremist leaders, and fanatical loyalty of the followers. As I have explained in the introductory chapter, extremism is a multidimensional phenomenon, and reducing it to one aspect is problematic. Therefore, these three features, although accurate, are only true of unjustified violent extremism and uncritical civil extremism. The names of extremist leaders that Wintrobe (2012) mentions support this argument: "Martin Luther King, Nelson

Mandela, Slobodan Milosevic, and Osama bin Laden.” What was common to all these leaders was that “they wanted to effect radical change in society” (Wintrobe, 2012, p. 79). However, different methods were used: “King abhorred violence. Mandela was willing to use it only reluctantly. For Milosevic, it was a principal tool. For Osama bin Laden, it is virtually the only tool” (ibid). Clearly, the outcomes of the first two leaders were/ are positive: eradicating/ reducing racism and apartheid, while the outcome of the last two leaders was catastrophic: Bin Laden was the mastermind of 9/11, and Milosevic was accused of crimes against humanity during the Yugoslav Wars of the 1990s. So, it is reasonable to classify types of extremism since it has different goals/outcomes, is achieved with different methods, and is advocated by different leaders with different ideologies.

According to Wintrobe, believers in indivisible goals have several features in addition to the unwillingness to compromise and negotiate. Extremist goals, i.e., indivisible goals, generate extreme methods and greater solidarity (2012). There is a sense of utopia and wild ambition about extremist goals that attract single-minded followers who are unwilling to give up on their indivisible goal. Although extremist movements might be different in their demands, “they often have one thing in common – a particular structure of “all or nothing” or indivisibility or utopianism” (ibid. p. 8), which makes extremist methods, i.e., violence, a necessary tool. Wintrobe argues that the straightforward explanation for this is that “leaders whose views are outside the mainstream adopt extremist methods when there is an indivisibility that characterizes the relationship between the intermediate goal of the group and its ultimate goal” (2012, p. 79). Some examples are communism, nationalism, and Islamic fundamentalism. An extremist

communist cannot divide control over the means of production as an intermediate goal from the achievement of communist society, which is the ultimate and grand goal. An extremist nationalist cannot separate control over territory as an intermediate goal from the achievement of nationhood, which is the ultimate goal. An Islamic fundamentalist is not willing to distinguish freeing the Muslim nations of foreign and secular influences as an intermediate goal from establishing a pure Islamic society, which is the ultimate goal (Wintrobe, 2012).

Wintrobe (2012) argues that even in cases where two parties hold opposite views, they may exhibit the same set of features. In agreement with Hannah Arendt, the similarities among extremist groups can be summarized as “totalitarianism.” Arendt was referring to the similarities between Soviet communism and Nazi fascism, but Wintrobe was referring to the Palestinian and Israeli conflict. Extremist members of both groups among them, Wintrobe argues, have seven features in common:

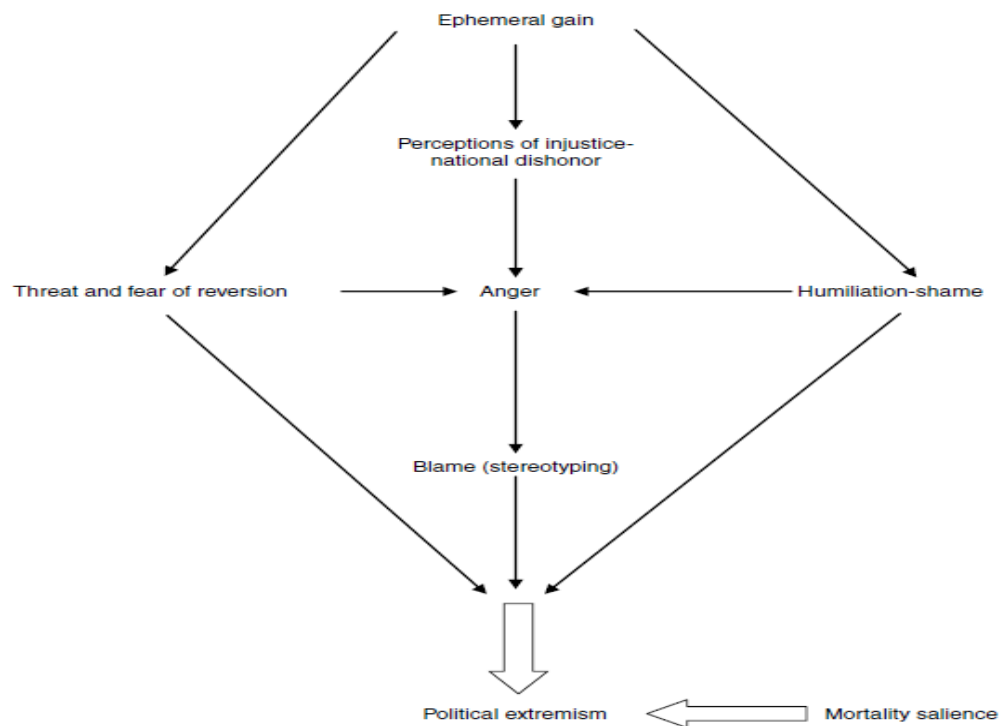
- 1- Both are against any compromise with the other side.
- 2- Both want the entire land of Palestine for their group.
- 3- Both are entirely sure of their position.
- 4- Both advocate and sometimes use violence to achieve their ends.
- 5- Both are nationalistic.
- 6- Both are intolerant of dissent within their group.
- 7- Both demonize the other side. (Wintrobe, 2012, p. 5)

Even though this observation is useful, it only accurately captures two types of extremism: uncivil extremism, since violence is used, and uncritical extremism, since there is no consideration

of the opponent's concern and there is no compromise of the demands. Moreover, civil extremism lacks number four since violence is not used as the only method, and critical extremism lacks number one since counterarguments are considered.

## 2.6 A Theory of Violent Extremism

One of the most comprehensive empirical studies on extremism is a book by Manus Midlarsky, *Origins of Political Extremism: Mass Violence in the Twentieth Century and Beyond* (2011). After a comprehensive historical investigation of the catastrophic wars in the 20th century, he suggested a theoretical framework to provide a causal explanation of the rise of violent extremism, i.e., uncivil extremism. A summary of the theory is illustrated in the following diagram:



Summary of a theory of extremism (Midlarsky, 2011, p. 67).

Before explaining the diagram, let us read how Midlarsky defines extremism because it helps to understand what type of extremism the diagram explains.<sup>29</sup> He defines political extremism as:

... [T]he will to power by a social movement in the service of a political program typically at variance with that supported by existing state authorities, and for which individual liberties are to be curtailed in the name of collective goals, including the mass murder of those who would actually or potentially disagree with that program (2011, p. 7).

At the top of the diagram, there is ephemeral gain. By ephemeral gain, Midlarsky means that in the context of war, sometimes a gain or victory is not permanent but fleeting and temporary, for example, “control and then loss of political authority within a given territory” (2011, p. 25). So, it is a short-lived success. However, for ephemeral gain to be the first step of violent extremism, not any short-lived success counts: “an ephemeral gain occurs when a severe loss (territory, population) or threats of its imminent occurrence, typically perceived as a catastrophe, is preceded by a period of societal gain, which in turn is preceded by a period of subordination” (ibid). The ephemeral gain is a short-lived success after subordination, which, because of its symbolic meaning, is seen as a national catastrophe. It does not have to be a real catastrophe; what counts is that in the eyes of the people, it is perceived as such. When this happens, Midlarsky argues, three outcomes or pathways follow: “(1) the threat and fear of reversion to an earlier state of subordination, (2) perceptions of injustice, (3) humiliation-shame”

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<sup>29</sup> I mentioned this definition in the introductory chapter as well to make a point that this definition only captures one type of extremism: violent extremism.

(ibid). These outcomes lead to anger and blame, including a possible stereotyping of innocents. These outcomes or pathways might co-exist as well: fear of the state of subordination can lead to a sense of humiliation, and this can lead to the perception of injustice. According to the diagram, generating anger is common among all these possible pathways. Anger here is a collective feeling of injustice. On this point, Midlarsky references Aristotle, who “equated the origins of anger with perceived injustice” (Midlarsky, 2011, p. 39).

Anger, in this theory, is not individualistic, fleeting, or inconsequential. We should remember that we are talking about the role of anger in the complex phenomena of the 20th century’s murderous ideologies. Anger as a collective feeling in response to receiving injustices leads to blame. Blame here is not a legitimate and proportionate call for accountability or correcting the injustice. Whoever is blamed in the context of violent extremism is worthy of no mercy; the anger of Nazis against Jews leading to the Jewish genocide is a clear example.

There is one more variable in the diagram which we have not discussed yet: mortality salience. The reason that mortality salience is shown as the independent variable is that in Midlarsky’s theory, “mortality salience in all cases was present before the rise of political extremism” (2011, p. 307). Mortality salience can be defined as “a heightened awareness of mortality, typically induced by thoughts of one’s death” (ibid, p. 57). Here, ‘one’s death’ is not about an individual but rather groups or even nations. This factor is a must in forming violent extremism, unlike other factors, which are not always necessary. Even though this factor is so crucial, it does not have to be factual because even if there were no actual danger, if “both the

army and public were led to believe that it was true,” it would generate violent extremism (ibid, p. 262).

To provide historical support for the diagram, here is a rather long quotation that Midlarsky applies to his theory to make sense of one of the most brutal violent extremisms in history: the rise of Nazism. Germany was successful in its early military insults against neighbouring countries, but the success was short-lived, i.e., ephemeral gain, because:

The abandonment of Wilson’s Fourteen Points at Versailles and the subsequent loss of substantial territory, not to mention the loss of nearly 2 million men at the front, was perceived as a significant injustice, for which blame was to be placed on the Jews. And the financial and military limitations of the Treaty of Versailles were to be understood by Germans as substantial restrictions on German freedom to pursue capabilities – another form of injustice. But an important theme was humiliation, especially after the French and Belgian occupation of the Ruhr in 1923–25 (to ensure payment of reparations), a violation of historic German territory. And this occupation was to come on the heels of an earlier French occupation of the coal producing Saar region at the end of the war [...] But the actual onset of German ethnic mass murder occurred during World War II and was precipitated by the threat and fear of reversion to the status of a defeated power, as it was prior to World War II. That threat began to appear almost immediately after the German invasion of the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941. The unexpectedly strong resistance by the Soviets and the increasingly close collaboration between the United

States (not yet a combatant) and Great Britain were to buttress that threat (Midlarsky, 2011, pp. 310-311).

In this example, all the variables of the theory are available: ephemeral gain (successful yet short-lived military assaults), humiliation (French and Belgian occupation of the Ruhr), sense of injustice (loss of 2 million men), fear of reversion (reversion to the status of a defeated power, as it was prior to World War II), anger, blame (Jews were blamed), and mortality salience (as a result of unexpected Russian resistance and collaboration between US and UK). Midlarsky provides a detailed explanation of other examples of violent extremism, such as Fascism and radical Islamism. However, it has to be stressed that this theory is mainly only successful in explaining one type of extremism: unjustified violent extremism.

## **2.7 What Extremism is Not**

Extremism is often mixed with other concepts such as terrorism, fundamentalism, fanaticism, and radicalism, and no wonder: there are similarities among them. In this section, I will explain the similarities and differences between these terms with extremism and its different types.

### **2.7.1 Terrorism**

An association of extremism with terrorism is frequently made not just by the media but also by academic scholars. For example, Zartman and Faure write, “how synonymous the two terms are is a matter for a not-too-interesting debate” (2011, p. 3). I disagree strongly: terrorism should not be tolerated; however, political extremism, at times, could be the only right way to go. Martin Luther King Jr. is a significant case in hand. He was accused of being an extremist in his struggle for racial equality. King rightly adopted the term and said, “the question is not whether



we will be extremists, but what kind of extremists we will be.” If not for King’s extremism, racial equality might have taken longer to reach the point that it has. What if social movement members use terror to advocate for their goals? Can we then say terrorism is necessarily extremism? If, among many methods, a social movement uses the most extremist method, i.e., terror, then yes, this social movement is both a terrorist and extremist movement. But what type of extremism? It would be unjustified violent extremism.

In the literature, support can be found for this reasoning: terror as an extremist method. For Nozick (1997), terrorism as directing violence against “innocent third parties for the attainment of certain goals” is related to the method of extremism. However, not all extremist methods are violent, but the more extremist a method is, the more likely it is to cause terror, thus, becoming terrorism. Moreover, not all violent methods are necessarily terroristic (in the sense of harming an innocent third party); for example, “the self-immolation of Buddhist monks to protest the war in Vietnam” (ibid) during the US Vietnam War. For Wintrobe (2012), the more extreme a goal is, the more likely an extremist method will be employed, and terrorism is one of these extreme methods. We begin to see that every terrorist is necessarily an unjustified violent extremist, but only those extremists who use the method of terror are terrorists.

Benjamin Netanyahu, in *Terrorism: How the West Can Win* (1985), defines terrorism as: “the deliberate and systematic murder, maiming, and menacing of the innocent to inspire fear for political purposes” (1985, p. 9). This definition is similar to the US State Department’s definition of terrorism as “premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence

an audience” (Beck, 2015, p. 26). Then it follows that terrorism is only relevant to one type of extremism: unjustified violent extremism (UVE). Both UVE and terrorism use violence as a method to promote and accomplish their goals. However, there is a difference between them: harming innocents and spreading terror are necessary conditions for terrorism but not for UVE. For example, two extremist social movements might use unjustified violence against the members of the other group without causing harm to a third party or spreading terror in the public as the terrorists do. So, terrorizing third parties is a necessary condition for terrorism, but it is not for UVE.

Bruce Hoffman’s definition of terrorism is “violence or [...], the threat of [using] violence [...] in pursuit of, or in service of a political aim” (1998. pp, 2–3). The phrase ‘the threat of using violence’ makes it difficult to pin down the exact similarities and differences between terrorism and extremism. There are two reasons for this confusion. First, in his definition, using violence is not necessarily a condition for terrorism because there could also be just a threat of using it. If using violence or a threat of using violence makes a social movement a terrorist movement, then terrorism has similarities with both civil extremism and uncivil extremism. Second, even if violence is used, but it is legitimate, for example, violent anti-colonial movements, then terrorism gets closer to justified violent extremism (JVE). The best way to deal with these complications might be to look for a better definition than Hoffman’s. His definition is vague: it neither tells us whether the political goal is justified nor if innocent lives were affected.

Colin Beck’s (2015) approach to terrorism clarifies the complications we just saw with Hoffman’s definition. For Beck, there are three conditions that have to be taken into consideration

to properly understand terrorism: illegitimate actors, non-routine use of violence, and harm beyond the immediate goal. An example of terrorism that captured these three conditions is 9/11. Beck writes: “the attacks on September 11th were initiated by an illegitimate actor (Al-Qaeda), using a non-routine form of political struggle (skyjacking and crashing planes into buildings) with a target beyond the immediate victims present in the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and airplanes (the American public or government) (2015, pp. 30-31). These criteria are important to distinguish terrorism from other violent activities. For example, in a war between two countries, usually, there is catastrophic use of violence, yet generally speaking, we do not label war between countries as terrorism. But how is extremism related to this account of terrorism? Beck’s account of terrorism clearly has features of UVE because unjustified violence is used to challenge the status quo. However, as explained, they are not identical: harming a third party is a necessary condition for terrorism, but it might not always be for UVE.

Why is it crucial, on the one hand, to see the terrorism-related element in extremism, while on the other hand, to see how different they are? There are two main reasons. First, it is bad and lazy thinking to equate two phenomena just because one phenomenon, terrorism, shares some features of a subtype of the other phenomenon, UVE, a subtype of extremism. Second, thinking, whether accurate or inaccurate, could have real-life consequences. Wintrobe, nicely explains this point: “it is worth emphasizing that policy [on what to do with extremism] should not throw out the baby with the bathwater. Extremism has to be considered separately from terrorism [...] Extremists are innovators, and the fruits of their innovation often invigorate society. Freedom of speech is the lifeblood of democracy. Many new ideas appear extreme when

first uttered, and serious curbs on freedom of speech will destroy democratic life” (2012, p. 260). However, since extremist ideas might facilitate and encourage using unjustified violence as an appealing and effective method, we should not uncritically accept extremist ideas, even peaceful extremist ideas.

### **2.7.2 Fundamentalism**

In the literature on fundamentalism and extremism, the most straightforward way to differentiate them is by the subject: fundamentalism is about a religious phenomenon, but extremism is about religious and non-religious phenomena. Fundamentalism is used to describe some aspects of religiosity, while extremism is used to describe both religious and non-religious phenomena. For example, according to Malise Ruthven (2007), fundamentalism describes "a religious way of being that manifests itself in a strategy by which beleaguered believers attempt to preserve their distinctive identities as individuals or groups in the face of modernity and secularization" (pp. 5-6). Fundamentalists take issue with secularization because it challenges their understanding of religion as the pure, highest, and unchangeable form of knowledge. For religious fundamentalists, since the religious text is the word of God, and one feature of a theistic God is omniscience, it follows that they should take the religious text literally.

The fundamentalist’s attachment to a religious text can reach a level in which “those who do attempt to place the sacred texts in a historical context or subject them to modern forms of hermeneutical criticism are [...] condemned as engaging in blasphemy” (Pedahzur & Weinberg, 2005, p. 5). Practicing religion based on an unchangeable and fixed literal interpretation of religious texts can be called a “cult of text” (Ruthven, 2007; Cassam, 2022a). It is worth noting

that because of the rise of Islamic fundamentalism, fundamentalism is often attached to Islam, but it is a religious phenomenon; therefore, Muslims, Jews, Christians, and Sikhs could be fundamentalists (Almond, Appleby & Sivan, 2003). However, at least theoretically speaking, “the great majority of practicing Muslims are ‘fundamentalists’ since they believe that the Quran remains unchanged from its initial revelation” (Yousif, 2012, p. 5). The centrality of holy text as a necessary condition for fundamentalism allows us to separate it from extremism and fanaticism: “since it is possible to be an extremist or a fanatic without revering a text, [therefore,]it is possible to be an extremist or a fanatic without being a fundamentalist” (Cassam, 2022a. p. 34).

If we define fundamentalism as a literal and fixed interpretation of religious texts, then how can we make sense of the similarities and differences between fundamentalism and extremism? Above all, as mentioned, religiosity is a necessary condition of fundamentalism; it is not for extremism. Moreover, implicating violent aggression against those who challenge fundamentalists’ literal interpretation is highly likely; however, using violence is only a necessary condition for violent/uncivil extremists. There are many examples of crimes caused by religious fundamentalists, such as the attack on Salman Rushdie, the author of "Satanic Verses" in New York in August 2022.

However, we should also note that fundamentalism does not always produce violence because one can be fundamentalist, i.e., have a fixed interpretation of a peaceful religious verse. For example, in Jainism, one of the oldest religions, nonviolence and reducing harm to living things, including plants and animals, are encouraged as a true religious lifestyle (Romano, 2001). The problem starts when all or a substantial portion of a religious text is taken literally because it

increases the likelihood of acting upon a violent verse. Fundamentalism shares at least one epistemic vice with uncritical extremism, for example, close-mindedness—both exhibit single-mindedness and certainty of their position. According to Almond, Sivan, and Appleby, among other characteristics, fundamentalists have at least two epistemic vices such as moral Manicheanism and absolutism (2003, p. 407). Moral Manicheanism means “fundamentalists see reality as sharply divided into light and dark, good and evil,” and absolutism means “fundamentalists are committed to ‘the absolute validity of the “fundamentals” of the tradition’ (2003, p. 407). The difference between fundamentalism and uncritical extremism is that the former commits these epistemic vices during religious thinking, but the latter commits them during religious and unreligious thinking. So, it can be concluded that every fundamentalist is an uncritical extremist, at least in mindset, but not all extremists are fundamentalists.

Someone can hold a position uncritically in a way that exhibits the mentioned epistemic vices, while the position is neither religious nor extremist. For instance, when a position is not about a religious issue, and it does not aim at the radical replacement of a status quo. In cases like these, we may call those people dogmatic or fanatic—more on fanaticism in the next section.

### **2.7.3 Fanaticism**

How should we make sense of fanaticism in the debate about what extremism is not? There is more confusion between fanaticism and fundamentalism than between fanaticism and extremism. Even though in the literature, many scholars view fanaticism and fundamentalism as almost synonymous (Yousif, 2012), I think there are differences between all three of them:

fanaticism, fundamentalism, and extremism. To start, let us consider an observation on fanaticism from a key text in argumentation literature, *The New Rhetoric* (1969):

The fanatic is a person who adheres to a disputed thesis for which no unquestionable proof can be furnished, but who nevertheless refuses to consider the possibility of submitting it for free discussion and consequently, rejects the preliminary conditions which would make it possible to engage in argumentation on this topic. (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, p. 62)

Fanaticism on this account can be equated with dogmatism: if X believes in Y and Y is a thesis “for which no unquestionable proof can be furnished” (ibid), yet X rejects any considerations that question his position Y, then X is dogmatic and fanatic. One expects to see X as an enthusiastic and passionate believer because X is not ready to change or modify Y even when Y is questionable and counter-considerations are available. We can see the enthusiastic feature of fanaticism in the Latin origin of the concept: “fanaticus [which ‘fanaticism’ derived from] means “to be put into raging enthusiasm by a deity” (French 1990, 1).” According to Yousif, in the contemporary meaning of the word, a fanatic “is simply an individual who goes to an extreme, is overly zealous or unreasonably enthusiastic regarding an issue, idea, opinion, or action” (2012, p. 5). If it is reasonable to define fanaticism as a questionable belief system held unreasonably and enthusiastically, then, how does fanaticism, as defined, differ from fundamentalism and extremism?

As we have established in the previous section, believing in a holy religious text is a necessary condition for fundamentalism. It follows that fanaticism and extremism differ from fundamentalism because someone can be fanatic and extremist about religious and non-religious

subjects. What about the emotional state of fanaticism, i.e., passion and enthusiasm: how do they differ? I think all of them are similar in this regard: an extremist, a fundamentalist, and a fanatic are passionate about their positions. Yet, we may argue that they are enthusiastic about different subjects. For example, “it is an interesting question why talk of fitness fanaticism is so much more common than talk of fitness extremism” (Cassam, 2022a. p. 7). We can be enthusiastic about many things without necessarily becoming an activist and forming or joining a social movement to change the status quo in alliance with our passion, which is the case in extremism.

Moreover, I believe that there might be significant differences concerning the epistemic states involved. The epistemic state of a fanatic is inherently problematic because, A, the position is debatable, i.e., it can not be objectively proved or disproved; B, a fanatic rejects any counter perspectives. Oversimplification and close-mindedness are two epistemic vices that every fanaticism is guilty of. It is less clear if the fundamentalist is necessarily guilty of these epistemic vices, but the fact that taking a religious text to be exempt from any flaws suggests that they are. According to Cassam, fanatics are guilty of more epistemic vices such as “gullibility, prejudice and intellectual arrogance” (2022a. p. 117). As for extremism, these epistemic flaws are only necessary conditions for one type of extremism: uncritical extremism, since we can also have critical extremism. Someone can be extremist, proposing a radical change in relation to how society is organized regarding a subject without oversimplifying the complexity of the subject or being close-minded and upfront dismissing any counter-consideration. Nellie McClung, Martin



Luther King, and Nelson Mandela were important and successful extremists of the 20th century who were neither simple-minded nor close-minded.

What about using or not using violence? Is it a necessary condition of fanaticism? Thinking about the epistemic vices of a fanatic, such as oversimplification and close-mindedness, it is possible for a fanatic to be violent, but is it not necessarily so? It may all depend on the subject. Holding a fanatical view that X football team is the best team is different from holding a conviction that anyone who criticizes the prophet Mohamed is guilty of blasphemy. The likelihood of the second fanatic, who can also be called a fundamentalist, committing violence is higher than the first. Empirically speaking, both beliefs have produced violent actions, but the question is about the degree.

For Cassam, however, using violence is built into the fanatic mindset: “fanatics have unwarranted contempt for other people’s ideals and interests and are willing to trample on those ideals and interests in pursuit of their own ideals and interests” (Cassam, 2022a. p. 7). As a result, fanatics “will try to impose their ideals on others, by force, if necessary (ibid). It can be argued that the fundamental reason behind fanatics’ actions is that “they are unwilling or unable to think critically about their own ideals and do not suffer from self-doubt” (ibid). Disregarding others’ interests and believing in the justifiability of using violence to promote your interest at the expense of others can also be called a moral vice of fanaticism (Cassam, 2022a, 130). So, in light of this, we might redefine fanaticism as a belief system that is certain and passionate about a problematic proposition, and it justifies using violence in favour of advancing it.

Fanaticism, as just defined, is clearly similar to unjustified violent extremism; in both cases, violence is used unjustifiably. However, since not every fanatic, for example, a sports fanatic, necessarily engages in political movements to change the political status quo, the two concepts are theoretically and empirically not identical. Moreover, extremism can be civil and peaceful, as is the case with civil extremism, and it can be free from epistemic vices that fanatics are guilty of, as is the case with critical extremism. Moreover, throughout history, we can find instances where extremists argued for legitimate cases, for example, a movement against racism and the exclusion of women from political life. So, although fanaticism and extremism share some features, they are different and should not be used as synonyms.

#### **2.7.4 Radicalism**

The last concept that is often confused with extremism is radicalism. Radicalization is usually used to depict a negative process. Deradicalization can be used to describe a positive process, and a radical position can be used to describe something positive (Cassam 2022a). In the literature on radicalism, sometimes it is explained as a positive force to avoid unnecessary and prolonged moderation, which can prevent society from useful changes. For example, for Cassam, “excessive moderation can be an obstacle to progress, but radicalism rather than extremism is the solution. [...because] radicals need not have extremist preoccupations and are not committed to violence” (2022a. p. 34). As I have already explained, equating extremism with violent extremism for an unjust cause is not correct because the unjustified violence method is only one way to achieve radical change in a status quo, and Cassam, despite his careful philosophical analysis, is mistaken here.

An example that would help to understand Cassam's approach to radicalism is 19th-century abolitionists. Cassam argues that even though the abolitionists called themselves fanatics, being uncompromising for a just cause is radicalism, not fanaticism or extremism. But what is radicalism? Colin J. Beck (2015) provides a useful definition of radicalism as "contention that is outside the common routines of politics present within a society, oriented towards substantial change in social, cultural, economic, and/or political structures, and undertaken by any actor using extra-institutional means" (2015, p. 39). Two phrases of this definition have to be clarified to understand it better, and to see the relevancy of it to extremism as defined in this dissertation. These two phrases are "contention that is outside the common routines of politics" and "extra-institutional means."

For Beck, not every change of routine in politics is radical because his definition specifies "that radical goals and ideas must involve changing society or social trends. This change can be progressive or reactionary [... and], this change must be fundamental – change to structures and systems, not just the hearts, minds, or actions of individuals" (2015, p. 39). It seems to be that change in radicalism is similar to change in extremism- a radical change in a status quo. What might be different, however, is that extremism also includes advocating for certain ideas that promote radical change, but radicalism seems to require radical ideas to be implemented in a society. To put it differently, failed extremism is not radicalism; only successful extremism is radicalism. Anyhow, what does he mean by using extra-institutional means? Beck writes:

Institutional means of politics are things like voting, lobbying, legislating that take place within the institutions of politics. Extra-institutional means are those things that are not

part of institutionalized governance, such as protest, boycotts, sit-ins, arson, violence, and so on. When institutional actors, like politicians, begin to use extra-institutional means, they approach radicalism (2015, pp. 39-40).

Here, the picture is less obscure, and we can see how extremism diverges from radicalism. Extremism can use both institutional and extra-institutional means to promote a radical change; however, radicalism, at least in Beck's account, only uses extra-institutional means. For example, when Trump issued the Muslim-ban order, which was implemented through institutional means, this was an extremist order. Just because the order was implemented through institutional means, this did not make it a moderate policy. It was an extremist order because 1) it was controversial), and 2) it aimed to radically change who could travel to the US.

Coming back to radicalism, according to Beck's account (2015), if a social movement has a radical goal but uses institutional means or extra-institutional means for a moderate goal, then it is not radical. Beck mentions the Occupy Wall Street movement of 2011 to explain the conditions necessary for radicalism. According to Beck, this movement cannot be defined as radical because even though the goal of the movement was radical, their method was not extra-institutional. His analysis of the example is rather confusing and contradictory. He first writes, "many Occupy activists expressed a desire for fundamental change to the capitalist economic system and American politics, and did so using a strategy that was not within political institutions," but then writes, "the contention was relatively routine in that it used tactics common to modern social movements marches, sit-ins, speeches, and petitions;" then, concludes "per our definition, we would not consider this a radical movement, no matter its unexpected

occurrence and surprising endurance” (2015, pp. 40-41). If the Occupiers’ goals were to achieve a fundamental change, and they tried to achieve it with sit-ins that fall under extra-institutional tools, then why were they not a radical movement? Anyway, for the current purpose, let us agree that these two conditions, a radical goal and extra-institutional means, are necessary for radicalism.

In my definition of extremism, there is a phrase ‘radical change,’ but does this make extremism a subset of radicalism? The details matter. First of all, radical change also exists in revolution, but we still use revolution instead of radicalism or extremism to refer to revolutionary phenomena. So, it is unclear if we can categorically categorize extremism as a subtype of radicalism. Moreover, based on whether violence is used or not, there are two different types of extremism: civil extremism (no violence) and uncivil extremism (with violence). Moreover, violence for a just cause would be justified-violent extremism, while using violence for an unjust cause would be unjustified-violent extremism. So, even if, at first glance, extremism resembles radicalism, in detail, they have enough differences.

## **2.8 Extremism and Argumentation Theory**

One of the earliest works by argumentation scholars on extremism is “Extreme Arguments: Anwar al-Awlaki's Radicalizing Discourse” by Brian K. Ladd and Jean Goodwin, 2022, and “What is Extremism? Advancing Definition in Political Argumentation” by Hareim Hassan and his colleagues (2023). Ladd and Goodwin study a speech by Anwar al-Awlaki. Al-Awlaki was an American Imam who advocated Jihad, including jihad against the US. In studying al-Awlaki’s speech in which he made a case on how Muslims should respond to cartoons drawn of

Mohammed, the prophet of Islam, Ladd and Goodwin found that “Awlaki's narrative-heavy discourse was at the same time intensely reasoned, integrating arguments from analogy, from moral justification ad populum, and from expert opinion” (2022, p. 39). This strategy to identify argument types used by al-Awlaki to justify violence is helpful for this project. Throughout this dissertation, whenever appropriate, I will use argumentation tools to identify the types of arguments that extremists make. Ladd and Goodwin conclude that their analyses “do suggest the power of argumentation analysis in understanding the radicalization of violent extremists” (2022, p. 46). Their approach is particularly relevant to chapter three, in which I study Jihadism and the arguments that the leader of ISIS, Caliph Abubakr al-Baghdadi, made.

In “What is Extremism? Advancing Definition in Political Argumentation,” Hassan, Farine, Kinnish, Mejia, and Tindale (2023) provide a comprehensive and neutral definition of extremism. In preparation for their definition, they first make a case for how argumentation is relevant to definitions, then identify issues with some of the definitions of extremism. Their definition consists of six clauses as the following:

Extremism is a position of a radical nature with the aim of challenging or changing a status quo, and which can be held by an individual or a group, which is about political or non-political subject matter, and which can have both positive or negative applications, and that is held in a resolute manner (Hassan et al, 2023, p. 5).

This approach to the definition of extremism is relevant to the approach of this project in two ways: the neutrality and comprehensiveness of a definition of extremism. However, the

typology of extremism advanced in this project is more systematic and ambitious, especially in the realm of political argumentation.

In the remaining section, I will briefly review some of the concepts from argumentation theory that are useful for this study (this concise review is by no means exhaustive). This work mainly falls under the rhetorical perspective of argumentation. I will first review some general ideas from the rhetorical approach/perspective to argumentation. Why employ the rhetorical perspective to argumentation but not logical or dialectical perspectives? The purpose of this dissertation is best served with the rhetorical perspective of argumentation since I want to investigate first how extremist arguers argue in terms of their rhetorical strategies. Second, why do their arguments have rhetorical forces, i.e., persuading and adherence forces? However, I do not wholly disregard other approaches and use them whenever appropriate. For example, my analysis of extremist arguments includes using fallacy theory and argument schemes to enrich my analysis.

Extremist arguments, arguments put forward by extremist arguers, regardless of what type of extremism they fall under, must be attractive to others to gain adherence. If we define a political argument as an argument that has public ramifications (or at least take public ramifications as one necessary condition of political argument), then large adherence to an extremist argument is a precondition for an effective extremist political argument since the more convincing an argument is, the more likely it gains adherence and the more effective it would be. Thus, it follows that since the audience and the persuasiveness of arguments are central in the

rhetorical approach to argumentation, the rhetorical perspective to argumentation is helpful for studying political argumentation and political extremism.

Extremist argumentation needs to be persuasive to be an effective modifier of a cognitive environment and thus be a challenging force against a status quo. The rhetorical study of arguments here means studying how ideas are modified through discourse (Tindale, forthcoming a). Rhetorical argumentation allows us to explain why and how extremist arguments are successful in achieving adherence. Adherence simply means changing an audience's mind and action towards the subject of an argument. Adherence could be a direct process, or it could be a long-complicated process. For example, as we have already learned from Aristotle's study of rhetoric, people are not always convinced by logical arguments alone: arguments from ethos and pathos also play their essential roles (Aristotle, 2007).<sup>30</sup> I will have a chapter dedicated to the role of argument from charisma, as a sub-category of argument from ethos, to explain leaders' role in extremist argumentation.

There is a pervasive yet inaccurate account of rhetorical argument, to which I am not subscribing. According to this inaccurate account, rhetoric is inherently negative because it is nothing but trickery. Rhetorical argumentation, however, can be utilized by civil and violent extremists for just and unjust causes; thus, it is not necessarily negative. In fact, rhetoric, by some readings, can be an antidote to violence. Crosswhite nicely puts the relationship between rhetoric and violence by borrowing from Hobbes: "Life gets more solitary, poor, nasty, and brutish—if not

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<sup>30</sup> In Aristotle's *Rhetoric* (2007), there are three means of persuasion: by the force of the argument itself (an argument from logos), by the force of the character of the orator/arguer (an argument from ethos), or by appealing to the emotions of the audience (an argument from pathos).



shorter—as the rhetorical order gives way to violence” (2013, p. 155). So, instead of attaching a negative core to rhetoric, we should be mindful of the use and misuse of the power of rhetoric.

Political extremist argumentation is a subset of political argumentation. Political argumentation, in general, is located in the domain of praxis (what to do?) rather than the domain of the epistemic (what is true?) (Kock, 2017). The significant consequence of argumentation in the domain of praxis is what Kock (2017) calls ‘legitimate dissensus.’ Legitimate dissensus (Kock, 2017) basically means that in the public domain of argumentation, disagreement is legitimate and expected no matter how reasonably and responsibly citizens argue.<sup>31</sup> Extremist arguments, by definition, evoke disagreement because in arguing for a radical change of the status quo, those who are content with it would disagree. Then, the question is, is disagreement about extremist arguments legitimate? Where to draw a line between legitimate and illegitimate extremist arguments? This depends on the type of extremism involved and the subject of an extremist argument. These questions will be discussed in the chapter on virtue argumentation.

To better understand the relevance of legitimate dissensus to political argumentation and extremist argumentation, the differences between arguments in the epistemic domain and the praxis domain should be explained. According to Kock (2017), classification between these two domains goes back to ancient Greece, in which Aristotle argued for their differences, but Plato argued that "truth was the issue in any serious discussion," and he would have considered the

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<sup>31</sup> What causes dissensus in political argumentation, among other reasons, is that political argument is not usually about matters of truth and falsity (what is valid/true logically/scientifically which happens in the domain of epistemic argumentation). Political argument is mainly about proposals that have practical consequences on public life (which happens in the domain of praxis argumentation). Disagreements about those proposals are expected, which is why legitimate dissensus is one of the core features of political argumentation. Since the domain of politics is a domain of conflicting interests, disagreement over a practical proposal is legitimate.

Aristotelian distinction false (2017, p. 170). Kock endorses Aristotle's position, that is, the acknowledgement of the differences between the epistemic domain and the praxis domain, and he is concerned because "modern argumentation theory has largely walked tacitly in Plato's footsteps in this respect, not in Aristotle's" (ibid). Of course, I am not implying that we should tolerate all extremist arguments that generate disagreements just because disagreement in a political domain is legitimate. The details matter as we will see in the following chapters. Therefore, the type of extremism at hand is crucial to conclude whether we should tolerate extremists' arguments by virtue of legitimate dissensus.

One of the consequences of extremist arguments is disagreements, which can reach the level of polarization. Aikin and Talisse (2019) explain many problematic epistemic features of argumentation in polarization, which are also relevant to extremism. Here are two of them: the simple truth thesis and the no reasonable opposition thesis. The simple truth thesis occurs when we believe truth is so simple and obvious that our opponent must be "ignorant, wicked, devious, or benighted" since they do not share our stand on an issue (2019, p. 69). The apparent consequence of this issue is the no reasonable opposition thesis; since truth is simple, there is no way our opponent's objections to what we consider true are reasonable. These problematic epistemic stands and many others occur in political argumentation, which makes reaching an agreement about what is reasonable difficult. Identification of these epistemic stands in political argumentation could be helpful to make us more critical of extremist arguments in so far as they help us 1) recognize them in others' thinking; 2) give the benefit of the doubt before rejecting

them up front just because they challenge a status quo that we may happen to subscribe to, and 3) be mindful of not committing them.<sup>32</sup>

## **2.9 A Typology of Extremism and a Scheme of Argument from Classification**

Classification of any subject that is complex and multidimensional becomes a necessity once the multidimensionality is proven. Classification clarifies complexities and has practical consequences, and it “is a complex pattern of reasoning essential for communicating and making decisions” (Walton & Macagno, 2010, p. 35). In this project, I argue that extremism is multidimensional in beliefs, goals, and methods; therefore, a typology of extremism becomes necessary. Thus, classifying extremism is helpful in understanding extremist beliefs and their manifestations, both negative and, at times, positive. To see the multidimensionality of extremism that has been suggested even more clearly, in this section, I will use two schemes<sup>33</sup> of argument from classifications that Walton and Macagno suggest. These schemes are helpful in seeing the multidimensionality of extremism (2002; 2010).

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<sup>32</sup> Another useful analytical concept from the Argumentation Theory is deep disagreement. Since extremist arguments, either by means of public argumentation or through violence and terror, radically oppose the status quo that others firmly support, it causes disagreement, and, possibility, deep disagreement. Robert Fogelin’s (2005) account of deep disagreement can be summarised in three points: “1- Successful argument is possible only if participants share a background of beliefs, values, and resolution procedures. 2- Deep disagreements are disagreements wherein participants have no such shared background. 3- Therefore, successful argument is not possible in deep disagreement cases” (Aikin & Talisse, 2019, p. 54). Deep disagreement allows us to make sense of the difficulty of arguing with extremists, but it also allows us to understand the reason for this difficulty. Having said that, since extremists can be civil and uncivil, critical and uncritical, there is still room for engaging in argumentation with them. Moreover, as the rhetorical approach of argumentation explains, and historical examples of extremist argumentation show, such as women suffrage and racial equality, despite deep disagreement, extremist arguments can modify a cognitive environment, which could eventually translate into social and political changes. I am not dismissing argumentation scholars’ concern about the challenges deep disagreement causes to argumentation. However, I am drawing attention to the fact that, *in the long run*, argumentation can sometimes change minds and socio-political realities despite deep disagreements.

<sup>33</sup> Argument schemes are defined as “forms of argument (structures of inference) that represent structures of common types of arguments used in everyday discourse, as well as in special contexts like those of legal argumentation and scientific argumentation.” (Walton, Reed & Macagno, 2008, p. 1)

As a reminder, extremism can be classified into two types and four subtypes as the following: Civil extremism and uncivil extremism. Civil extremism can be classified into critical and uncritical extremism. Uncivil extremism can be classified into justified and unjustified extremism. The essential feature of all of them or that which makes them extremist is the nature of their demand: a radical demand that challenges a status quo and aims at replacing it. Walton (2002) provides a scheme of classification from the definition that is useful to explain my approach. Here is the scheme:

Major Premise: Generally, if this type of indicator is found in a given case, it means that the presence of such-and-such a property may be inferred. (If p, then q.)

Minor Premise: This type of indicator has been found in this case. (p.)

Conclusion: Such-and-such a type of event has occurred, or that the presence of such-and-such a property may be inferred, in this case. (Therefore, q.) (2002, p. 42)

If we apply this scheme to the classification of extremism, then we would have something like the following:

Major premise: Generally, if a demand with a radical nature is found in a social movement's demands (p), it means that a social movement might use violent means or public argumentation means to achieve their radical demand, and it means the proponent of the demand could be critical or uncritical towards their opponents' arguments (q). (If p, then q)

Minor premise: a demand with a radical nature is found in this or that social movement (p)

Conclusion: therefore, it can be inferred that violent means or public means of argumentation can be used to achieve the demand, and it means the proponent of the demand could be critical or uncritical towards their opponents' arguments. (Therefore q)

Although this scheme has a structure of deductive argument, Walton and Macagno (2010) argue that this should be called abductive argument because "abduction inference [...] goes from facts to their explanations, characterized by the logical form of an inference to the best explanation" (Wirth 1998 and Aliseda 2006 as quoted by Walton & Macagno, 2010, p. 49). Considering the complexity of extremism, it is important to focus on inference to the best explanation. This observation allows us a degree of flexibility in our identifications of the types of extremism which is important because of various methods that can be used by extremist groups, and various attitude extremist might have towards opponents. This is because a radical demand (p) does not necessarily generate violent methods or uncritical mindsets.

Walton and Macagno examine various schemes of argument from classification, but the following scheme seems to be the most applicable to my approach:

Major Premise: For all x, if x fits definition D, and D is the definition of G, then x can be classified as G.

Minor Premise: A fits definition D.

Conclusion: A has property G. (2010, p. 39)

Let us examine how my classification looks according to the scheme just mentioned. Let us start with defining the variables:

X: any political demand

D: aiming at a radical replacement of the status quo

G: political extremism

A: any social movement (regardless of whether it uses violence or not; it violates principles of critical discussion or not; it violates principles of justified violence or not)

Major premise: for any political demand (x), if the demand (x) aims at radical replacement of the status quo (D), and aiming at radical replacement of the status quo (D) is the definition of extremism (G), then that political demand (x) can be classified as extremism(G)

Minor promise: (A) is a social movement that fits (D) that advocates for radical replacement of the status quo (regardless of whether it uses violence or not; it violates principles of critical discussion or not; it violates principles of justified violence or not).

Conclusion: Therefore, (A) a social movement (that advocates for radical replacement of the status quo regardless of whether it uses violence or not; it violates principles of critical discussion or not; it violates principles of justified violence or not) has properties of extremism.

I will suggest a simpler version of this scheme and argument, which looks like the following:

Major premise: D is the sufficient condition of G.

Minor premise: A has D.

Therefore: A can be classified under G.

Major premise: aiming at radical replacement of the status quo (D) is the sufficient condition for extremism (G).

Minor premise: this social movement (A) demands at radical replacement of the status quo (D).

Conclusion: therefore, this social movement (A) can be categorized under extremism (G).

These schemes, to an extent, clarify the typology of extremism defended in this project because they help identify the necessary condition of extremism: a radical goal. Extremism does not necessarily generate violence or an uncritical mindset because, contrary to the prevailing view on extremism, a violent method and an uncritical mindset are not necessary conditions for all extremist movements. A violent method is only a necessary condition of uncivil extremism, and unjustified violence is only a necessary condition of unjustified violent extremism. Public argumentation is a necessary condition for civil extremism, and a critical mindset is a necessary condition for critical extremism. What is common in all these types of extremism is that which makes all of them extremist: a radical goal that demands the replacement of a status quo.

## **2.10 Concluding Remarks**

In this chapter, I reviewed essential works related to extremism. I drew attention to the fact that extremism is a multidimensional phenomenon (peaceful or violent methods; critical or uncritical mindsets; satisfying or violating conditions of justified usage of violence) and it is not inherently negative, as the majority of the literature on the subject asserts. Thus, I have made a case that extremism can be classified into different types. One finding of this approach is the separation of positive from negative types of extremism. What we should be worrying about is the negative

types of extremism: unjustified violent extremism (for example, ISIS, see chapter three) and uncritical civil extremism (some of the Trump supporters who subscribe to election denialism discourse, see chapter four).

Society continuously changes for good or bad. Extremism and its radical and ambitious demands play an essential role in societal changes. However, it is a common routine for a dominant group benefiting from the current status quo to oppose any changes, let alone a radical change that might threaten their interests. Therefore, it is not surprising to see extremism used as a negative label to delegitimize radical demands. Extremism in the public consciousness, to a great extent, is a stain: if X is described as extremist, there must be something wrong with X. This project encourages us to resist this ready temptation in three ways: first, those who label others as extremist might just use it as a rhetorical strategy to protect their interests; second, extremism is not necessarily negative; third, even if it's negative in the case at hand, then we should identify the type of extremism that is in question, not reject extremism as a whole.

The novelty of this project in providing a neutral account of extremism and identifying its different types might cause some discomfort, considering that the literature on extremism is almost always negative. However, we should be mindful that using the label of extremism as a rhetorical strategy to delegitimize radical demands and maintain a status quo to protect the interests of certain groups has a long history and is an ongoing phenomenon in the political discourse. Let us consider some examples. It was not in the interest of powerful men for women to have the right to vote. It was not in the interest of white people for black people to have the same rights. It was not in the interest of religious authorities to allow secularization and the



separation of church from state. It was not in the interest of the royal family for the will of people to replace the divine right to rule.

Moreover, it is not in the interest of the fossil fuel industries for the green industries to replace them, yet global warming demands it. It is not in the interest of the religious clerk in Iran for the movement of 'Women, Life, Freedom' to succeed, yet democracy demands it. It is not in the interest of the Taliban for Afghan women to have the right to education, yet human rights demand it. Instead of proceeding with more examples, I will end with a question: instead of viewing extremist demands from the perspective of those who benefit from the status quo, is it not better to also view those demands from the perspective of those whose interests/rights are not respected within the current status quo? If we do that, we will have a more comprehensive understanding of extremism.

## Chapter Three: How Do Jihadis Argue? ISIS as a Case of Unjustified Violent Extremism

We see the knife; we don't see what makes the knife so eloquent. (Salazar, 2016, p. 345)

Weapons love words. With words they make new weapons. (Salazar, 2017, p. 1)

### 3.1 General introduction

This chapter has three main parts divided into several sections as follows. In part one, I will briefly explain why ISIS (Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, Islamic State, Daesh) is a case of extremism and what type of extremism it is. Moreover, I will explain what contributions argumentation theory can make to understanding ISIS. In the second part, I will explain jihadism as the ideology of ISIS. Understanding jihadism as a worldview and a theoretical infrastructure of ISIS is crucial to understanding ISIS's rhetoric and the speeches made by key figures of this movement, which will be the subject of part three. In part three, I will study a famous speech by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the caliph of the caliphate, titled *A Message to the Mujahidin and the Muslim Ummah in the Month of Ramadan*. This project is a contribution to an area of argumentation that, according to Ladd and Goodwin, is understudied:

Terrorist violence remains one of the most significant threats in the contemporary world. [...] Yet while substantial attention has been paid to the Western discourse that frames these events, the *discourse* produced by the violent *extremists themselves* remains understudied" (2022, p. 39, emphasize added).

### 3.2 Making Sense of the Case

After WWI and WWII, humanity witnessed some progress here and there, such as the formation of the United Nations and the beginning of the Cold War. The hope for more lasting peace became more and more realistic. Even some philosophers promoted the end of history thesis and everlasting success of Liberalism, especially with the fall of the iron curtain (for example, see *The End of History and the Last Man*, Fukuyama, 1992). Yet, after 9/11, 2001, the world entered a new series of wars led by the United States of America, known mainly as the 'War on Terror.' Soon, the US invaded Afghanistan in 2001 and later Iraq in 2003. After years of staying in Afghanistan, the US gave Afghanistan back to the Taliban on a silver plate in 2021. As for Iraq, just after one year of the invasion, the early stage of ISIS, then known as Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI), emerged in 2004 in Iraq. Later, in 2013, the group in full force remerged in Iraq and Syria under the name Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS). Then ISIS changed its name to the Islamic State (IS) and declared the establishment of a caliphate<sup>34</sup> in Iraq and Syria in June 2014 (MMP, 2021). This time, ISIS controlled vast lands in Iraq and Syria, and more than six million lived under ISIS rule (Barrett, 2014). In this vast land, the rule of absolute terror was in place. Here is one example: They enslaved over seven thousand Yazidi women and put their fathers, husbands, and brothers into mass graves. Who would think humanity witness this evil in the 21st century? This chapter tells the story of barbarism par excellence. Nevertheless, as we will discover, even barbarism can think

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<sup>34</sup> A caliphate is an Islamic state led by a supreme religious and political leader known as a caliph. The term originates from the Arabic word "Khalifah," meaning successor or representative of the Prophet of Islam, Muhammad.

and produce convincing arguments that win the hearts and minds of thousands, including the “educated” ones.

How to make sense of the caliphate? Above all, we should avoid downgrading the complexity of the issue. Yes, they were a group of extremists, terrorists, barbarians, or whatever you wish to call them, but the fact that they were able to attract people by the thousands, including educated people from Western countries, to immigrate to a warzone to sacrifice themselves proves we are dealing with something complicated. No one probably acknowledges the caliphate's complexity as Philippe-Joseph Salazar [hereafter, I use caliphate, ISIS, and Islamic State interchangeably]. Salazar said we face “a truly extraordinary intellectual power: the caliphate” (2016, p. 344). The heart of ISIS's power lies in its rhetoric. Salazar argues that, when it comes to rhetoric, this organization could have the upper hand over the West:

Indeed, while Western education is less and less demanding in terms of linguistic mastery and polyglotism, cultural depth, historical culture, philosophical or literary content, less and less educated in fact, and while public arguments are increasingly framed by the immediacy of copy and paste, Facebook, and Twitter, here is a power of global reach that is exactly the opposite: steeped in the humanities (its [ISIS's] humanities, but humanities nonetheless), revelling in the beauty of literary forms and styles, practicing high oratory, explicit and unashamed in its recourse to theology and philosophy, trusting above all in the inherent power of literacy to win over those who apply their minds and, as scandalous as it may seem to us, open their hearts to the caliphate's complex world picture. (2016, p. 346)

It follows that the West is paying the price for advancing science at the expense of humanities. As will be clear in this chapter, Jihadism and ISIS's discourse provides a story that answers the big existential questions such as what is the meaning of life? What is the best way to live? Why am I here? What will happen when I die? And so forth. ISIS's answers to these questions create a story, i.e., establish the caliphate, although unconvincing to many of us, compelling enough to attract thousands to sacrifice themselves and kill many thousands more. On the power of big story, Salazar argues that "if we were still teaching the Great Books at college, the millennials, commentators, politicians, and agencies would have at the ready a sharp resource to understand, rebut, and combat ISIS's rhetoric of terror" (2016, p. 352). If we take Salazar's observations seriously, then maybe, along with building more robust security tools against potential jihadists and further advancing AI, we should pay more attention to humanities as well.

### **3.2.1 Justifying the Case: Is ISIS an Extremist Organization?**

Is ISIS an extremist organization? We can answer this question with one word: yes. We can support this yes with one reason: Al-Qaeda, a terrorist organization that claimed responsibility for 9/11, criticized ISIS for being *extremist* (Cassam, 2022a. P. 12, my emphasis). However, since I have established six types of extremism, I need to explain what type of extremism best captures ISIS.

I argue that ISIS falls under the most problematic type of extremism: unjustified violent extremism, in short, UVE. UVE in this work is defined as a subtype of violent extremism in which violence is unjustifiably used, i.e., 'conditions of justifying violence' are not met in advocating or achieving radical change in the status quo.

As explained in the previous chapters, the rationale for classifying violent extremism into justified and unjustified violent extremism is that, at times, in advocating for a radical change, employing violence is justified, but often it is not. An example of the former is armed conflict against colonialism and apartheid (for example, Mandela's short-lived armed struggle in South Africa); an example of the latter is ISIS. When violence is necessary, it is justified violent extremism, but when it is unnecessary, it is unjustified violent extremism. As explained in the previous chapters, in a democratic society, when political rights such as freedom of conscience, freedom of expression, and freedom of assembly are respected, then using violence to radically change the status quo is unnecessary; therefore, it is unjustified; thus, we would have unjustified violent extremism if violence is used. However, when an undemocratic political regime violates these rights, then using violence to change the status quo becomes necessary and thus justified. However, we have to be careful here not to justify violence just because conditions of democratic disobedience are lacking. For a simple reason: violence can be used responsibly and justly, and it can be used irresponsibly and unjustly, even if conditions for using violence exist.

Cassam's criteria to decide where using violence is justifiable and where it is not is useful here. These conditions, as mentioned before, can be called 'conditions for unjustifiable violence.'<sup>35</sup>

The usefulness of this introduction becomes apparent when we consider the context of this case. ISIS emerged in Iraq and Syria, where democracy was and still is far from consolidation. To decide whether they used violence justly or unjustly, the following questions need to be asked:

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<sup>35</sup> See chapter 2 for detailed explanations on these conditions.

Were conditions of democratic disobedience available in Iraq and Syria during ISIS's emergence? What was the end goal of ISIS (was it a just or unjust cause)? Was violence necessary (was it the only way to achieve the goal?). Was violence used carefully (was it used proportionally?), and who was the target (were innocent people targeted in the process)?

To start, the conditions of democratic disobedience were not available in Iraq and Syria during ISIS's emergence. Yet, political parties and civilians were making their demands to the authorities without committing crimes as ISIS did. For example, Kurds in Iraq and Syria were on the opposition side. They disagreed with the federal government, yet they refused to use violence against the federal government except in self-defence. The story with ISIS differed because of the *total* rejection of the nation-state and the aim to substitute it with the caliphate; therefore, negotiation is not a word in their dictionary.

Let us move to the second question: What was the end goal of ISIS (was it a just or unjust cause)? ISIS believed in re-establishing the caliphate. In simple language, the caliphate is an Islamic empire that does not acknowledge modern political systems such as nation-states. The caliphate is not just ruling based on Sharia (Islamic laws), as is the case in Saudi Arabia, for example, but gathering Muslim communities under the banner of Islam regardless of the modern established borders. So, was this goal legitimate? Where does legitimacy come from? What is the primary source? In simple and short language, it is people's will. In Iraq, for example, in 2005, Iraq's constitutional commission approved a draft constitution, which was ratified after 78.5 percent of the country voted in favour of the constitution (Jafar, 2008). Even though most Sunnis rejected the constitution, and ISIS is a Sunni organization, their rejection of the 78.5 percent of

the Iraqi people's will is a sufficient reason to delegitimize ISIS's goal, i.e., establishing the caliphate by dissolving the sovereignty of Iraq.

Let us move to the next question: was using violence necessary (was it the only way to achieve the goal)? The nature of ISIS's primary goal, i.e., reestablishing the caliphate, requires violence. For the simple fact that it rejects nation-states and any constitution that is not strictly based on Sharia. However, since the goal was not legitimate, it follows that the violence employed in service of an unjust cause was also unjust.

Anyway, for the sake of argument, let us imagine that ISIS's goal was legitimate, and violence was justified; we still need to answer the last question: was violence used carefully (was it used proportionally)? The short answer to these questions is no. Suffice it to remember the example mentioned previously: the mass killing of Yazidi males and enslaving of females in the thousands. The German parliament acknowledged what Yazidis suffered at the hands of ISIS as genocide (Carrel, 2023). When a social movement, no matter how noble its goals are claimed to be, is convicted of committing genocide, it will reach the threshold of satisfying conditions of unjustified violent extremism.

### **3.2.2 ISIS and Argumentation Theory**

What contributions can argumentation theory make to understanding ISIS? I will mainly focus on exploring the rhetorical strategy used in Jihadism ideology and a speech by al-Baghdadi [from now on, Baghdadi]. Moreover, I identify major arguments and analyze and evaluate them. In other words, through tools from argumentation theory, I will try to explain how the most problematic type of extremism, UVE, is argued in the case of ISIS. Argumentation scholars have



recently started to contribute to the literature on extremism. For example, Brian K. Ladd and Jean Goodwin (2022) argue that despite the prevailing danger of terrorism, the discourse of terrorism is still “understudied.” They write:

In Europe, [...], there were 119 failed, foiled, and completed terrorist attacks and over 1000 people arrested for terrorism related crimes in 2019 alone (Europol, 2020). In the United States there have been 121 failed, foiled, or successful plots since 9/11. Yet [...] the *discourse* produced by the violent extremists themselves remains understudied (p. 39, my italic).

Ladd and Goodwin's main strategy in their paper is to identify argument types that al-Awlaki uses to justify violence, which is helpful for my approach in this chapter. However, the scope of my analysis is broader than their approach in several ways. First, I will examine the ideology behind the Baghdadi speech, which is jihadism. Second, I will identify the rhetorical strategies that jihadis use, and I will say whether jihadis make good or bad arguments. Here, David Zarefsky's observation on rhetorical analysis is helpful. He argues that from a rhetorical perspective, argumentation is focused on “how inferences are justified for audiences in specific situations” (Zarefsky, 2020, p. 298). To make sense of ‘specific situations’ in which ISIS reasons, I provide contextual explanations, such as socio-political and ideological explanations, in this part and the second part.

Another useful analytical tool that I borrow from argumentation theory is the rhetoric of exhortation. The rhetoric of exhortation has three necessary conditions: action-orientated speech, inspiring the audience to act as the fulfilment of their duty and obligation, and

recognizing the intention of the speaker as a good reason to engage in the action (Kauffeld & Innocenti, 2018). This rhetorical strategy seems to have played an important role in Baghdadi's rhetorical success in calling for jihad.

Although the caliphate no longer exists on the ground, it is naive to believe the danger of jihadism is no longer real. Establishing the caliphate and using jihad still exist in the minds of violent jihadis. So, the danger is still real since the discourse of violent jihadism is still around. We should keep in mind that "texts last longer than armament: they need not be upgraded every ten years, and they cost very little, next to nothing, in fact. ISIS seems to have understood it" (Salazar, 2016, p. 352). Some authors rightly argue that destroying ISIS on the ground does not mean ISIS's 'virtual caliphate' is destroyed. For example, Hassan (2017) argues:

Although the territorial "caliphate" has ceased to exist, the virtual "caliphate" which IS has been building up on social media and other online platforms will prevail and may continue to beguile vulnerable segments of societies. IS has already appealed to its followers to hijrah (migrate) to its wilayats ("provinces") that stretch from West Africa to the Philippines (p. 1).

Argumentation theory can provide an understanding of Jihadism's discourse and how to resist it. If we understand how jihadis think, we will be better positioned to combat the mindset that keeps reproducing violent jihadis. Ladd and Goodwin conclude in their paper that their findings "do suggest the power of argumentation analysis in understanding the radicalization of violent extremists" (2022, p. 46). This chapter aims to enhance our understanding of the violent extremism of Jihadism in general and of ISIS in particular.

### **3.2.3 Socio-political Factors**

Although argumentation, the rhetorical component, in particular, played an important role in establishing ISIS and convincing Muslims worldwide to join it, there were non-argumentative factors as well. Argumentation (making, sending, receiving, judging arguments) does not happen in a vacuum. When we read Salazar, for example, we are tempted to over-emphasize the role argumentation, specifically rhetoric, played in the formation of the caliphate. However, we should not overlook the non-argumentative factors. In this section, I will briefly explain the historical socio-political factors that facilitated the birth of ISIS. Of course, I am not claiming that those factors were categorically non-argumentative. For a simple reason: they were talked about. Argumentation enters the equation when we start voicing our concerns or visions and try to convince others to join us. Having said that, paying attention to the socio-political facts gives us some context, which puts us in a better position to critically assess arguments in a case. The case in hand here is ISIS. So, what were the socio-political factors that facilitated the birth of ISIS?

The Iraqi economy was already weakened by decades of economic sanction before the 2003 invasion. The dire economy was coupled with security unrest due to the invasion and the policy of de-Baathification, which basically deprived a vast section of society of their jobs. Moreover, the lack of services and job opportunities contributed to pushing Sunnis to seek an alternative to the Shia-led government supported by the US and the Kurds. Sunnis ruled Iraq during the Saddam era for several decades, but due to the invasion and de-Baathification policy, they found themselves powerless. Other factors, such as anti-American sentiment, played a role due to the American-Israeli close alliance. Moreover, the interest alliance of AQI members with

the ex-Baath party smoothed the unification of different voices under ISIS. In this complex multi-factual oven, ISIS was cooked.

After reviewing the literature on the factors that contributed to the emergence of ISIS, a group of researchers (Pelletier, Lundmark, Gardner, Ligon & Kilinc, 2016) suggested the 'Political Process Model' as the best theoretical framework to explain ISIS. This model has three components as the following:

First is the political opportunity, also described as the political environment within the region that motivates people to act as a group to facilitate a change. Second, is mobilizing structures, which are about the presence of formal and informal vehicles that enable collective action. The final component is cultural dynamics, or shared meanings or frames that a group of people applies to a given situation (p. 877).

I will briefly comment on each component. The process of De-Baathification of the Iraqi government after the invasion removed Sunnis from power. Former Baath party leaders were looking for factors that could unite Sunni voices against the new government, which was Shia-dominated. It can be argued that the American detention centers were a good matchmaker between AQI members and the ex-Baathist party (Barrett, 2014). Above all, both were Sunnis and had a common enemy: the Iraqi government led by Shia, Kurds, and Americans. This is an example of the pragmatic elements of both Jihadis and Baathists because they were clearly subscribing to two different ideologies.

The Baath party was an ultranationalist-fascist party which engaged in a systematic genocide campaign against the Kurds known as the Anfal campaign. Even in 1988, Saddam

Hussein used chemical weapons against Kurds in the city of Halabja, which claimed five thousand lives on the same day. Generations after the attack, survivors and their children are still suffering. Nevertheless, as will be apparent in the second part, ISIS rejected nationalism and nation-state, among other modern political concepts. In the beginning, the ex-leaders of the Baath party were leading ISIS because of their military expertise and status within the Sunni community. However, as the movement grew, ISIS leaders took over the leadership role (Barrett, 2014). Because of their ideologies, it is reasonable to assume that the ex-Baath leaders never genuinely subscribed to a Jihadism ideology; they used it to gain power. However, soon they became a tool for Jihadism's agenda: establishing the caliphate.

Among other factors facilitating mobilization were multiple media sources, such as books, magazines, social media, and widespread teaching in mosques and others. Some researchers found that in some weeks, the ISIS propaganda machine released 100-200 media releases per week (Winter & Zelin, as quoted in Larsson, 2017, p.28). This clearly shows the level of jihadis' commitment and sophistication.

We should not overlook the importance of shared meaning in creating ISIS. Above all, the shared meaning was created by a jihadist reading of Islam. However, according to some surveys, there was already a growing global demand for a unified Muslim force before the formation of ISIS. For example, "66 percent of Muslims worldwide support unifying the global Islamic population under one or two caliphates. Furthermore, [...] over 50 percent of Muslims in the Middle East believed that *Sharia* [Islamic law] should be the only source of law in their countries"

(Pelletier, Lundmark, Gardner, Ligon & Kilinc, 2016, p. 872). So, marrying socio-political factors and jihadist interpretations of Islam was a successful strategic factor in forming ISIS.

What we can learn from this quick survey of the factors leading to the formation of ISIS is that the causes were multidimensional; therefore, the solutions must be multidimensional as well. It is simplistic only to blame certain Quranic verses or particular readings of Islam and overlook socio-political factors. Moreover, it is equally simplistic to detach Islam from any responsibility and only focus on socio-political factors. In the second part of this chapter, we will explore Jihadism as a mental map of ISIS. In the last part, we will explore how the most influential figure of ISIS, the caliph, argued and justified limitless violence. In both parts, we will see how argumentation played out in providing reasons for perilous positions and strategies used to manipulate the minds and hearts of thousands.

### **3.3 The Rhetoric of Killing?**

We love death. The U.S. loves life. That is the difference between us two. (Bin Laden as quoted in Chertoff, 2008)

This, O Muslim brothers, is who we are; we slay for our God, our God demands the slaying. I kill, therefore I am. (Murawiec, 2008)

ISIS was practicing jihad. Baghdadi was advocating for jihad. ISIS members killed in the name of jihad. What is Jihad? This section will navigate Jihadism as the ideology of ISIS. This is important in several ways. First, it allows us to see the theoretical foundation of the arguments made by Baghdadi; thus, we would be in an informed position to identify and evaluate them. Second, it allows us to understand Islam better and identify elements of Islamic discourse which are problematic in the sense of being inducive of encouraging violent extremism. Third, we will be

better positioned to provide a counter-discourse to reduce the effect of Jihadism. Knowing your enemy will give you a better chance of success.

Since there is a dialectical relation between thought and action, examining a thought is relevant to promoting, preventing or simply making sense of an action. Understanding Jihadism, with its logic, i.e., its reasons and inferences, and rhetoric, i.e., its discursive strategies, allows us to make sense of the “the pervasiveness of death in action [by ISIS which] matches the primacy of death in the mind [of its members]. [So,] after the practice of death, we can study its theoretical underpinnings” (Murawiec, 2008, p. 27). In the ideology of Jihadism, the concept of jihad is the fundamental persuasive tool which leaders like Baghdadi utilize “via certain discursive strategies such as [...] argumentative [strategies ...] to exhort radical Muslims to slaughter non-Muslims and the apostates.” (Al-Rikaby & Mahadi, 2018, pp. 769-700). So, what are jihad and Jihadism?

The literal meaning of ‘jihad’ has a neutral connotation: ‘striving’. Usually, jihad is used with ‘fi sabil Allah,’ which means ‘in the path of God’ (Bonner, 2008, p. 2). Jihad means striving in the path of God. Since there are many ways a believer can strive in the path of God, and an imam, a religious authority, can interpret what counts as ‘striving,’ jihad is open to different interpretations, including justifying violent and peaceful ways of striving (see the next section). Yet when it comes to ISIS, Jahan argues (2017) “Jihad is murdering of people irrespective of gender, race, and religion who disagree with their ideology” (p. 58). To understand their ideology, we need to dig further.

One of the most rhetorically successful strategies that ISIS uses to mobilize its members is attaching two possible outcomes of jihad, which would be a badge of pride and honour regardless

of the outcomes. In ISIS discourse, “if someone sacrifices their life during [a] fight with disbelievers, he/she certainly will earn paradise in the hereafter which is martyrdom. Whereas, if someone win, he/she will be glorified in earth or enjoy the result of victory” (Jahan, 2017, p. 60). So, either way, a jihadi, someone who practices jihad, is a winner. Although this is a powerful persuasive strategy, it is still fallacious thinking. The most relevant fallacy here is a version of “false dilemma.” This fallacy is self-explanatory: an arguer presents a scenario with only two options, but in reality, there are more. So, the audience is trapped between two options. What is brilliant here, in ISIS discourse, is that as long as ‘true Muslims’ subscribe to their interpretation of jihad, they come out as the winners. So, it is even more powerful than a common false dilemma argument because here, both options serve the arguer’s interest: recruiting more and more members. We should remember that this line of reasoning was and continues to be successful in winning hearts and minds. Regardless of whether the reasoning is fallacious or not, ISIS successfully created a double-edged sword with it. On the one hand, it clears the heart of the jihadi from fear of death because whether successful or not in fighting, they are still a winner. On the other hand, it creates a fearful heart for the potential victims of ISIS. One of the jihadis, Nibras Islam, said, “O Crusaders[..]: We will make you sleepless. Your heart will shake in fear of us” (Jahan, 2017, pp. 72-3). For potential victims, ISIS was to be feared and taken seriously because they would be killed in fighting, tortured to death, or sold into slavery if captured.

The acts of jihadi stem from Jihadism. Jihadism is a cognitive environment which cultivates jihadi minds. Jihadism is not just a manual of how jihadi should do this and avoid that, but it is also “a culture with its own poetry, music, dream interpretation, and other things” (Bunzel, 2017,



p, 1). Jihadism, therefore, is a wholistic discourse that targets its adherents through arguments from logos, ethos, and pathos. It makes arguments from logos by making arguments supported by religious logic. It is logic, anyway. For example, if there are only two outcomes for jihad, achieving paradise or living with a badge of honour, then it is totally logical to be jihadi because either way, you would be a winner. It makes arguments from ethos by referring to the character of the prophet, his successors and other high-regarded religious personnel. Moreover, of course, it makes arguments from pathos by appealing to the emotions of the Muslims. It can be argued that it does the last type of argument more effectively because one has to be emotionally charged with pride and anger, in addition to *absolute* certainty, to face death and force death upon others *joyfully*.

### **3.3.1 Pillars of Jihadism**

To understand Jihadism, we need to identify and define its core concepts. To use a metaphor, if jihadism is a table, then we need to examine its legs, which support it. To make the subject clear and succinct, I will explain some of the key concepts: *tawhid* (monotheism), *hakimiyya* (God's sovereignty), and *jahiliyyah* (age of ignorance).

The principle of *tawhid*, monotheism, is much more exclusive than just rejecting atheism or polytheism; it also rejects any monotheistic interpretations that jihadis do not endorse. For example, in the case of ISIS, the victims were not just Yezidi, Christians and people with no religious beliefs, but anyone, including Sunni Muslims, who did not fit the rigid interpretation of ISIS. So, "it is this "rejectionism" that is their [jihadi's] hallmark, framed around the creed of monotheism and the methodology of jihad" (Bunzel, 2017, p. 6). It can be argued that the rigid

monotheism of ISIS involving the meaning of God is also a monopoly of God. You would be a disbeliever, regardless of how religious you might be, if you do not worship the exact God in the exact ways that ISIS members do. So, since the concept of God is very central in Islam, then all ISIS and other jihadi movements need to do is to question one's understanding of God, then denouncement and killing of that person will follow smoothly in their logic.

Hakimiyya, God's sovereignty, means the only legitimate type of governance is that which directly and rigidly implements Sharia, Islamic law. So, ideas like individual sovereignty, state sovereignty, supremacy of law, or what have you in modern political thought are all unacceptable for one simple reason: they are not based on God's sovereignty. God's sovereignty requires God's guidelines, i.e., Sharia, to be respected and implemented thoroughly and rigidly in every aspect of life (Malka, 2015). Any sociopolitical arrangements that deviate from the *hakimiyya* are, therefore, by default *jahiliyyah* (age of ignorance). Jahiliyyah is a "Quranic term indicating the age of ignorance and idolatry prevailing in Arabia prior to the rise of Islam in the seventh century" (Bunzel, 2017, p. 7). So, Jihadism is equally dismissive of the era of idolatry that existed more than a thousand years ago and of democracy in the 21st century. Why is that the case? For a simple reason, both of them violate the principle of hakimiyya. No matter the essence of alternatives, socialism or Capitalism, monarchy or democracy, for jihadis, it is either God or total destruction. Here is an interesting paragraph by one of the most influential masterminds of modern jihadism, an iconic leader of the Muslim Brotherhood, Sayyid Qutb:

Look at this Capitalism with its monopolies, its usury and whatever else is unjust in it; at this individual freedom, devoid of human sympathy and responsibility for relatives except

under the force of law; at this materialistic attitude which deadens the spirit; at this behaviors, like animals, which you call ' free mixing of the sexes ' ; at this vulgarity which you call ' emancipation of women,' which are contrary to the demands of practical life; and at Islam, with its logic, beauty, humanity and happiness, which reaches the horizons to which man strives but does not reach. (Qutb as quoted in Sarangi & Canter, 2009, pp. 45-46)

The rhetoric of jihadi is a discursive justification of the logic of dichotomy. In the above paragraph, we clearly see this dichotomy between the jihadi version of Islam and the West. While the West is identified as a system and practice of monopolies, injustices, cruelty, anti-spirit, vulgarity, and animal-like behaviours, Islam, on the other hand, is logical, beautiful, and full of humanity and happiness. The force of the rhetoric of jihadism lies in its capability of portraying an image of the complex world with a simple logical dichotomy in which the judgement is simple: Islam is good, and the rest is garbage. This simple logic, which is presented with words loaded with strong emotions, is rich enough rhetorically that it produces jihadis with a convinced mind and fixed spirit who believe they are the winners of both this world and the latter, whether they kill or be killed. Quite honestly, this is indeed powerful.

The rhetoric of Jihadism is mainly idealistic, but not solely because there are also elements of pragmatism. It is idealistic in the sense of justifying belief in the perfection of Islam and living as a true believer to achieve a perfect paradise. It is pragmatic because, despite its despising of the West, it acknowledges its scientific advancement and *takes advantage* of it. Jihadis know that in order to achieve their ideal goals, including establishing a caliphate, they need practical tools,

and what is better than turning to science for practical tools? On this point, in summarizing Qutb's position on Islam, Sarangi and Canter write, "Muslim society needs to learn the pure sciences like physics, engineering, medicine, mathematics and biology in which the West has made significant progress. However, Muslims must keep away from liberal arts like political science and philosophy, since they contain un-Islamic ideas and are sinful" (p. 46). We should remember that without mastery of IT knowledge used in the online propaganda campaign and using modern armaments, ISIS could not have convinced thousands worldwide to immigrate to Iraq and Syria and fight local and international forces for years.

The amount of certainty jihadis have in their position is mind-astounding. Yes, all of us are certain about some positions, but certainty in itself is not necessarily problematic. The arrogance and feeling of superiority that comes with some certainty make it dangerous. We see this clearly in Qutb's writing:

The earth belongs to God and should be purified for Him unless the banner, 'No deity except God,' is unfurled across the earth. Man is [a] servant to God alone, and he can remain so only if he unfurls the banner ... no sovereignty except God's, no law except from God, and no authority of one man over another, as the authority in all respects belong to God (As quoted in Sarangi & Canter, 2009, p. 42).

This line of reasoning is a ticking bomb for democracy: it is not enough to allow jihadis to practice and preach their religion in a democratic system because 1) the constitution is not Sharia-based; 2) not all people are Muslims. Jihadis misuse freedom of conscience, expression, and assembly provided in the democratic system while spreading their undemocratic ideas.

Democracy, for them, is a perfect nest to hatch their tyranny. It is only a sign of ignorance of jihadism when any critique of Islam is dismissed or even cancelled because it is labelled as ‘Islamophobia.’ In response to a piece by Tarek Fatah published in the Toronto Sun, the founder of the Islamic Party of Ontario, Syed Jawed Anwar, in 2018, wrote, “Tarek is an open enemy of Islam” (ACD, 2018). Although this language does not directly justify violence, it is still problematic. All we need is to ask, if someone is an open enemy of Islam, what should a jihadi do to him?

Having said that, I am not arguing that Islam is necessarily an anti-democratic religion; I am not even arguing that all jihadis are. There are different types of jihads, and only one of them is the most problematic: Salafi-Jihadi or militant Jihadi. So, what are the types of Jihadism?

### **3.3.2 Types of Jihads**

Judging from ISIS’s atrocities, we may be tempted to attach an inherent negative judgment to jihad and jihadism. We would be mistaken. In this section, I will try to provide an account of jihad which captures its multidimensionality. This will be useful to avoid the hasty generalization fallacy. If we generalize ISIS’s usage of jihad to describe all Muslims or even all Muslims who advocate for jihad, then we would be committing a hasty generalization because ISIS’s employment of jihad is only one way of interpreting jihad. This classification of jihad also helps us to be mindful of the rhetorical strategies that ISIS uses to justify violence through advocating for jihad. Even though “all jihadis are Islamists—call them jihadi Islamists—[] very few Islamists are jihadis” (Bunzel, 2017, p. 5). I will go a step further by arguing that not all jihadis are violent. Therefore, even though all jihadis are Islamist, not all jihadis fall under the category of unjustified violent extremism. Jihad is a central concept in Islam, and different interpretations are attached to it.

However, it can be argued that what is shared among all interpretations is that since God created Muslims, they owe him their soul. Thus, Muslims must do x, y and z to satisfy God. Various jihads result from what is counted as the right way to satisfy God. The main aim of satisfying God for all Muslims is to be worthy of his paradise in the afterlife.

The following types of jihad have been identified in the literature on jihad: offensive versus defensive jihad, greater or internal jihad versus lesser or external jihad. Different scholars have justified their positions with examples from the Quran and Islamic history. To keep this section short, I will only introduce the subject. This allows us first to categorize ISIS better and to be mindful of the fact that, fortunately, or unfortunately, the Quran is open to different interpretations. One can find evidence of whatever kind of jihad one believes in.

Bonner (2008) raises three questions that are a helpful guide to our discussion: "Is it [jihad] an ideology that favours violence? A political means of mass mobilization? A spiritual principle of motivation for individuals?" (p. 2). Regardless of how different the answers to these questions might be, what is common in all the forms of jihad is that jihad is striving to be worthy of God's mercy and thus worthy of his paradise. In this striving, Muslims use different methods.

One may engage in offensive jihad. Offensive jihad or Salafi/militant jihad simply means that even if non-Muslims do not do any offensive action against Muslims, Muslims still have the right and obligation to attack them until they die or live under the banner of true Islam.<sup>36</sup> The idea is that since offensive/Salafi jihadis believe in Islam, therefore they are entitled to wage

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<sup>36</sup> There are nuanced arguments on how to deal with non-Muslim believers, such as Christians, once their land was conquered, but it is not relevant to our discussion.

offensive wars and spread the word of God with swords. The term Salafi is a key term in jihadism. Salafists can be defined as “religious and social reformers who seek a return to the authentic beliefs and practices of the first three generations of Muslims” (Haykel, as quoted in Malka, 2015, p. 11). So, Salafi jihadis are those who believe in offensive warfare to ‘return to the authentic beliefs and practices of Islam.’ Salafi-jihadis are those who believe that the only way to do a successful transaction with God (strive to please God with your soul, body and wealth so as to win paradise) is for Muslims to live as Muslims lived at the time of the prophet, even if this required using violence against not just atheists, but believers of other religions, and Muslims who do not subscribe to their strict commitment of Salafism: to live life as early generations of Muslims did.

Among other supports that offensive/militant/Salafi jihads provide to convince Muslims of their interpretation of jihad is the following verse from Sura (at-Tawbah) of the Quran:

Allah has purchased from the believers their lives and their properties in exchange for Paradise. They fight in Allah’s way, and they kill and get killed. It is a promise binding on Him in the Torah, and the Gospel, and the Quran. And who is more true to his promise than Allah? So, rejoice in making such an exchange—that is the supreme triumph (9:111).

The diversity of jihad is mainly caused by the method that a Muslim would choose to do the transaction successfully: selling soul and wealth, buying Paradise. The idea that “Allah has bought from the believers their lives and their wealth in return for Paradise” is shared by all Muslims since this is the core of the belief. It can be argued that the strict interpretation of the texts and the commitment to living as in the early Islam era makes Salafi-jihadis perpetually

violent since the world changes continuously. Therefore, it can be argued that for the Salafi-jihadi movement, like ISIS, “death is not an instrumentality – like the death of the enemy on the battlefield – it has become an end in itself” (Murawiec, 2008, p. 12). How could one force the world to live as people lived more than a millennium ago, if not through violence?

Subscribers to defensive jihad, on the other hand, believe that Muslims still aim to spread the message of God but only use violence if they are offended, i.e., face violence by non-Muslims either in the process of spreading Islam or when they are attacked. Many Islam scholars defend this account of jihad. For example, Abdullah Azzam argued that “jihad can be waged only against non-Muslim invaders and should focus on anticolonial struggles in Palestine, the Caucuses, and elsewhere” (as quoted in Malka, 2015, p. 15). The history of defensive jihad reasoning goes back to the thirteenth century when Mongols attacked Muslim lands. Among other verses that advocate for defensive jihad to support their position is this verse from The Heifer chapter: “And fight in the cause of Allah those who fight you, but do not commit aggression; Allah does not love the aggressors” (2: 190).

The distinction between offensive and defensive jihad becomes less clear when some jihadis advocate for offensive jihad but frame it as defensive. Their argument goes like this: non-Muslim forces during colonialism invaded Muslim lands, and when they left, pro-western leaders took power; therefore, engaging in violence against those pro-western leaders is defending Islam (Malka, 2015). They stretch this line of reasoning even to justify invading Spain because Islam once upon a time ruled Spain. For example, a famous Islamic scholar, Al-Buti, argues:



Al-Andalus [Spain] remains part of the territory of Islam (*dar al-Islam*) legally, and Muslims bear the responsibility, according to the jurists, of returning it back to the fold of Islam. The Muslims' neglect of their responsibility during all of these centuries does not change this obligation one bit. (As quoted in Cook, 2005. p. 123)

In the literature on Jihadism, we also find terms of greater or internal jihad and lesser or external jihad. These types are classified based on the degrees of importance. Greater/internal jihad focuses on the importance of purifying one's soul from desires, passions and lusts that could derail one from the true path of Islam. In the external jihad, the focus is more on spreading Islam and protecting it against the enemies of Islam. So, external jihad may capture both offensive and defensive jihad. The word 'greater' emphasizes the importance of taking care of one's soul over the importance of spreading Islam through jihad. The former is greater compared to the latter because "the authentic jihad, the "greater jihad," is not warfare waged in the world against external adversaries but is rather an internal spiritualized war waged against the self and its base impulses...and then rise to contemplation of higher truth" (Bonner, 2008, p. 12). Both internal and external are jihads because both require struggle. In the history of Islam, we find many voices who identify internal jihad as the jihad that takes a real fighter to fight it because a true fighter is "one who fights his [lower] soul [lust and earthly desires]" (Cook, 2005. p. 35). This classification of jihad into greater and lesser jihad "can be dated to the first half of the ninth century, when the ascetic movement in Islam was beginning to coalesce into Sufism, the mystical interpretation of Islam" (Cook, 2005. p. 35). There is an interesting analogy by al-Ghazali, one of the most influential thinkers of Islam, which "presents the lusts and passions of the soul as an invading

army trying to conquer the body and to keep it from following the path of mysticism” (Cook, 2005, p. 37). So, it could be argued that sometimes it is easier to fight others than to have one’s own ‘sinful desires’ under one’s control, as the reasoning of internal jihad goes.

How to make sense of those who say Islam means peace and those who say Islam is inherently violent? Both of them are guilty of oversimplification and the fallacy of hasty generalization. Yes, both camps can find textual evidence from the Quran and empirical evidence from Islamic history to support their position, but they are wrong not to acknowledge evidence from the other side. The truth of the matter is “[t]he Quran contains both the sword verses [pro-violence] and the *salam* verses [pro-peace], and it is a matter of emphasis and interpretation by believers, which one to advocate” (Sarangi & Canter, 2009, p. 49). ISIS leaders have succeeded in making a case to convince thousands of their rhetoric of offensive jihad. In the case of jihad, those who are more skillful in their argumentation either kill or prevent killings. There was a time when Christianity was also open to violent interpretation. The secularization process in Western countries gradually reduced the realization of potential violence in Christianity. In the Islamic world, secularization is yet to be successful. Until then, we are at the mercy of those who make more convincing pro-greater jihad arguments. Argumentation matters.

### **3.4 How Does the Caliph Argue?**

In this part, I will analyze a speech by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the caliph, titled:

A Message to the Mujahidin and the Muslim Ummah in the Month of Ramadan,' 1 July 2014 from Amirul-Mu'minin Abu Bakr al-Husayni al-Qurashi al-Baghdadi.<sup>37</sup>

Al-Baghdadi pleads to Muslims around the world to immigrate to Islamic State. This analysis aims to figure out the argumentative strategies that the caliph uses. The paragraphs of the speech are numbered for easy reference and the organizational flow of the study. I will comment on each paragraph separately and then have overall comments.

Baghdadi presented two speeches in one week. Just two days before the speech that we study here, Abu Muhammad al-Adnani, the spokesperson of ISIS, "announced that ISIS was now to be known as the Islamic State, that the caliphate had been established, and that Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi had been nominated as its caliph... al-Baghdadi positioned [the caliphate] as the center of gravity for the Muslim world with [himself] the caliph as its sole authority" (Ingram, Whiteside & Winter, 2020, pp. 161–162). There was a lot at stake for Baghdadi to achieve through his argumentation. There are Islamic countries, such as Saudi Arabia and Iran, and many Islamic scholars in the Islamic world. To be convincing in his arguments, Baghdadi had to make a case for why, among other Islamic countries, the Islamic State was worthy of becoming the center of the Islamic world and why he should be the caliph among all the Islamic scholars. Unless he was sophisticated in his argumentation strategies, it is unlikely that he would have made a convincing case for his controversial claims.

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<sup>37</sup> The whole speech is taken from: Al-Baghdadi, A. B. (2020). Declaration of a Caliphate. In T. Ball, R. Dagger, & D. I. O'Neill (Eds.) (pp. 533–537).

### 3.4.1 Rhetorical Significance of the Title and the Caliph's Name

Let us explore his argumentative strategies starting from the title: *“A Message to the Mujahidin and the Muslim Ummah in the Month of Ramadan.”*

Why not simply a message to ‘Muslims’? Why specifically ‘mujahidin’? Mujahidin are not just believers but believers who are also fighters. Thus, right from the very beginning of the speech, the title set the tone of the speech: a call for jihad. As discussed in the second part, jihadism is a complex term open to four interpretations: offensive, defensive, greater and lesser jihad. So, when Baghdadi called for jihad, what type of jihad did he mean? Having read the second part, we know the type is offensive jihad. However, what is interesting is that, at times, he packages offensive jihad as defensive, even greater jihad.

Another noteworthy remark before we study the speech is the caliph's name: Amirul-Mu'minin Abu Bakr al-Husayni al-Qurashi al-Baghdadi. Amirul-Mu'minin means the commander or the prince of the believer. So, he stimulates a collective ethos before he has even uttered a word. In this context, collective ethos means ‘speaking on behalf of a group’ (Amossy, 2018). He, a commander or a prince, speaks on behalf of the ruled, i.e., the Islamic world. In the Baghdadi context, the collective ethos is even more inclusive than any ethos constructed by any commander or the prince because his constituency is not limited to an army or a state but rather the entire Muslim population, regardless of where they happen to reside. On this point, Salazar writes: “With the proclamation [as Amirul-Mu'minin, the caliph. His] biography becomes hagiography, a tradition of spoken words and of gestures that hereafter pertain to a holy history. His life story goes from a fact sheet to a holy legend” (2017, p. 15). As a ‘holy legend,’ Baghdadi is

no longer a commander who could be challenged. Therefore, if he demands jihad, obedience to his call becomes a political and religious virtue because now he is a successor of the prophet and pursues “the expansion of the community or nation of believers, the one through whom *jihad* passes and transits, in a continuation of prophetic action” (ibid. p. 23).

Another interesting remark worth making is about the “al-Qurashi” part of Baghdadi’s name. Al-Quraishi is the tribe that the prophet of Islam, Muhammad, belongs to. By associating himself with the tribe of the most important person in Islamic history, Baghdadi tries to stimulate an approval response from his audience.

Baghdadi's reasoning goes like this: The prophet is from the al-Quraishi tribe. This makes the al-Quraishi tribe special among other tribes because those who belong to the tribe of the prophet are special. I belong to the same tribe; therefore, I am special to you.

If we dig further, we can actually detect an enthymematic argument<sup>38</sup> from analogy as the following:

Explicit premise 1: The prophet is from the al-Quraishi tribe.

Hidden sub-conclusion: therefore, the al-Quraishi tribe is special among other tribes, and those who belong to the tribe of the prophet are special.

Explicit premise 2: I belong to the same tribe.

Hidden main conclusion: therefore, I am special to you.

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<sup>38</sup> An enthymematic argument sometimes purposely lacks some elements and is not fully expressed in order to increase the rhetorical forces of an argument by inviting an audience to step in and provide missing premises.

Associating one with a tribe might not come across as appealing in consolidated democratic systems in which individualism has, to a great extent, replaced attachment to collective identities, such as tribes. Moreover, because of the rule of law, individuals' rights are protected without the need to appeal to a tribe. However, in non-democratic countries, such as Iraq and Syria, where ISIS emerged, neither individualism nor the rule of law is as effective as in democratic countries. Collective identities are still appealing to individuals. This is not just for cultural reasons but also for economic and security. Individuals still turn to tribes to leverage their power for economic and security reasons. That is why there are still annual tribal festivals in many places. So, considering the context, we realize that, even in choosing names, ISIS's rhetorical argumentation is complex and well-thought-out.

#### **3.4.2 Rhetorical Analysis of the Speech**

*[1] Truly all praise belongs to Allah. We praise Him, and seek His help and His forgiveness. We seek refuge with Allah from the evils of our souls and from the consequences of our deeds. Whomever Allah guides can never be led astray, and whomever Allah leads astray can never be guided.*

The opening of the speech is common to sermons by imams. An imam is a Muslim scholar who preaches in religious gatherings, such as in mosques on Fridays. The argument that is put forward demands total submission to God's authority: even though "Whomever Allah guides can never be led astray, and whomever Allah leads astray can never be guided," we still "seek His help and His forgiveness. We seek refuge with Allah from the evils of our souls and from the consequences of our deeds" (para. 1). This argument sets the stage for the imam to make a strong

case for any proposition that it can be supported by the word of God: Quran. The rhetorical strategy here is making a case for ultimate trust in God because he is the ultimate authority. The danger here is twofold. First, what is written in the Quran is considered the word of God and, therefore, demands absolute submission. Second, which is a consequence of the first but exceeds it in danger, is any interpretation an imam associates with the word of God will most likely be taken as accurate beyond any grain of salt. In either case, the critical apparatus of the audience is almost utterly disarmed. Baghdadi seems to be well aware of this line of reasoning, which is why he heavily appeals to God in his speech, as it will be apparent.

*[2] I testify that there is no god except Allah—alone without any partners—and I testify that Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) is His slave and Messenger . . .*

This statement is shahada in Islam, meaning one becomes Muslim by uttering this sentence. The exact phrasing of Shahada is ‘There is no true god but Allah, and Muhammad is the messenger of God.’ This statement is a performative act: A non-Muslim becomes Muslim just by saying these words. One’s religious identity is entirely changed due to a short sentence. Either in wartime, when a non-Muslim prisoner of war may use shahada to lessen his burden or in a free society, the speech is performative: changing one’s identity radically.

On the performative aspect of the shahada, Salazar observes the difference between becoming a believer in Christianity and Islam and concludes that “Entering Christianity, [...], requires preparation, catechisms, conversations with a priest or pastor, baptism: in short, a series of at times lengthy, deliberate actions that are subject to scrutiny. Entering Islam [on the other hand] is a powerful and dazzling act of language” (2017, p. 3). On this aspect, language in Islam

is more performative than in Christianity: one sentence does the whole job, while it is a lengthy process in Christianity. Moreover, at least on the issue of the proclamation of faith, Islam is more rhetorical than Christianity in the sense of how effective the language is. What a lengthy deliberation achieves in Christianity is achieved with one sentence in Islam. There are other examples of the performative act in Islam; one of the most effective ones is the declaration of the caliphate itself. On this point, Salazar argues that Baghdadi “by demonstrating that others are “polytheists,” assumes the Caliphate. He has “performed” the Caliphate. The Caliphate has come into existence” (ibid. p. 18).

*[3] And there is no deed in this virtuous month or in any other month better than jihad in the path of Allah, so take advantage of this opportunity and walk the path of you[r] righteous predecessors. Support the religion of Allah through jihad in the path of Allah. Go forth, O mujahidin [holy warrior] in the path of Allah. Terrify the enemies of Allah and seek death in the places where you expect to find it, for the dunyā (worldly life) will come to an end, and the hereafter will last forever.*

The call here is for external jihad, which could include both offensive and defensive jihad. The jihad he advocates is clearly violent and potentially deadly, yet he frames it as an opportunity to be taken advantage of. His speeches and the propaganda of ISIS media were convincing, and he succeeded in recruiting thousands of fighters. Reconstructing the main argument in the paragraph allows us to see reasons put forward to support his call. There are different ways to reconstruct the argument; here is one of them:



The central claim is that Muslims should become jihadis: ‘Support the religion of Allah through jihad in the path of Allah.’ Reasons:

1- jihad is the most virtuous deed: ‘There is no deed in this virtuous month or any other month better than jihad in the path of Allah.’

2- True Muslims in the past were jihadis: ‘Walk the path of you[r] righteous predecessors.’

3- if you die while in service of Allah, then you will lose worldly life but win eternity: ‘for the *dunyā* (worldly life) will come to an end, and the hereafter will last forever.’

Why were these reasons convincing for thousands to immigrate to one of the most insecure places on earth? To put it briefly: jihad is a rational decision, and a jihadi is a rational person. Rationality here means thinking and acting according to what I call ‘religious logic.’ If God exists and jihad is the most virtuous way to serve him, and through jihad, we can buy eternal life in paradise if we only sacrifice the fleeting worldly life, then what is more reasonable than to kill until we are killed? So, Baghdadi is making a reasonable case, as far as the, for a better or worse phrase, religious logic goes.

*[4] {So do not weaken and call for peace while you are superior; and Allah is with you and will never deprive you of [the reward of] your deeds. This worldly life is only amusement and diversion} [Muhammad: 35–36].*

*[5] {And this worldly life is not but diversion and amusement. And indeed, the home of the Hereafter —that is the [eternal] life, if only they knew} [Al- ‘Ankabūt: 64].*

*[6] {But the enduring good deeds are better to your Lord for reward and better for [one’s] hope} [AlKahf: 46].*

Paragraphs 4, 5 and 6 are all direct quotations from the Quran. The Quran being the word of God, and God being the ultimate knower, Baghdadi supported his call for jihad with the most bulletproof evidence: the Quran. Here, he is appealing to authority, but since the authority is God, then we may call this argument in religious logic (religious reasoning) an 'appeal to sacred authority.' However, we do not see a direct reference to jihad in these verses. The rhetorical strategy that Baghdadi uses here is to mix contexts by using a reason in one context to support different contexts. The last sentence of paragraph 3 is about the temporality of worldly life and the eternality of the hereafter life. This reason is used to support the claim of jihad. Then he references verses from the Quran which resemble his 'temporality of worldly life and eternality of the hereafter life' reason. However, these verses do not mention jihad. Nevertheless, Baghdadi cites three verses right after his request for jihad, as if these verses also request jihad as the only successful strategy to win eternal paradise. Let us rephrase his argument to make his rhetorical strategy clear:

Premise 1: we should do X (jihad) because of Y and Z.

Premise 2: Z is also mentioned in the Quran.

Sub-conclusion: therefore, we have the best reason to do X.

Main conclusion: therefore, we should do X.

But in the Quran, Z is not necessarily used, at least in these verses, to justify X, let alone the type of X (offensive jihad). We should remember that there are four types of jihad, as discussed in part two. Regardless of these details, the damage of associating X with Z through appealing to sacred authority is done.

*[7] Moreover, blessed is the one who parts with his dunyā in Ramadan and meets his Lord on a day from amongst the days of forgiveness.*

Ramadan is a special month for Muslims. Muslims fast each day from sunrise to sunset for a whole month and become more committed to their religion. This commitment manifests through fasting, praying, reading the Quran, becoming more charitable and helping needy families. We can argue that Ramadan is a month of greater/ internal jihad in the sense of striving to become a better person morally and spiritually. How does Baghdadi use Ramadan to advance his call for offensive jihad? The phrase 'parts with his dunya and meets his Lord' is a clear reference to jihad. Baghdadi's jihad is offensive, thus violent. One who participates in offensive jihad simply goes to war. One who goes to war will likely part with his dunya, i.e., die. Baghdadi packages death with blessing, meeting God, and forgiveness. Death is no longer negative but an opportunity to be blessed, forgiven, and, above all, meet God. His rhetoric can transform what we avoid the most, death, to be what we want the most: blessed eternal life in paradise. Baghdadi's deal is too appealing to reject for someone who subscribes to unjustified violent extremism in the version of Salafi-Jihadism.

*[8] O mujahidin [holy warriors] in the path of Allah, be monks during the night and be knights during the day. Bring joy to the hearts of a believing people, and show the tawāghīt (rulers who claim Allah's rights) what they are wary of.*

The caliph portrays a virtuous life to the degree that life can hardly get any better. A life that is full of meaning, purpose and virtues. If you accept his rhetoric, then you spend the night as monks and enjoy a sweet taste of spirituality, i.e., engage in greater jihad. During the day, you

become an example of courage and bravery. You live proudly because you bring joy to those you care about and fill the heart of your enemy with fear, i.e., engage in a defensive jihad. Who does not want to have a life like this?

Members of ISIS encountered many hardships; they were a target of coalition forces and were killed and captured by the thousands. However, because of the rhetoric they believed in, they thought they were living a virtuous, purposeful, and courageous life. They thought beyond doubt that they were monks in heart and warriors in action.

Here, and whenever he encourages his audience to do something that is framed as duty and where it is accompanied or even produced by strong emotions, the caliph is using the rhetoric of exhortation. Fred J. Kauffeld and Beth Innocenti identify the necessary conditions of exhortation as the following:

...making statements openly urging addressees to perform some principled course of action; openly intending to inspire addressees to act on the principles; and intending that addressees' recognition of the intentions to urge and inspire creates reasons to grant a sympathetic hearing to what the speaker has to say. (2018, p. 468)

The overall principled action that is urged to be done in the whole speech is immigration to the Islamic State to engage in jihad. In this paragraph, the principled action is expressed as acting as monks during nights and warriors during days. But why not simply urge them to do jihad? The obvious reason is that he needs to inspire them and provoke their emotions and sense of duty so that not just their minds but also their hearts are on board. Moreover, Baghdadi is straightforward with his intention that he wants them to be jihadi, and the only reason he

provides for his intention, at least in this paragraph, is the intention itself. This paragraph is a clear example of how Baghdadi utilizes the rhetoric of exhortation.

*[9] O mujahidin in the path of Allah, truly the matter is that of Allah's religion and His commodity. You only have one soul and an appointed time of death that will neither be hastened nor delayed. It is a matter of Paradise and Hellfire, happiness and misery. As for the religion of Allah, then it will be victorious. Allah has promised to bring victory to the religion. And as for Allah's commodity, then it is precious and valuable. Indeed His commodity is costly. Indeed His commodity is Paradise. As for the soul, then what a lowly, miserable, wretched soul it is if it does not seek what is with Allah and does not support the religion of Allah.*

Baghdadi's request to Muslims worldwide to immigrate to the Islamic State and to fight is a reason-intensive request. By reason-intensive request, I mean he provides many reasons for his claims. His rhetoric is convincing not just because of his style and word choice but also his reasons. For example, in this paragraph, we find several reasons to become a jihadi and immigrate to Islamic State. In each reason he provides to justify jihad, there is an additional implicit or explicit reason to support it. I will show his reason-intensive rhetoric in the following reconstruction of his macro-argument. The overall claim is that Muslims should sacrifice their lives to win Allah's commodity, i.e., paradise. This is one way to reconstruct this macro-argument.

Premise 1: your life will neither be hastened nor delayed [why?] (because your destiny has already been decided).

Premise 2: there are only two options available to you to choose from: paradise and eternal happiness or hellfire and eternal misery. [therefore, if you are wise, you would choose the first option].

Premise 3: Islam will be victorious [why?] [because Allah has promised to bring victory to the religion].

Premise 4: Allah's commodity is valuable but costly [why?] [because it costs one's soul]

Premise 5: your soul, regardless of how valuable it may be, will be a lowly, miserable, wretched soul if it does not seek what is with Allah and does not support the religion of Allah by becoming jihadi and immigrating to Islamic state.

Overall conclusion: You should immigrate to the Islamic State, become a jihadi, sacrifice yourself, and win paradise.

This argument in religious logic is reasonable for any audience who shares the underlying belief system. In this religious logic, i.e., belief system and religious reasoning, all the claims and reasons that Baghdadi mentions are accepted as true. They are essential elements of the religion itself. All Muslims believe in the existence of hellfire and paradise, in worldly life to be temporary, but life after death to be eternal. They all hope to win God's blessing, avoid hellfire and win paradise. The disagreement is not the end but the means. ISIS and Baghdadi argue that the right tool is offensive jihad; other Muslims choose different means, such as internal and greater jihad. So, the argument is rational according to the belief system that underlies it.

Religious logic is a necessary condition of Jihadism, regardless of the type, but it is not a sufficient reason. All Muslims subscribe to religious logic. Thus, it is a necessary condition for any

type of jihad they engage in, but it is not sufficient because additional factors are needed for each type of jihad. The socioeconomic backgrounds presented in the first part of this chapter help us make sense of some of the additional reasons that are needed for religious logic to produce a Salafi-jihadi such as the dire economy worsened due to American invasion, de-Baathification policy, hostility to American-Israeli collusion, and more. Moreover, the interest alliance of AQI members with the ex-Baath party smoothed the unification of different voices under ISIS. However, we will be mistaken if we conclude that these socioeconomic reasons are the only sufficient reasons for Salafi-Jihadism. The simple fact that thousands of foreigners immigrated from all over the world to Iraq and Syria and did not share these socioeconomic reasons proves the fact the caliph's rhetoric was among the essential reasons that gave birth to the IS or at least for convincing thousands to join it. So, we can conclude that the discourse of jihadism and the rhetoric of its key figures, such as the caliph, played a much more important role in the creation of ISIS than socioeconomic reasons. Thus, to fight the Salafi-Jihadism movements, the focus should be more on counter-rhetoric than socioeconomic factors or at least they should go hand in hand.

*[10] By Allah, we will never be mujahidin as long as we are stingy with our lives and our wealth. By Allah, we will never be truthful as long as we do not sacrifice our lives and wealth in order to raise high the word of Allah and bring victory to the religion of Allah.*

Here, Baghdadi responded to those who may disagree with his call for offensive jihad. Implicitly, he calls them stingy and untrue believers. The reasoning here is mainly dichotomy: generous and stingy, true and fake. The only way to be the former is to subscribe to offensive jihadism. We

should remember that, in religious logic, the price for choosing the false option is very consequential: eternal hellfire against eternal paradise. The caliph's dichotomous reasoning might cause some reconsideration from those not yet convinced by his appeal for immigration to the Islamic State.

*[11] {Indeed, Allah has purchased from the believers their lives and their properties [in exchange] for that they will have Paradise. They fight in the cause of Allah, so they kill and are killed. [It is] a true promise [binding] upon Him in the Torah and the Gospel and the Quran. And who is truer to his covenant than Allah? So rejoice in your transaction which you have contracted. And it is that which is the great triumph} [At-Tawbah: 111].*

One of the common features in the caliph's rhetoric is to appeal to the sacred Islamic text, the Quran, and through the Quran, to the sacred authority, God. First, he provides his reasons for his claims; then, he will find the same or similar reasons from the Quran. This is a powerful rhetorical strategy because any Muslim who rejects Baghdadi's reasons when he utters them as his own reasons cannot do the same when the caliph shows that the reasons are not entirely his but God's reason: God the ultimate authority of everything and anything. To fully appreciate Baghdadi's rhetorical techniques and reasoning, we should try to read them through the lens of what I call religious logic. Simply, we should read it as a believer. As someone who believes in the following:

- 1- Allah is omnipotent (all-powerful), omniscient (all-knowing), and omnibenevolent (supremely good).
- 2- Muhammad is the messenger of Allah.



- 3- The Quran is the word of God.
- 4- Worldly life is temporary, but the afterlife is eternal.
- 5- We will either be blessed with eternal paradise if we live as true Muslims or cursed with eternal hellfire if we do not.

In religious logic (belief system, religious reasoning), these five propositions are taken for granted. Since Baghdadi's audiences are Muslims and already on board with religious logic, and we want to make sense of the impact of his speech on his audience, we should be mindful of this logic. Once we look at the world through the glasses of this logic, then we will be in a better position to appreciate arguments put forward by ISIS, Baghdadi and other Salafi jihadism leaders.

*[12] So take up arms, take up arms, O soldiers of the Islamic State! And fight, fight!*

After providing his reasons and accurately or inaccurately linking to the Quranic verses (it is a matter of a different debate), Baghdadi appeals to repetition to give momentum and confidently demands fight and fight. Here, the appeal is to emotion, and no reason is provided, but since his audiences have already been prepared, he tries to target their heart rather than their minds.

*[13] Beware of becoming deluded and losing strength. Beware, for the dunyā [worldly life] has come to you reluctantly, so kick it down, trample it, and leave it behind you. Indeed, what is with Allah is better and more lasting.*

Here, Baghdadi responds to a possible doubt in his audience. The doubt about whether to totally disregard this life; no wonder it is a huge demand. As it is, he hears the voice of doubt in his audience, saying, 'How could I give up my career, family, dreams and hope of this dunya?'

The caliph, with absolute certainty, cautions them to be aware of dunya and ‘kick it down, trample it, and leave it behind you.’ If we fully grasp the power of this rhetoric as a ‘total devaluation of life,’ then we will begin to make sense of ISIS members’ lack of fear of death. The ultimate manifestation of this total devaluation of life is suicide. When a member of ISIS drives a suicide car bomb, he knows beyond any doubt that even if a bullet does not kill him, the explosion of the bomb attached to his car will kill him. But so what? He is already convinced of the reasonableness of kicking this dunya down, trampling it, and leaving it behind himself because in doing that, he will be with Allah, which is ‘better and more lasting.’

*[14] Indeed, the ummah [believers, followers] of Islam is watching your jihad with eyes of hope, and indeed you have brothers in many parts of the world being inflicted with the worst kinds of torture. Their honor is being violated. Their blood is being spilled. Prisoners are moaning and crying for help. Orphans and widows are complaining of their plight. Women who have lost their children are weeping. Masājid (plural of masjid) [mosques] are desecrated and sanctities are violated. Muslims’ rights are forcibly seized in China, India, Palestine, Somalia, the Arabian Peninsula, the Caucasus, Shām (the Levant), Egypt, Iraq, Indonesia, Afghanistan, the Philippines, Ahvaz, Iran [by the rāfidah (shia)], Pakistan, Tunisia, Libya, Algeria and Morocco, in the East and in the West.*

*[15] So raise your ambitions, O soldiers of the Islamic State! For your brothers all over the world are waiting for your rescue, and are anticipating your brigades. It is enough for you to just look at the scenes that have reached you from Central Africa, and from Burma before that. What is hidden from us is far worse.*

Here (para. 14 & 15), he, the caliph, appeals to emotions: sympathy, anger, and pride. He stimulates sympathy and anger in his audience by mentioning how “Prisoners are moaning and crying for help. Orphans and widows are complaining of their plight. Women who have lost their children are weeping.” He further unleashes anger from his audience by mentioning how sacred places like mosques are desecrated and Muslims worldwide, from East and West, face injustice. Baghdadi’s rhetoric is rich because he does not just unleash emotions from Muslims but gives them a direction on what to do: You feel hurt and angry; here is what you should do to feel proud. You should become jihadi and join ISIS because “Indeed, the ummah [believers, followers] of Islam is watching your jihad with eyes of hope.”

Baghdadi’s appeal to emotion is rich because it is packaged as an appeal to logos. He does not provoke emotions in his audience without providing ‘empirical evidence.’ Of course, I am not claiming that the empirical evidence accurately reflects how Muslims were/are treated; it is a matter of a different debate. My point is that he provides justification for his audience to be angry and seek revenge, and that is why his rhetoric works. Clearly, his justification is not convincing for everyone, but it is for those for whom it fits with their belief system. What he is doing with his arguments is ultimately a descriptive and prescriptive picture of the world: here is how Muslims are treated, and here is what we should do about it. His rhetoric is a purpose-generator in a world which, for many, lacks meaning and worth and which, for them, should be left behind.

*[16] So by Allah, we will take revenge! By Allah, we will take revenge! Even if it takes a while, we will take revenge, and every amount of harm against the ummah [believers] will be responded to with multitudes more against the perpetrator.*

At this stage of the speech, the emotions are high, filled with anger, sympathy, and courage, and supported by considerable ‘empirical evidence.’ He appeals to repetition to assure his audience that the suffering of Muslims is not all in vain because: by “Allah, we will take revenge! By Allah, we will take revenge!” Now, all he has to do is explain how exactly revenge will be conducted. There is no question whether Muslims have been wronged or whether Muslims are right to take revenge; now, it is a matter of how to take revenge, not why revenge.

*[17] {And those who, when tyranny strikes them, they defend themselves} [Ash-Shūrā: 39].*

What Baghdadi does, again and again, is first, he paraphrases what is already stated in a Quranic verse; then, he quotes the verse. This strategy is effective because the audience’s critical apparatus falls apart when God speaks. So, if you claim X and support it with a Quranic verse, the only option, at best, that a Muslim has is to ask whether the verse is taken out of context. With this strategy, even if his audience is not convinced by what they hear the first time from Baghdadi, they are unlikely to stay unpersuaded when God himself says the same thing or is close to it.

In this verse, we do not know who represents tyranny; we only know that we need to fight back when they attack. What Baghdadi does is portray a picture of the world where there are tyrants who subjugate Muslims and who have to be fought by Muslims. Then he says, look, I am not the one who asks you to fight back; it is God himself. Even if you do not believe me, do not dare to question God.

*[18] And the one who commences is the more oppressive.*

Reassure ISIS members, actual and potential, that no matter how they respond, since they did not initiate the injustice, the enemies of Islam are more oppressive. So, you are allowed to be

ruthless. And indeed, they were ruthless: threw people off buildings, set people on fire, sold people in marketplaces, and more.

*[19] Soon, by Allah's permission, a day will come when the Muslim will walk everywhere as a master, having honor, being revered, with his head raised high and his dignity preserved. Anyone who dares to offend him will be disciplined, and any hand that reaches out to harm him will be cut off.*

Offensive jihad, which Baghdadi depicts as defensive jihad in his rhetoric, is not just legitimate, but its success is guaranteed. His rhetoric is comprehensive regarding the emotions he stimulates in his audience: anger, sympathy, pride, and absolute certainty. He provides empirical and textual evidence from the Quran to enrich appeals to emotions with appeals to logos, i.e., verifiable reasons. Now, his audience is angry, passionate, proud and certain of success. Any commander will dream of having his soldiers share the mindset of the caliph's soldiers.

*[20] So let the world know that we are living today in a new era. Whoever was heedless must now be alert. Whoever was sleeping must now awaken. Whoever was shocked and amazed must comprehend. The Muslims today have a loud, thundering statement, and possess heavy boots. They have a statement that will cause the world to hear and understand the meaning of terrorism, and boots that will trample the idol of nationalism, destroy the idol of democracy and uncover its deviant nature.*

In part two of this chapter, we discussed some essential features of Salafi-Jihadism. One of them was the rejection of modern political principles. As one of the most influential proponents of this ideology, Baghdadi clearly depicts the total rejection of modern political

principles such as nationalism. This is one of the instances where the extremity of ISIS is exemplified: a radical change of the status quo.

This paragraph differs from the previous ones regarding the intended audience. Here, the main audience is non-Muslims. The message for enemies of Islam is loud and clear: we destroy everything that you believe in. Baghdadi's argumentative strategies are not unrealistic threats that could be disregarded as empty exaggerations or improbable promises. He and his followers actually did exactly what they claimed. They imposed a caliphate at the expense of the nation-state and showed the world "the true meaning of terrorism." There is an important lesson to be learned here: extremist rhetoric should be taken seriously, even when it is as unrealistic as making a case that we should turn back history by hundreds of years. Baghdadi's speech was a roadmap; his followers did everything to implement it, and they succeeded at the expense of thousands of lives.

*[21] So listen, O ummah of Islam. Listen and comprehend. Stand up and rise. For the time has come for you to free yourself from the shackles of weakness, and stand in the face of tyranny, against the treacherous rulers—the agents of the crusaders and the atheists, and the guards of the jews.*

There are two major points worth considering in this paragraph. First, depicting weakness as a prison and joining jihad as the key to breaking free. Unfree are any Muslims who have not yet joined ISIS. No matter where you live, west or east, in a democratic or undemocratic society, since you have not yet joined the family of Salafi-Jihadism, you are a slave. This dichotomy

between freedom and slavery or bravery and weakness is an effective rhetorical strategy because it reduces the complexity of options into just two options.

The second point is about ISIS's conception of the enemy. ISIS emerged from Iraq and expanded to Syria; both countries are not secular. The majority of Iraqis and Syrians are committed Muslims. Baghdadi needs to employ a rhetorical strategy to associate these countries with more obvious enemies of Islam: crusaders, atheists and Jews. This is an effective strategy because, in the mind of his audience, no arguments are needed to make a case for why crusaders, atheists and Jews are enemies of Islam. It is a given. A proper name for this strategy would be guilty by association: X is already proven to be an enemy of Islam, and Y is associated with X; therefore, Y is also an enemy of Islam. Regardless of whether we find Baghdadi's strategies persuasive, for his audience, it helped create one of the most terrifying armies in recent history.

*[22] O ummah of Islam, indeed the world today has been divided into two camps and two trenches, with no third camp present: The camp of Islam and faith, and the camp of kufr (disbelief) and hypocrisy—the camp of the Muslims and the mujahidin everywhere, and the camp of the jews, the crusaders, their allies, and with them the rest of the nations and religions of kufr, all being led by America and Russia, and being mobilized by the jews.*

The implicit dichotomous view in the previous paragraph is made explicit in this paragraph. This camp of jihadis is good; the rest of the world is bad, as simple as that. The second camp also includes Muslims who are not subscribing to Salafi-Jihadism because, as we saw in the previous paragraph, they are associated with established enemies of Islam: crusaders, atheists and Jews. To guide his audience's thinking processes to the desired conclusion, he ties down all

the various groups of enemies of Islam to the most obvious one: the Jews. This rhetorical strategy bypasses any potential hesitations by jihadis to kill Muslims. At the end of the day, as mentioned, Iraq and Syria are predominantly Muslim countries. Baghdad's strategy to associate whoever becomes an obstacle of ISIS with Jews successfully extinguished any flame of hesitation.

*[23] Indeed the Muslims were defeated after the fall of their khilāfah (caliphate). Then their state ceased to exist, so the disbelievers were able to weaken and humiliate the Muslims, dominate them in every region, plunder their wealth and resources, and rob them of their rights. They accomplished this by attacking and occupying their lands, placing their treacherous agents in power to rule the Muslims with an iron fist, and spreading dazzling and deceptive slogans such as: civilization, peace, co-existence, freedom, democracy, secularism, baathism, nationalism, and patriotism, among other false slogans.*

Baghdadi requested immigration around the world to Iraq and Syria. He knows some of his audience may wonder why they should conduct jihad against their Muslim brothers. Baghdadi provided an answer in this paragraph. The rulers of the Muslim world are 'treacherous agents' of disbelievers. Here again, we are witnessing a strategy of guilt by association. The argument goes like this:

Premise one: There is no doubt disbelievers are true enemies of Islam, and we need to fight them.

Premise two: Rulers in the Muslim world are treacherous agents of true enemies of Islam.



Conclusion: Therefore, rulers in the Muslim world are also true enemies of Islam, and we need to fight them.

With this strategy, any concepts that are remotely associated with the West must be rejected, regardless of whether Muslim people in Muslim countries voted in favour of them. As a result, concepts like civilization, peace, co-existence, freedom, democracy, secularism, Ba'athism, nationalism, and patriotism, among others, have to be rejected. This is a powerful rhetorical tool because it delegitimizes all government systems in the West and East. This allows us to make sense of why ISIS and other Salafi-Jihadi groups commit terrorist activities in all parts of the world.

The success of Baghdadi's rhetorical strategy in this paragraph is relevant to the fact that Jihadis around the world left their countries, which are ruled in various ways by 'dazzling and deceptive slogans' and immigrated by thousands to Iraq and Syria to kill and be killed under the banner of the Islamic State.

*[24] Those rulers continue striving to enslave the Muslims, pulling them away from their religion with those slogans. So either the Muslim pulls away from his religion, disbelieves in Allah, and disgracefully submits to the manmade shirk (polytheistic) laws of the East and West, living despicably and disgracefully as a follower, by repeating those slogans without will and honor, or he lives persecuted, targeted, and expelled, to end up being killed, imprisoned, or terribly tortured, on the accusation of terrorism. Because terrorism is to disbelieve in those slogans and to believe in Allah. Terrorism is to refer to Allah's law for judgment. Terrorism is to worship Allah as He ordered you. Terrorism is to refuse humiliation, subjugation, and subordination [to the kuffār—infidels]. Terrorism is for the*

*Muslim to live as a Muslim, honorably with might and freedom. Terrorism is to insist upon your rights and not give them up.*

This is a rich paragraph. Two main rhetorical strategies are used: dichotomy or false dilemma and a stipulative definition of terrorism. After the caliph associates what he calls “dazzling and deceptive slogans” with disbelievers of Islam, he provides a dichotomous scenario in which Muslims are cornered into choosing ISIS. His argument can also be identified as a false dilemma. Here is one way to reconstruct the argument:

Premise one: Muslims have two options: live under the mandate of shirk (polytheistic laws) or become terrorists (basically jihadis by joining ISIS).

Premise two: If a Muslim refuses to become a jihadi (by refusing joining ISIS), he must choose to shirk.

Conclusion: So, in order to avoid living under the rules of polytheism, you must join ISIS.

What makes this argument effective, in addition to basically cornering the audience into choosing ISIS, is his choice of words. His word choices are designed to provoke strong emotions. For example, he uses ‘disgracefully submits to the manmade shirk (polytheistic) laws,’ “living despicably and disgracefully as a follower,” and “repeating those slogans without will and honour.” This technique encourages emotional responses and discourages a critical, rational response. Who wants to live a disgraceful, despicable life without honour? For an individual who is already thinking within the religious logic and tacitly inclined towards Jihadism, Baghdadi’s arguments are the push that was needed in order for him to become a killing machine the world was to see during the rule of the Islamic State.

Another interesting strategy is the definition of terrorism. He is aware of the fact that terrorism is already a dirty word that no one wants to be associated with, and he knows that he and his movements will be associated with terrorism, so he cunningly embraces the label but changes its meaning. To do that, he stipulates the definition of terrorism:

Terrorism is to refuse humiliation, subjugation, and subordination [to the kuffār—infidels].

Terrorism is for the Muslim to live as a Muslim, honorably with might and freedom.

Terrorism is to insist upon your rights and not give them up. (para.24)

This is an effective strategy for two reasons. First, it disarms his opponent's media, rhetorically speaking: go ahead and label us as terrorists; we welcome the label. Two, it puts the mind of his potential followers to rest that, instead of being worried about being called terrorists, you want to be called one because then you know you are a true Muslim. He is a sophisticated rhetor. He addresses the doubt of his audience even before they utter it. Neither logic nor bullet is a sufficient weapon to fight Salafi-Jihadism. Equally passionate rhetoric is also needed.

*[25] But terrorism does not include the killing of Muslims in Burma and the burning of their homes. Terrorism does not include the dismembering and disemboweling of the Muslims in the Philippines, Indonesia, and Kashmir. Terrorism does not include the killing of Muslims in the Caucasus and expelling them from their lands. Terrorism does not include making mass graves for the Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the slaughtering of their children. Terrorism does not include the destruction of Muslims' homes in Palestine, the seizing of their lands, and the violation and desecration of their sanctuaries and families. Terrorism does not include the burning of masājid in Egypt, the destruction of the Muslims'*

*homes there, the rape of their chaste women, and the oppression of the mujahidin in the Sinai Peninsula and elsewhere.*

*[26] Terrorism does not include the extreme torture and degradation of Muslims in East Turkistan and Iran [by the rāfidah], as well as preventing them from receiving their most basic rights. Terrorism does not include the filling of prisons everywhere with Muslim captives.*

Baghdadi's argumentation style is wholistic in an Aristotelian sense. He appeals to logos, ethos and pathos. In paragraph 24, in loaded words, he stimulates emotions; thus, he appeals to pathos. In paragraphs #25 & 26, he cunningly provides empirical reasons by sarcastically asserting how Muslims are mistreated; thus, he appeals to logos. So, his audience is targeted from different directions.

Baghdadi and ISIS media continually feed the cognitive environment with ideas, arguments, and rhetorical strategies that provide a discourse not just to persuade potential recruiters but also to protect them from counter-rhetoric and arguments from other media. His arguments on terrorism expand the cognitive environment with a new understanding of terrorism. Of course, he distorts the main understanding of terrorism, but with his distortion, he supplies his actual and potential followers with a mental shield, rhetorically speaking, to be protected from the accusation of terrorism. With that, he basically paralyzes the normative force of a terrorist and terrorism.

This is not to say that everything that Baghdadi mentions is false. The issue with his approach to terrorism is that it includes any wrongdoing that Muslims may have experienced.

However, as we know, terrorism is not any wrongdoing. Nevertheless, for Baghdadi, an accurate understanding of where terror was implicated upon Muslims is not his concern. His main concern is to infect the cognitive environment on terrorism with the rhetoric of distortion so as to achieve two goals. First, limit the rhetorical significance of terrorism as used by opposing media to describe Jihadis' acts. Second, he provides a cognitive shield for his potential followers who have not yet joined ISIS to provide counterarguments during self-deliberation or deliberation with those who are rejecting Salafi-Jihadism on the grounds of terrorism. Of course, when he says, "terrorism does not include this and that wrongdoing against Muslims," he is being sarcastic because he believes those wrongdoings are examples of terrorism. We also witness the sarcastic references to terrorism in the coming next paragraphs.

*[27] Terrorism does not include the waging of war against chastity and hijab (Muslim women's clothing) in France and Tunis. It does not include the propagation of betrayal, prostitution, and adultery. Terrorism does not include the insulting of the Lord of Mightiness, the cursing of the religion, and the mockery of our Prophet (peace be upon him). Terrorism does not include the slaughtering of Muslims in Central Africa like sheep, while no one weeps for them and denounces their slaughter.*

The key strategy here is mixing what is, arguably, a restriction of Muslim freedom, such as restriction on wearing hijab, with prostitution and slaughtering of Muslims and labelling all of them as terrorism. His audience may not be aware of the details of the civil war in Central Africa. Since they know Westerners restrict wearing hijab, they may be enticed to conclude that Westerners are slaughtering Muslims in Central Africa. They are unaware that if not for the UN

peacekeepers, which Baghdadi totally rejects, the atrocities in Central Africa would have been even worse. At this point, Baghdadi's rhetoric has already done harm, and his audience reaches the conclusion and reasons: "if Westerners and non-believers slaughter us [Muslims], why don't we [jihadis] slaughter them back? If Westerners are not terrorists, why are we [jihadis]?" No wonder ISIS beheaded many people on camera and proudly spreads the videos. Baghdadi uses many rhetorical strategies, but when it comes to his interpretation of terrorism, the rhetoric of distortion is at work and at work dangerously.

*[28] All this is not terrorism. Rather it is freedom, democracy, peace, security, and tolerance! Sufficient for us is Allah, and He is the best Disposer of affairs.*

Now not just terrorism is distorted, but freedom, democracy, peace, security and tolerance because they are associated with terrorism and terrorism is already distorted. The rhetoric of distortion pollutes the cognitive environment. Imagine we engage with Salafists who have not yet become Salafi-jihadi, and we use these concepts to make a case for why ISIS is wrong. If our interlocutor had already been exposed to rhetoric like Baghdadi's, then we would have a case of deep disagreement, and argumentation would most likely be unfruitful.

*[29] {And they resented them not except because [for no reason other than] they believed in Allah, the Exalted in Might, the Praiseworthy} [Al-Burūj: 8]*

Again, this is an appeal to the sacred authority, God. However, without the context, it is hard to tell that this verse supports Baghdadi's conclusion that Muslims are victims of terrorism. However, rhetorically speaking, it helps to justify his position. It is not he who says non-believers face atrocities because of their faith; it is God himself.

*[30] O Muslims everywhere, glad tidings to you and expect good. Raise your head high, for today—by Allah’s grace—you have a state and khilāfah [caliphate], which will return your dignity, might, rights, and leadership. It is a state where the Arab and non-Arab, the white man and black man, the easterner and westerner are all brothers. It is a khilāfah that gathered the Caucasian, Indian, Chinese, Shāmī, Iraqi, Yemeni, Egyptian, Maghribī (North African), American, French, German, and Australian. Allah brought their hearts together, and thus, they became brothers by His grace, loving each other for the sake of Allah, standing in a single trench, defending and guarding each other, and sacrificing themselves for one another. Their blood mixed and became one, under a single flag and goal, in one pavilion, enjoying this blessing, the blessing of faithful brotherhood. If kings were to taste this blessing, they would abandon their kingdoms and fight over this grace. So all praise and thanks are due to Allah.*

The Islamic State was attacked by the coalition day and night. Even before ISIS, Iraq and Syria already suffered a lack of security, economic opportunity and political stability. Yet, it is portrayed in Baghdadi’s speech as a palace that Kings would abandon their kingdoms to immigrate to. Why do arguments like these, which are distortions of reality and a clear exaggeration, have rhetorical force, i.e., persuading force? Two reasons can be identified here. First, the language he used to create a picture of a unified identity to the degree of brotherhood. This shared identity is a powerful source of meaning that, for many, stands in sharp contrast to the individualism of the West. Moreover, his word choices, which exaggerate how amazing life is under the banner of the Islamic state, are an effective rhetorical tool to provoke passion and high

expectations. This feature, which we may call a 'rhetoric of exaggeration,' is absent from academic and media reports that are critical of ISIS, which may be an advantage for masterminds of Salafi-Jihadism.

The second reason is that despite exaggeration and flowering language, he states an empirical fact: the caliphate does exist. Therefore, Baghdadi appeals to logos, ethos and pathos. He is appealing to logos because he provides an empirical fact to support his claims, in this case, the fact that the caliphate is declared. He is appealing to ethos, or rather sacred ethos, because he thanks God for establishing the caliphate. He appeals to pathos by provoking emotions through the rhetoric of exaggeration.

*[31] Therefore, rush O Muslims to your state. Yes, it is your state. Rush, because Syria is not for the Syrians, and Iraq is not for the Iraqis. The earth is Allah's. {Indeed, the earth belongs to Allah. He causes to inherit it whom He wills of His servants. And the [best] outcome is for the righteous} [Al-A'rāf: 128]. The State is a state for all Muslims. The land is for the Muslims, all the Muslims.*

Here, he clearly shows a dismissive attitude of Salafi-Jihadism toward modern political systems such as nation-states. He dismisses concepts like sovereignty and nation-state by stating that Syria is not for Syrians and Iraq is not for Iraqis. How does he support his dismissive attitude? Again, by appealing to sacred authority, God. Even though the verse does not reject the nation-state, as Baghdadi knows, his audience might not see it this way. For them, Baghdadi is trustworthy because everything he asks them to do is also God's request.



*[32] O Muslims everywhere, whoever is capable of performing hijrah (emigration) to the Islamic State, then let him do so, because hijrah to the land of Islam is obligatory.*

Baghdadi is careful in his argumentation. The main purpose of his speech is to make a case for hijra around the world to the Islamic State. Yet, after 31 paragraphs, he then explicitly discloses his request. He has provided much evidence for his request that now he is demanding it and claims that it is no longer a request because it is 'obligatory.' We can read this as taking the audience seriously and showing respect by making a strong case (strong as far as his reasoning goes) before demanding the audience to do X. We can argue it is all manipulation, but even a good manipulator has to respect his audience by providing reasons for his claims.

*[33] Allah (the Exalted) said, {Indeed, those whom the angels take [in death] while wronging themselves—[the angels] will say, "In what [condition] were you?" They will say, "We were oppressed in the land." The angels will say, "Was not the earth of Allah spacious [enough] for you to emigrate therein?" For those, their refuge is Hell—and evil it is as a destination} [An-Nisā': 97].*

*[34] So rush, O Muslims, with your religion to Allah as muhājirīn (emigrants). {And whoever emigrates for the cause of Allah will find on the earth many [alternative] locations and abundance. And whoever leaves his home as an emigrant to Allah and His Messenger and then death overtakes him—his reward has already become incumbent upon Allah. And Allah is ever Forgiving and Merciful} [AnNisā': 100]<sup>39</sup>*

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<sup>39</sup> Throughout Baghdadi's speech, we witness references to immigration and emigration interchangeably. What he tries to make a case for is immigration: encourage all Muslims to immigrate to the Islamic State. However, in the Quranic verses he uses to support his case, there are references to emigration. I think he purposefully uses them interchangeably. With that, he strengthens the rhetorical force of his case by mixing his voice with the voice of God.

The background of these verses is events that happened during the early stage of Islam. Islam first emerged in Mecca but was under pressure from the Meccans. According to Mustafa Khattab (n.d.), “the verse [33] also applies to any Muslim who accepts abuse and refuses to move to another place where they can live with dignity and practice their faith freely” (p. 94). There are several points worth considering. Above all, the overall argument is an argument from analogy. The background allows us to see the analogical reasoning. Argument from analogy is one of the central argument types in Islam (Salazar, 2017). The way it works is by comparing what the Quran and tradition (the prophet’s speech and deeds) advised to a historical example; then, if the current example “resembles” the historical one, then the same advice should be implemented in the current example. Here is one way to reconstruct Baghdadi’s argument to justify immigration to Islamic State:

Premise one: Muslims in Mecca were facing prosecution for practicing their faith.

Premise two: God advised them to immigrate to another place, i.e., [Madina], to practice their faith freely.

Premise three: Muslims nowadays are also facing prosecution for practicing their faith.

Conclusion: Therefore, Muslims are also advised by God to immigrate to another place [Islamic State] to practice their faith freely.

The problem with the argument is premise three and the conclusion. Yes, Muslims face prosecution in some places, such as Myanmar and China, but in most places, especially in European countries and North America, they practice their religion freely. The conclusion is also problematic because there is no room to compare practicing your faith in a peaceful democratic

country to practicing your faith under rockets, as was the case with the Islamic State. However, his audience seems to be hypnotized by his arguments and by arguments injected into their cognitive environment by other advocators of Salafi-Jihadism.

*[35] We make a special call to the scholars, fuqahā' (experts in Islamic jurisprudence), and callers, especially the judges, as well as people with military, administrative, and service expertise, and medical doctors and engineers of all different specializations and fields. We call them and remind them to fear Allah, for their emigration is wājib 'aynī (an individual obligation), so that they can answer the dire need of the Muslims for them. People are ignorant of their religion and they thirst for those who can teach them and help them understand it. So fear Allah, O slaves of Allah.*

Three points can be discussed here. First, we see a practical leader here. He knows what his movement needs in terms of hiring; he is acting like a human resource manager sending a vacancy request. He speaks to Muslims, but among them, he speaks to those who can provide services desperately needed to sustain the caliphate, such as military and medical skills.

Second, he changes his tone from asking, requesting immigration, to demanding. He appeals to emotions to request immigration but appeals to logos to demand immigration. Third, he blocks a potential objection to his request by implying that if you object, then you are ignorant of your religious obligation; therefore, if you want to be a true Muslim, submit to my request and immigrate to the Islamic State.

*[36] O soldiers of the Islamic State, do not be awestruck by the great numbers of your enemy, for Allah is with you. I do not fear for you the numbers of your opponents, nor do I*

*fear your neediness and poverty, for Allah (the Exalted) has promised your Prophet (peace be upon him) that you will not be wiped out by famine, and your enemy will not himself conquer you and violate your land. Allah placed your provision under the shades of your spears. Rather, I fear for you your own sins. Accept each other and do not dispute. Come together and do not argue. Fear Allah in private and public, openly and secretly. Stay away from sins. Expel from your ranks those who openly commit sin. Be wary of pride, haughtiness, and arrogance. Do not become proud on account of gaining some victories. Humble yourselves before Allah. Do not be arrogant towards Allah's slaves. Do not underestimate your enemy regardless of how much strength you gain and how much your numbers grow.*

Words have power. Those who join ISIS may face death or captivity, which is a real fear. But Baghdadi's rhetoric is such that it substitutes real with unreal fear. The unreal fear is not to be persuaded by his arguments, which would be a real fear for Baghdadi himself. How does he do this substitution? The major strategy, which is a common strategy, is an appeal to sacred authority. Any rational military leader would be worried about great numbers of the enemy, and any rational person would be worried about dying of starvation because of famine. Then, how come, contrary to common sense, Baghdadi asks his audience not to fear great numbers of enemies and starvation? Were thousands of his audience suffering from a brain malfunction? That is very unlikely since people with all sorts of training joined ISIS. What is more likely is that they were thinking within the boundary of what I call 'religious logic.' For them, their logic

provides ample evidence to believe what they believe in, no matter how non-commonsensical it may look to us.

Another interesting point in this paragraph is Baghdadi's strategy to connect greater/internal jihad to offensive jihad. As discussed in part two, greater jihad focuses on spiritual growth through avoiding sins. Baghdadi briefly uses the language of greater jihad in the context of offensive jihad when he says, "I fear for you your own sins. Accept each other and do not dispute. Come together and do not argue." Come together and immigrate to the Islamic State, and do not argue; if you do so, you are committing sins; if you commit sins, you will live contrary to what God demands. Who wants to challenge God?

*[37] I also remind you to attend to the Muslims and the tribes of Ahlus-Sunnah (the Sunnis) with goodness. Stay awake guarding them so they can be safe and at rest. Be their support. Respond with kindness if they do you wrong. Be gentle with them, giving them as much pardon as you can. Persevere, endure, and remain stationed. Know that today you are the defenders of the religion and the guards of the land of Islam. You will face tribulation and malāhim (fierce battles). Verily, the best place for your blood to be spilled is on the path to liberate the Muslim prisoners imprisoned behind the walls of the tawāghīt [rulers who claim Allah's rights]. So prepare your arms, and supply yourselves with piety. Persevere in reciting the Quran with comprehension of its meanings and practice of its teachings.*

Here, Baghdadi speaks like a realist and practical commander. He knows not everyone in his territories is subscribing to Salafi-Jihadism. Furthermore, he knows that not everyone is welcoming when thousands pour into those towns and cities. So, it is wise to ask those who are

coming to be respectful of locals. With that, he also sends an indirect message to locals not to worry and attempts to win their trust. He depicts a picture of the mujahidin as liberators who sacrifice themselves to save the locals from the non-Muslim rulers and as believers who truly fear God and are engaged in spirituality. Far from this rather romantic picture of ISIS members, they imposed all sorts of pains on the local communities, including committing genocide. He is taking his audience seriously, even those he puts into mass graves and sells into slavery.

*[38] This is my advice to you. If you hold to it, you will conquer Rome [i.e., the West] and own the world, if Allah wills. {Our Lord, we have believed in what You revealed and have followed the Messenger, so register us among the witnesses [to truth]} [Āl 'Imrān: 53].*

Here is a promise as big as to become a superpower and conquer the world and a plea made to God to accept jihadis as true followers of the prophet. However, both the promise and the plea are framed to strengthen Baghdadi's leadership position. As he states clearly, the precondition of success is for his advice, immigrate to the Islamic State, to be implemented. This strategy to present what his audience wants in a way that depends on their submission to his rule is very consequential to any leader. Baghdadi does it successfully. To reinforce his position, he frames both goals, i.e., conquer the world and live in paradise, through submitting to his demands.

*[39] {Our Lord, do not impose blame upon us if we have forgotten or erred. Our Lord, and lay not upon us a burden like that which You laid upon those before us. Our Lord, and burden us not with that which we have no ability to bear. And pardon us; and forgive us;*

*and have mercy upon us. You are our protector, so give us victory over the disbelieving people} [Al-Baqarah: 286].*

Among all other verses, why does Baghdadi finish his speech with this verse? I think this verse serves two points. First, it addresses the potential hesitation of his audience about whether they are making the right decision by joining ISIS. By appealing to God's forgiveness, he implicitly addresses his audience's fear of making a mistake by joining ISIS. More specifically, he addresses the fear of the impossibility of the task. No wonder, since the burden is huge: declaring a caliphate and fighting the entire world to protect it. So, it makes sense, from the audience's psychological state, to ask for mercy from God. Second, he reassures them that, despite the enormity of the task, they will win because they fight for God, and God will give them victory over the disbelievers.

### **3.5 Concluding Remarks**

How can we understand a process of persuasion? This is not an easy question, especially when the audience is people with whom we do not share an epistemic foundation and with whom we have disagreements. Among other skills and strategies, we need to learn to look at the world through their epistemic glasses. Of course, it is challenging, if not impossible, to fully embrace others' episteme because even if we understand their mindset, we cannot fully understand them because we have different sets of experiences. Without this skill and strategy, we could be dumbfounded by how some people think, argue and act. When it comes to Salafi-Jihadism, we need to be able to see jihadis through their epistemic glasses. Otherwise, we will fail to understand them and their argumentation culture. As a part of jihadi's episteme, I have suggested

a 'religious logic.' I use logic here as a system of reasoning. Religious logic then means a system of religious thinking.

The main epistemic features of religious logic in Islam include the following: The existence of a theistic God, acceptance of Mohammad as the last messenger of God, acceptance of the Quran as the literal words of God, belief in the afterlife and the possibility of eternal condemnation in hellfire or salvation in paradise, and, arguably the most problematic one, belief in the superiority of Islam over other religions. All these epistemic propositions are accepted by all Muslims, except the last one. The more moderate a Muslim is, the less likely they are to believe in the superiority of Islam. The more extreme a Muslim is, the more likely they are to believe in the superiority of Islam to the degree of imposing Islam through violence. Moreover, we need to be aware of the fundamental pillars of Salafi-Jihadism ideology discussed in part two, such as *tawhid* (monotheism), *hakimiyya* (God's sovereignty), and *jahiliyyah* (age of ignorance).

Also, we need to keep in mind the sociopolitical and economic realities of Iraq and Syria during ISIS, which are briefly discussed in part one. Combining all these factors, we start to make sense of the Salafi-Jihadism argumentation.

The following general remarks about Baghdadi's rhetorical strategies can be made. Baghdadi almost always provides reasons for his claims. One of the most frequent types of evidence he provides is Quranic verses. He knows the paramount importance of this text for Muslims, so he is taking advantage of it. He first paraphrases what is stated in a verse in the way that serves his intentions, then cites the complete verse. With this strategy, he mixes his arguments with Quranic arguments, which puts his audience in a difficult position because now



rejecting Baghdadi's arguments means rejecting the word of God, which no Muslim wants to do. Perhaps the proper name of this argumentation strategy is "appeal to sacred authority." Like the tradition of appealing to authority or argument from authority, Baghdadi, as a speaker, appeals to authority, an expert, to justify his position. However, the authority here is not an expert in this or that field; instead, it is God himself as the ultimate authority of everything. As a result, for an audience who resides within the border of religious logic, Baghdadi's appeal to sacred authority is a powerful rhetorical strategy.

Baghdadi's argumentation is comprehensive in the Aristotelian sense. He appeals to logos, ethos, and pathos to convince his audience of his arguments. He appeals to logos, for example, when he tries to convince his audience by mentioning empirical 'facts' about how Muslims are treated. He appeals to sacred ethos, for example, when he mentions God and the word of God. He appeals to emotions, for example, through his word choices, which are loaded with emotions and encourages his audience to act as their duties demand--here, the rhetoric of exhortation is relevant (Kauffeld & Innocenti, 2018), more on this point in the following paragraphs.

Another strategy is defecting counter-discourse through polluting the cognitive environment. One way to do that is through sarcasm. For example, in a case of using concepts like terrorists and terrorism by opponents of ISIS to delegitimize the movement, Baghdadi provides an account of terrorism that, first, has an unclear meaning. Second, normatively, it could be positive. Thus, he pollutes the cognitive environment by promoting a misguided understanding of terrorism and terrorists and paralyzes any normative power a terrorist label might have. He

does that so masterfully that instead of being concerned about being labelled a terrorist, a jihadi wants to be called a terrorist because that would indicate that he is now a true Muslim.

Baghdadi's rhetoric is exciting, passionate, and meaningful, and it is a call of duty. He makes a case that if you buy it, your nights are blessed with spirituality, and your days are full of courage and bravery. Even if you die, you will be blessed with eternal happiness in paradise. A particular rhetorical strategy that is most relevant to this point is the rhetoric of exhortation (Kauffeld & Innocenti, 2018). He depicts jihad as a duty and obligation of true Muslims and requests them to become jihadis. His depiction is such that it evokes strong emotions like courage, pride and wrath. Moreover, he is so open and frank about his request that his audiences are willing to grant him a sympathetic hearing.

Baghdadi's rhetoric is more appealing if we compare it with a discourse in which life is depicted with absurd and nihilist colour, with a relativist mindset where there is no absolute truth, or with an atheistic worldview where death is the end of everything. Salazar argues that "Against this style, we are disarmed: Our political language, in comparison, is sterile, rhetorically banal, and poetically deficient. Therefore, in the caliphate's discourse, there is a logic [...] that contains, aside from the profession of faith and its evocative poetic force, dialectical rigor: the rigor of analogical reasoning" (2017, p. 9). Rhetorically, the discourse of ISIS is one with absolute certainty, zeal, exaggeration and purpose-driven. Logically, it is heavily analogical in which words from God and his prophet are used to justify a current case based on a case mentioned in sacred texts. If X was suggested/ordered/ promised in the case of Y in the Quran, then now, hundreds of years later, in the case of Z, which resembles Y, X must follow. The fundamental reason for the important

role that analogical reasoning plays is that in Salafi-Jihadism, whatever is written in the Quran and whatever the prophet said or did is *categorically perfect*. Thus, as people who live hundreds of years later, according to Salafi-Jihadism, it is on us, every one of us, to adjust our lives to the early tradition of Islam. So, in their logic, support from the Quran or the prophet is the most potent reason you can hope for to support a claim. Thus, if you think you would win an argument with a jihadi by referencing human rights, democracy, freedom, equality, or what have you, you would waste your and his time.

One of the biggest problems in Salafi-Jihadism argumentation is not how central the Quran is but rather how poetic the Quran can be. Poetry is not a source of concern in a book written for aesthetic and literary pleasure. However, for a book read as a law book, poetry is a ticking bomb because it opens the door to misinterpretation. On this point, Salazar observes that “God spoke rhetorically and poetically. [...] therefore, rhetoric and poetics [are] injected into mental logical schemas” (2017, p. 8). When Baghdadi uses heavily emotionally charged vocabularies, engages in exaggeration, uses empirical facts, and every now and then, a Quranic verse is mentioned, it is all part of a system of thinking in which rhetoric, poetry and logic are intertwined. This system is powerful because rational persuading without emotions on board may not lead to action. A convinced mind is much more potent with a passionate heart.

How does the most problematic extremist, i.e., unjustified violent extremist, argue? In the case of Baghdadi, we witness a tongue sharper than a sword. A tongue that kills thousands before it is killed. Even when it is killed, his spirit reincarnates and gets born again to kill until it is killed. The rhetoric of Salafi-Jihadism is a rhetoric of perpetual death. ISIS in Iraq and Syria was defeated,

but only militarily. That is why we still witness the violent activities of Salafi-Jihadism proponents. The rhetorical force of the caliph and caliphate goes far beyond the caliphate's territory. The danger of jihadist rhetoric was real before the caliphate and is real now; "its rhetorical challenge, goes far beyond the territorial existence of the Islamic State" (Salazar, 2017, p. 26).

## **Chapter Four: Expanding Argument from Authority: Argument from Charismatic Authority and the Case of Donald J. Trump**

### **4.1 General Introduction**

How can we make sense of the grip a leader has on his follower's belief system? Clearly, this question can be investigated from different angles. This research approaches this question through an argument from charismatic ethos. In simplest terms, charismatic ethos is ethos in its full force: shifting and/or consolidating an epistemic position for a large group of audience not only because of what is said but, more importantly, who said it. Charismatic ethos or charismatic authority is a mysterious rhetorical force that functions in an "unaccountable manner" (Goodwin, p. 271, 1998). This research aims to demystify the nature of charisma and argument from charismatic authority. To achieve this goal, a two-level analysis is implemented: theoretical and empirical. Theoretically, I will investigate into the literature on arguments from authority and explain ethos and deference as the close cousins of charisma. At the empirical level, I will focus on charismatic elements in Donald Trump's rhetorical argumentation, with specific attention given to the Save America Rally speech.

Extremist political argumentation is a goal-directed argumentation to radically challenge and change a status quo. In political argumentation and extremist political argumentation, leaders play a crucial role in mobilizing people, direct and indirect audiences, through their arguments to achieve a radical change in the status quo. Argument from ethos, we learn from Aristotle, is very powerful, rhetorically speaking, in making a successful case of persuasion. The ethos of the arguer saves us, as an audience, from the headache of critical engagement in an argument. The logic is

simple here: If I find you trustworthy, I will also find your arguments trustworthy. When a leader is charismatic, then not just an individual audience but a group or even a nation is affected by his ethos. In the context of extremist political argumentation, the ethos of a charismatic leader is so powerful that it convinces his followers to challenge, peacefully or violently, pro-status quo forces wholeheartedly. The concept of 'charismatic ethos' or charismatic authority is used to make sense of the grip that a leader has on his followers.

This research makes a case for an argument from charisma as a type of argument from ethos. The ethos here is used in the broadest sense: that which makes an arguer trustworthy. Both ethos and charisma are based on the trustworthiness of the arguer. However, in the literature on leadership and types of authority, charismatic leadership and charismatic authority are already established. So, it makes more sense to use the argument from charismatic authority in the context of political argumentation to investigate the force of a charismatic leader's argument on his/her followers. In such a context, the term 'charismatic ethos' or simply 'argument from charisma' are useful analytical tools to investigate the nature of the rhetorical force of a leader. Trump is the leader of the main focus here.

Charisma is an influential factor in political argumentation. For example, according to Christopher Achen and Larry Bartels (2016), voters do not have informed policy preferences first, then search for candidates who can realize their political preferences. Literature on voters' behaviours shows that "[voters] tend to *first* choose their favoured leaders, and *then* adopt the political views and stances of the leaders" (Benkler & Roberts, 2018, p. 305, my emphasis). Studies on voter behaviours have established that what determines voters' decisions is only partly

affected by the content of the policy they support or reject (see Converse, 1964; Kinder & Kalmoe, 2017 in Benkler & Roberts, 2018). Partisan affiliations and the role of leaders are crucial factors in the voters' decision-making process. These studies clearly show that in political argumentation, the primary factor in holding or rejecting a polarized and extreme standpoint is not the force of the argument that is put forward against or in support of a position but rather the ethotic and charismatic force of the arguer: the question of 'who is the arguer?' could be more influential than the question of 'what is the argument?' In other words, what we have in political argumentation is a power that goes above and beyond the mere force of an argument. This chapter aims to investigate the role of the charisma of a political leader as a way to make sense of that power.

Even though charisma plays a crucial role in political argumentation, reviewing the key texts on argumentation schemes shows that no attention has been given to charisma. Suffice it to mention some of the key texts by prominent authors in the field: *Argumentation Schemes* (Walton et al., 2008), *Argumentation Schemes for Presumptive Reasoning* (Walton, 2009), and *From Argument Schemes to Argumentative Relations in the Wild* (edited by Eemeren and Garssen, 2020). In these works, there is no reference to arguments from charisma. I assume that the reason for ignoring charisma is that arguments from charisma are simply categorized under ethotic arguments without even acknowledging it. However, the vast literature on charisma and charismatic leaders proves the importance of the phenomenon, and thus, scholars of argumentation, in general, and political argumentation, in particular, should study charisma. This is what this research aims to initiate.

The main research questions of this chapter are as follows: How can charisma be situated in the literature of argument from authority? What is charisma, and how do we define argument from charisma? Is Donald Trump a charismatic leader? What role did his charisma, if he is charismatic, play on his audience in general and on the January 6 insurrection in particular? To answer this question, first, I will provide the rationale for choosing Trump's argumentation as a case of extremist political argumentation. Second, I will explore the literature on ethos and deference in argumentation literature and examine their relation to charisma. Then, I move to review the literature on charisma and explore charisma's role in extremism; lastly, I will examine Trump's Save America speech to identify elements of charisma and extremism.

#### **4.2 Is Trump an Extremist Arguer?**

Extremist argumentation, as I use it in this dissertation, means injecting a cognitive environment with radical arguments and proposals to change a status quo radically. As I have explained in chapter two, depending on the method used, the nature of the demand and argumentation virtues present or absent, extremism can be divided into six types and subtypes: civil and uncivil extremism, justified and unjustified uncivil extremism, critical and uncritical extremism. To understand what type of extremist Trump is, first, we need to see if he is an extremist arguer in the first place.

Trump has released thousands of tweets, held numerous press conferences, and presented hundreds of speeches as a politician. It is beyond the capacity of this research to study all this material. I will focus mainly on the Save the America Rally speech. On January 6, 2021, after the election, Trump delivered a speech, and on the same day, his supporters attacked the



capitol building, which resulted in multiple deaths, injuries, and arrests. The question remains: was Trump responsible for inciting violence through his argumentation? What was the overall goal of his speech? Was it to radically change the established tradition of peaceful transition of the presidential power from one person to another?

A deeper analysis of his speech will be presented in the last part of this chapter; however, for now, I will briefly present some remarks to see if we can label Trump as an extremist.

What did happen on January 6, 2021? After Trump finished his Save America Rally speech, his supporters attacked the Capitol building in less than an hour. Why did they do that? The fundamental reason was to 'Stop the Steal' by stopping, by force, the validation of the election result in Congress. Is this an act of political extremism? The January 6 incident was an extremist move because it attempted to "subvert the U.S. Constitution and overturn the valid 2020 presidential election" (Sozan & Roberts, 2023, p. 1). So, it was a controversial political move to radically change the tradition of power transition in the U.S., as a democratic country. In the American context, in fact, in any democratic country, will refusing the result of an election by force be considered an extremist move? For the simple fact that this act would be challenging the status quo radically, i.e., the tradition of power transition peacefully, it would be an extremist act.

Nevertheless, how can we extend the judgement of extremism from his followers to Trump himself? In other words, how can we hold Trump responsible for his followers' extremism? In part three, I will study the Save the America speech in detail to answer this question. For now, I will appeal to an argument from expert opinion to justify my case: The expert opinion of the

January 6<sup>th</sup> Committee. This committee consisted of 9 congress members from both Democratic (7) and Republican Parties (2). In the final report, the committee makes:

[A] central point abundantly clear: Donald Trump, the twice-impeached and one-term 45th president, is *principally responsible* for the multipart conspiracy to overturn the 2020 election and the related January 6 attack on the Capitol. Trump was personally and substantially involved in every major facet of the plot. The committee’s report details the premeditation of Trump and his allies that seeded the “big lie” well before Election Day and drove the decision to falsely claim victory on election night and unlawfully call for vote-counting to stop (Sozan & Roberts, 2023, p. 8, my emphasis).

The fact that a group acknowledges one of its members as the leader depicts the fact that a leader influences a group. Since a leader is influential, then he is responsible. The influence a leader has is a bridge that connects the responsibility of his/her followers to a leader. When a group engages in a riot, for example, there is:

[A] reciprocal relationship between the leader’s behaviour and the behaviour of the riots. [...] The behaviours of leaders and followers positively reinforce one another in an upward spiral of violence. Trump’s rally speech and his tweets [...] increased violence, the use and display of weapons, and the tweets of protesters and bystanders, which in turn stirred more violence and racism (Li et al., 2022, p. 9).

Mistrust in elections is a perpetual feature of Trump’s rhetoric. For example, the “Stop the Steal” slogan was first introduced in 2016. After the 2020 election, his dismissive rhetoric of the election was even more intensified. His January 6th speech:

[W]as a clear call to arms where he extolled supporters to be strong and to fight for him and the nation. Supporters responded by chanting “fight for Trump,” “stop the steal,” and “take the Capitol.” In the last two minutes of the speech, Trump transparently averred, “We fight. We fight like hell. And if you don’t fight like hell, you’re not going to have a country anymore,” reminding his base that “real” patriots must violently defend their rightful place” (Jordan & Dykes, 2022, p. 449).

Another reason for connecting the extremism of his followers to Trump is a place-based argument. The place of a social movement has a rhetorical contribution to the overall social movement’s rhetoric. Thus, “the rhetorical performance [...] of places in protest can function in line with the goals of a social movement” (Endres & Senda-Cook, 2011, p. 257). There are historical examples in support of the significance of place as an argument component. For example, “The 1963 Civil Rights Movement’s March on Washington culminated at the Lincoln Memorial in the Washington Mall in part because of the significance of that place: both its proximity to the center of federal government and Abraham Lincoln’s role in freeing slaves” (ibid, pp. 257-8). Gathering at the Lincoln Memorial functioned as an additional premise to support the overall goal of the civil rights movement. This place brought Lincoln's ethotic force to strengthen the movement's legitimacy. The location of Trump’s speech was less than half an hour's walk from the Capitol building. Why this place, one can wonder, if the intention was not already to facilitate the attack on the Capitol?

The less an audience is exposed to other time/place positions with alternative arguments, the more likely a speaker will be to be successful in his persuasive intentions. Why might this be

the case? For an audience to be exposed to different and opposite arguments from the cognitive environment that challenge a speaker's arguments, an audience might need additional time and place. So, if a speaker limits the availability of time and place by choosing strategic places conducive to the goal of a gathering, then the place will have rhetorical significance. The location of the Save America speech was less than half an hour's walk away from the Capitol. The aim of the speech was basically to encourage the audience to stop the stealing of the election. How can they do that? By stopping the validation process of counting the votes. The only way to do that is to disturb the process by physically being inside the Capitol building. So, Trump was rhetorically successful in choosing the place of his speech.

All in all, there seems to be an agreement between the January 6 Committee and some scholars that Trump was indeed responsible for the insurrection. Since the insurrection was an extremist act, the rhetoric which justifies it is extremist, too.

How, then, can we categorize Trump's extremism? The picture here is blurred. Depending on which argument one looks at, Trump can be judged as a civil or uncivil extremist. For example, even though the literature on the January 6 incident makes clear that Trump should be held accountable for the violent incident, Trump also said, "I know that everyone here will soon be marching over to the Capitol building to *peacefully* and patriotically make your voices heard." (from the Save America rally speech, my emphasis). Moreover, generally speaking, the fact that Trump largely mobilizes his base to peacefully achieve their goals, not through violent actions, is a good reason to categorize Trump under the category of civil extremism and not violent extremism. However, on the January 6 incident, a case could be made in favour of categorizing

Trump's extremism as violent extremism more than civil extremism. Still, we should not judge Trump's whole political journey as a case of violent extremism just because of one incident: January 6.

#### **4.3 Argument from Authority: Ethos, Deference and Charisma**

Our knowledge is *limited*. This is probably the most fundamental limitation of human epistemic capability. Despite our limitations in various knowledge fields, we still have to act as if we *know* what we are doing. For example, you may have no idea how and why a pill would work; still, you will take it three times a day confidently as if you know how and why it improves your health. Actually, most of us have no clue how it works; we take it because it is prescribed by someone we *trust*, a person who has *authority* in medicine, i.e., a doctor. This is an appeal to authority, and it is a result of two epistemic realities. First, what we know is *limited* and what we do not know is *unlimited*. Second, we must still act in the world with our limited knowledge. Therefore, we must appeal to authority to compensate for our limited knowledge. This is a must since we cannot limit our life experience only to the areas of our own expertise. These two unfortunate and unavoidable facts of human epistemology create many interesting problems; one of them, which is the subject of this chapter, appeals to charismatic authority.

Appeal to authority has been an interest of argumentation scholars since ancient times. Since charisma in a political context is a type of authority, I will try to situate charisma in the authority literature. At the end of the day, followers of a charismatic leader trust the judgement of their leader as if he/she is an expert in politics. To limit my focus, I will examine three important figures: Goodwin, Aristotle, and Whately. These investigations will help us better situate

arguments from charisma in the literature of argument from authority in Argumentation Theory and how relevant and distinctive an argument from charismatic authority is from other types of argument from authority. For the point of reference, I approach charismatic authority in the following way: Charismatic authority is neither based on coercion (such as naked power, e.g., violence) nor legal-legitimate force (institutional authority). Charismatic authority is “neither based on power nor knowledge “(Goodwin, 1998, p. 270) but is based on natural and inborn skills that make a person influential and persuasive (Weber, 1947) in some *unaccountable manner* (Goodwin, 1998, my italic). In the section “Defining Argument from Charismatic Authority,” I will expand on my approach. For the time being and in simple terms, we should understand charismatic authority as an appeal that a leader has for his/her followers that we cannot attribute to a clear reason/s, and that is, I guess, what Goodwin means by ‘unaccountable manner.’

#### **4.3.1 Goodwin**

Among the prominent argumentation scholars, Jean Goodwin is the only one who suggests argument from charisma as a distinctive type of argument from authority in her analysis of argument from dignity authority. According to Goodwin (1998), there are two main arguments from authority in the literature: an argument based on command and an argument based on expertise. She proposes a third type: an argument from dignity. She also mentions charisma in addition to dignity but with a question mark (1998, p. 271). She argues, “Each type is distinguished with respect to the reaction that a failure to follow it ordinarily evokes” (1998, p. 267). In response to what gives expertise, she writes, “superior knowledge... and the ability to command arises when one has a right or power due to one’s role in some social unit, be it family,

organization or state.” (1998, p. 270). However, she continues, “there are cases of authority which seem based on neither power nor knowledge” (1998, p. 271). As for the source of the third type of authority she suggests dignity (p. 267), but also mentions charisma as a possibility (p. 271). She defines charisma as “the manifest ability to influence others in some unaccountable manner” (1998, p. 271). Failure to obey command authority is punishment, ignoring expert authority would be imprudent (acting against one’s self-interest), and failure to obey dignity [charismatic] authority would be disrespectful and result in being discriminated against by the public and in being ashamed (1998, pp. 268-275). Goodwin (1998) mentioned Jesus as an example of who has charisma, which resembles charisma in political contexts as someone who embodies an extraordinary suprapersonal power (McIlwain, 2012, p. 1) (this point will be clearer in the later section on Max Weber on Charisma).

In the context of political argumentation, where a charismatic leader is a speaker, and the audience sees a leader as someone who personifies<sup>40</sup> what they believe in, it is reasonable to argue that public humiliation, if not physical assault, may result from not showing respect and obedience to the charismatic leader. Therefore, *partly*, I build my account of charismatic argument on Goodwin’s account of argument from dignity.

#### **4.3.2 Aristotle**

When the authority of an arguer is based on his good character in the eyes of his audience, then we have an argument from ethos. The origin of the discussion of ethotic argument goes back to the ancient Greeks. In Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, there is a tripartite account of persuasive methods.

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<sup>40</sup> I develop this idea further in section 4.5: Charisma and Extremism: Personification of Ideology

According to Aristotle, an argument can be persuasive in three ways: by the force of the argument itself (an argument from logos), by the force of the character of the orator (an argument from ethos), or by appealing to the emotions of the audience (an argument from pathos).

For Aristotle, "[there is a persuasion] through character whenever the speech is spoken in such a way as to make the speaker worthy of credence; for we believe fair-minded people to a greater extent and more quickly [than we do others]" (*Rhetoric*, Bk 1,2, 1356a; Kennedy, trans). An argument from Ethos applies to "all subjects in general and completely so in cases where there is no exact knowledge but room for doubt" (*Rhetoric*, Bk 1,2, Kennedy 1356a). The key phrase here is "the speaker worthy of credence." According to Aristotle, a speaker must satisfy three conditions to be worthy of credence. These three conditions are "practical wisdom, virtue and goodwill" (*Rhetoric*, Bk 2, 2, Kennedy 1378a).

Ethotic arguments have captured the attention of some contemporary scholars of argumentation studies, such as Walton, Groarke, and Tindale. They provide schemes to understand the arguments' structure better and provide critical questions to avoid fallacious appeals to ethotic qualities. Walton (1995, p. 152) provides the following scheme:

- Major Premise: If X is a person of good moral character, then what X says should be accepted as more plausible.
- Minor Premise: X is a person of good moral character.
- Conclusion: Therefore, what X says should be accepted as more plausible.

The following are the critical questions (CQ) matching this scheme.

- CQ1: Is X a person of good moral character?



- CQ2: Is character relevant in the dialogue/argument?
- CQ3: Is the weight of presumption claimed warranted strongly enough by the evidence given?

Groarke and Tindale (2013, pp. 308–9) suggest the following scheme:

- Major premise: X says Y
- Minor premise: X is knowledgeable, trustworthy, and free of bias
- Conclusion: So, Y is acceptable

The critical questions they suggest to critically assess ethotic argument, or pro-hominem argument as they call it, focus on the second premise: Is the speaker knowledgeable? Is she trustworthy? Is she free of bias?

One of the crucial questions here to ask is: Is it possible for a speaker to present an argument from ethos while not being a good character but just pretending to be? It is possible because an orator can simply pretend "successfully" that he is trustworthy by falsely showing that he has practical wisdom, virtue, and goodwill. On this point, Rapp (2010) concludes that "it must be stressed that the speaker must accomplish these effects by what he says; it is not necessary that he is actually virtuous: on the contrary, a preexisting good character cannot be part of the technical means of persuasion," (this is not the case for the later accounts of argument from ethos which consider prior ethos and good character such as accounts developed by Walton (1995), Groarke and Tindale (2013). Therefore, if a speaker can present himself successfully as someone trustworthy by pretending to have a good character, even though he lies, he would be a successful candidate for an argument from ethos. Nevertheless, in this case, it would be a fallacious

argument from ethos because it lacks the reasons it claims to have, i.e., practical wisdom, virtue, and goodwill. However, the speaker can satisfy all three conditions and become a successful candidate for an argument from ethos that is not fallacious (he has a good character). So, in either form, the normative, positive core is believed by the audience of the argument. If the belief is accurate (the arguer does indeed have a good character, that is, the audience has reasonable grounds for believing this), then this is a non-fallacious argument from ethos. However, if the belief about the good character of the arguer is misplaced, then it would be a fallacious argument from ethos. The core of argument from ethos is the arguer's trustworthiness in the eyes of the audience; this feature also, as we will explore, is at the core of argument from charisma. Thus, the argument from charisma could be classified as a subtype of argument from ethos.

#### **4.3.3 Whately: Argument from Deference**

Whately's approach to the problem of authority is much more comprehensive than Aristotle's and Goodwin's. In this section, I will present various reasons to support this proposition. I will start by defining 'deference' and its distinctive features from other types of authority. I am aware that deference is a response to authority, not authority in itself. However, to capture Whately's account of authority, I label his analysis of authority as a "deferential authority" to refer to an authority that generates deference in his approach. This is a useful strategy since, as we saw with Goodwin's approach and as we will see with Walton's approach, different authors use different terminology to refer to different types or manifestations of argument from authority. Throughout this section, I will discuss the nature of deferential authority, how and why deference can be a logical fallacy and how it is linked to charisma and extremism.

Whately defines deference as the following:

The person, body, or book, in favour of whose decisions there is a certain presumption, is said to have, so far, "authority" in the strict sense of the word. And recognizing this kind of authority, —a *habitual Presumption in favour* of such a one's decision or opinions—is usually called "deference" (2010, p. 118, emphasize added).

This definition has several important ideas; above all is the habitual feature of deference, which vastly increases the probability of an authority being fallacious. Since deference is "a habitual presumption in favour of such a one's decision or opinions," there is a possibility of uncritical acceptance of deferential claims. Moreover, if a person's opinion is habitually, not just in certain conditions or circumstances, accepted as truth, then that opinion can become a dogma, and people who accept that dogmatic opinion can become extremists in protecting whatever that dogma demands them to protect. For example, if a charismatic leader, religious or political, happens to have unjustified violent extremist ideas, and followers of that leader have a habitual presumption in favour of the leader and accept those ideas as truth. As a result of believing in those ideas, followers can commit all sorts of atrocities. In the context of political argumentation, a charismatic leader can have deference in the eyes of his followers in the sense of evoking the habitual acceptance of the leader's arguments.

Here, it can be argued that we notice the abdication of responsibility for the actions of the followers. Unfortunately, the world is full of examples to support this reasoning. In October 2020, an 18-year-old Muslim man beheaded a teacher in Paris just because he mentioned a cartoon of Mohammad, a prophet of Islam, in his class. Clearly, this boy has been radicalized (by

a person, body, book, or all of them) to think that beheading anyone who dares to talk about Islam's holy prophet is not just justified but a Jihad, a religious duty.

According to Whately (2010), in a deferential argument, a speaker who yields to an antique source to strengthen his case is often more convincing. There is a possibility of fallacy here since oldness or antiquity does not necessarily mean goodness or validity. History, especially the history of science, does not lack convictions that used to be considered true, but as science progressed, they were revised or even changed.

Here, we witness an important difference between Aristotle and Whately. For Aristotle, ethos is the authority that only comes from the speaker's character, which is thought to be good in the eyes of an audience. However, for Whately, non-human elements of argumentation, such as a book, tradition, or antiquity, can have authority. This is particularly the case in the religious texts considered holy by millions of people, such as the Quran and the Bible. Another difference is that the possibility of uncritical acceptance of questionable claims is higher in an argument from deference than in an argument from ethos because of the habitual presumption in favour of deferential arguments. Here, the unaccountable manner of charisma's rhetorical effect can be argued to be related to deference. However, since, for Whately, non-human elements can have deferential impacts, but only humans can have charismatic force, then the category of deferential arguments is broader than arguments from charisma.

On the problem of using antiquity in favour of an argument, Whately interestingly raises a valid concern:

A book or a Tradition of a thousand years old, appears to be rather a *thing* than a *person*; and will thence often be regarded with blind deference by those who are prone to treat their contemporaries with insolent contempt, but who will not go to compare with an old man. They will submit readily to the authority of men who flourished fifteen or sixteen centuries ago, and whom, if now living, they would not treat with decent respect (2010, p .120).

What Whately mentions here is very relevant to identifying a fallacy from an argument of authority as accepting an argument by virtue of who the arguer is, not the merit of the argument itself. Of course, sometimes, the reason that an authority supports a claim is a good reason to consider that claim. However, the problem of deference is the obliteration of critical engagement by an audience because of the *habitual presumption* in favour of a person or a book.

#### **4.3.4 Legitimate Authority, Deference, Admiration and Concurrence**

To better understand deference and its relation to charisma, it is helpful to situate Whately's approach to argument from authority in the literature on argument from authority. According to Hansen, Walton makes an essential distinction between epistemic authority and administrative authority. Walton's account, Hansen argues is similar to Whately's in the sense that:

Whately's distinction turns out to be very much the same as the one that Walton settled on between epistemic and administrative authority [...]. Whately's 'authority' in the strict sense (epistemic authority) is "a claim to deference"; his 'authority' demanding obedience is administrative authority. (Hansen 2006, p.322).

As we will see later, the deference that charisma generates is similar to epistemic authority in the sense that the audience voluntarily adheres to charismatic arguments (arguments by arguers who are found charismatic by the audience). To better understand the difference between these types of authorities, let us see how Walton approaches the subject:

The cognitive (epistemic, de facto) [deference] type of authority is a relationship between two individuals where one is an expert in a field of knowledge in such a manner that his pronouncements in this field carry a special weight of presumption for the other individual that is greater than the say-so of a layperson in that field. When used or appealed to in argument, the cognitive [epistemic, deference] type of authority is essentially an appeal to expertise or expert opinion. By contrast, the administrative (deontic, de jure) [legitimate] type of authority is a right to exercise command or influence, especially concerning what should be done in certain types of situations, based on an invested office, or an official or recognized position of power (Walton, 1997, pp. 77-78).

Two observations about this paragraph. First, an authority that generates deference is a result of voluntary acceptance from an audience (this is an important similarity, as would be clear, between deference and charisma). However, it is not up to the audience to accept the authority generated by the legitimate or administrative structure. For example, when an argument is provided by a university professor who has an epistemic or deferential authority because of his expertise in his field, it is still up to me, as a student, to accept his argument, even though his knowledge in the field clearly supersedes mine; still, I accept his argument voluntarily. However, when there is an official contract between us, for example, I sign a contract to be a teaching

assistant in one of his courses, then his authority shifts from deference to administrative or legitimate authority, and I no longer have a voluntary option to accept his orders as long as I want to keep my position as a teaching assistant.

To further elaborate on Whately's understanding of deference, I should mention how it differs from admiration and concurrence. Whately writes: "For it is to be observed that admiration, esteem, and concurrence in opinion, are quite distinct from "deference," and not necessarily accompanied by it" (2010, p. 119). The difference between deference and concurrence and admiration is that for the former, the listener agrees with the speaker because he is the person who said so; however, in the case of concurrence, the listener agrees with the speaker because of the reasons that the listener happens to hold, and the speaker expresses those reasons. Therefore, in the case of concurrence, the listener will still hold this position even if the speaker changes his mind (Hansen, 2006). Here, we see another similarity between charisma and deference because, in both cases, there seems to be an unaccountable manner in recognizing a speaker as having deferential authority (that which generates deference) and charisma. This is to say that when an audience finds an arguer worthy of deference or finds the speaker charismatic, in both cases, it is not clear why.

The difference between admiration and deference is such that admiration is based on the speaker's reasons; however, deference is based on an affirmative emotion towards the speaker. However, even though admiration is less susceptible to uncritical acceptance, it is not immune from it because wrong reasons can cause admiration. Deference could still prompt uncritical acceptance of argument rather than admiration because "deference is apt to depend on feelings;

—often, on whimsical and unaccountable feelings" (Whately, 2010, p. 120). Appeal to emotions also plays an important role in arguments from charisma (see sections on Trump's speech). It is reasonable, then, to argue that there are similarities between arguments from deference and charisma.

There are three more features of Whately's account of an argument from authority that show the richness of his approach. Those features are self-deference, unconscious deference, and personal affection. Unconscious deference is when neither party (speaker nor the listener) is aware of it. According to Whately, "There may be a "habitual presumption" in the mind of the one, in favour of the opinions [and] suggestions [...] of the other, which we have called deference. These parties, [...] are unaware of the state of the fact. There is a deference; but unconscious" (2010, p. 119). Since charisma is inherently vague and there is an unaccountable manner of why a follower finds a leader charismatic, charisma seems to be what evokes deference. However, since non-human factors, such as a book, can have deference, not all deferential arguments are explainable through charisma.

In the Aristotelian context, the speaker actively and consciously attempts to be trustworthy to persuade his audience of the subject matter he is talking about. However, in the Whatelian context, an audience might have been persuaded by the speaker's charismatic character, even though neither the speaker nor the listener is aware of this because the persuasion might have happened entirely unconsciously.

Whately writes, "Personal Affection, again, in many minds, generates deference. They form a habit of first, wishing, secondly, hoping, and thirdly, believing a person to be in the right,



whom they would be sorry to think mistaken" (2010, p. 121). Personal affection can happen at a personal level, and it can happen at the group level. Deference at the group level can be similar to a leader who is found charismatic by a group. The more affectionate a person is to his group, or the more affectionate a group is to a person, i.e., a charismatic leader, the less critical engagement to the presented arguments will occur. The fundamental logic here is that affection makes someone who is affectionate feel sorry if his object/subject of affection turns out to be wrong. To avoid being remorseful, a group member may avoid thinking critically about his group or his leader. If he thinks critically, he may disagree with his group, which may generate a negative feeling. So, it makes sense that in order to avoid negative feelings, one has to avoid critical thinking. We all are members of a group (or even groups depending on the layer of identity we discuss): family, occupation, religion, nationality, etc. The strength of our group is a strength of ourselves; therefore, it is human nature to be affectionate towards his group and be more critical of the other groups.

How do we make sense of an argument from charismatic authority in the literature that exists about argument from authority? That is to say, where does this argument belong in the literature? To make the long story short, it can be argued that the best way to locate an argument from charisma in the literature on argument from authority is to categorize argument from charisma as a cousin of argument from ethos and deference. The persuasive force of ethos comes from an arguer who is believed by his/her audience to have a good moral character. The persuasive force of deference comes from a habitual presumption in favour of an arguer. Charisma, on the other hand, comes from inborn rhetorical talents that make an arguer worthy

of credence and deference in some unaccountable manner. In the next section, we will focus on arguments from charismatic authority and explore their contribution to the enrichment of the literature of arguments from authority.

#### **4.4 Charisma and Argument from Charisma: Max Weber on Charisma**

Charisma is authority, not power. Of course, charisma has power, but since we *voluntarily* acknowledge the charisma in someone, their influence on us is that of authority, i.e., charisma is not coercion. The fact that charismatic authority is not coercion makes it relevant to argumentation. Argumentation is changing minds through exchanging arguments. The moment an audience accepts or rejects an argument involuntarily and not based on the merit of the presented arguments but to avoid exposure to force and coercion, we have stepped outside the realm of argumentation. Thus, argumentation is, by nature, a democratic endeavour. The voluntary acceptance of charismatic authority makes charisma an argumentatively relevant endeavour. The power of charisma is fundamentally rhetorical: changing or consolidating one's epistemic stands. The rhetorical force of charisma is such that followers of charismatic leaders are willing "to accept his (or her) call to give up some of their resources, wealth, time, energy or existing social bonds and commitments for the implementation of his (or her) vision" (Eisenstadt, 1968, p. xxii as quoted in Shamir, 1999, p. 556). Such a force should be taken more seriously by scholars of argumentation. This research is an attempt to start studying charisma argumentatively.

Charisma is easy to feel but hard to define. Like some other controversial concepts, it is a subject of misunderstanding. For example, "much like the ongoing debate over the definition of

terrorism, charisma and charismatic authority are difficult concepts to define, and the situation is made worse by the widespread and vague use of the word in contemporary popular culture” (Hofman & Dawson, 2014, p. 349). The inherent vagueness of charisma makes it susceptible to various definitions, to the degree of “banalization” of the term (ibid). As a result of the banalization of the term, “charisma has been co-opted as a synonym for superficial attractiveness with a hint of mysterious allure” (ibid). Despite their negative observation of the vulgarization of the concept, Hofman and Dawson agree to define charismatic authority as the following:

Charisma is a quality attributed to individuals who are thought to possess *exceptional abilities, particularly to influence and inspire others, which are not accessible to the rest of us*. Charismatic authority is the accepted power to lead and command others stemming from the recognition of this quality (Hofman & Dawson, 2014, p. 349, my emphasis).

To make sense of the distinctive nature of charismatic authority, it helps to explore what authorities are not charismatic. In part one, I have partially addressed this issue; here, I will broaden the exploration. The pioneer of charismatic study, Max Weber, a German sociologist, classifies authority into traditional, legal, and charismatic types. The first is inheritably based, such as monarchy or chieftdom; the second is legally based, such as elected officials; and the last is based on exceptional innate personality. So, “charismatic authority is not owed to an office by virtue of law or custom, but to particular individuals whom Weber describes as “holders of specific gifts of body and spirit”” (Hofman & Dawson, 2014, p. 350). In the original meaning of the word ‘charisma’ is identified as a “gift of grace” or a divinely inspired calling to service, office, or leadership” (Willner & Willner, 1965, p. 78). The Weberian account of charisma as a natural gift

or talent is relevant to the semantic meaning of the root of the word. What is the nature of this natural gift or talent? I argue that charisma is a rhetorical talent since whoever has it, we would more likely find him/her more persuasive.

Weber further classifies charisma into two types: routinized and personalized or primary. The first one "derives from institutional power accorded by social roles." The second one "is a gift that inheres in a person simply by virtue of natural endowment" (McIlwain, 2012, p. 1). Weber defined charismatic leadership and personalized charisma as the *ambiguous quality* in which a charismatic person "is set apart from ordinary people and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities" (1947, p. 333). Thus, charisma can be referred to as "an extraordinary quality of a person" (1947, p. 295). In this sense, charisma can have "profound and extraordinary effects on followers" (House & Baetz, 1979, p. 399). Since it is based on institutional power, routine charisma can be labelled as an administrative authority, and I will not focus on it in this chapter. The focus is on personalized charisma, which is not a role given by hierarchy or social advantage. In this chapter, by charisma, I mean personalized or primary charisma.

Weber's personalized version of charisma seems to be the charisma that Goodwin mentions because it is not necessarily based on expertise or a social role. Goodwin (1998) mentioned Jesus as an example of charismatic person, which resembles charisma in political contexts as someone who embodies an extraordinary suprapersonal power. According to Weber, personalized charisma is not a given role by "hierarchy, or social advantage... but it is a gift that inheres in an object or person simply by virtue of *natural endowment*. Such 'primary charisma'

cannot be acquired by any means" (McIlwain, 2012, p. 2 my italic). It can be argued that charisma is a rhetorical talent par excellence. Since talent exists in other domains of human knowledge, in the domain of rhetoric, charisma could be that talent. The rhetoric of charisma is that which demands obedience through persuasion, not traditional or legal authority. The more charismatic a leader is, the more successful he is in achieving voluntary obedience from his audience. The means of charismatic rhetoric are diverse; they include both verbal and nonverbal means, which "allow the charismatic leader to attract attention, reinforce social norms and a sense of collective identity, and strengthen the beliefs of followers" (Grabo et al., 2017, p. 473). Of course, every leader aims for obedience from his audience. However, a charismatic leader is one who has a rhetorical capacity to "inspire loyalty toward himself as the source of authority, *apart from an established status*" (Willner & Willner, 1965, p. 77, my emphasis). So, charismatic authority can exist apart from traditional and/or legal authority, but it can also be an additional source of authority as well.

Two elected officials or two chiefdoms might achieve different levels of obedience from their followers for different reasons. Charisma could be a relevant factor here. Moreover, a charismatic leader who lacks traditional or legal authority might later achieve those authorities. The reality of borders among different types of authorities in the real world is less clear than in the conceptual world.

To further comprehend the distinctive nature of charismatic authority, let us consider the role of a non-charismatic leader. Ordinary leadership "entails the following ontological characteristics: the impersonality of its rule, an emphasis on procedural moderation, and

continuity” (Pappas, 2016, p. 2). These features basically mean an ordinary leader, i.e., a non-charismatic leader, operates within the bureaucratic limitation, which limits his movement to rule-bound procedures within the existing legal framework. As we will see in the next section, a charismatic leader violates these features, thus making it extremist, as I define in this dissertation: a radical departure from a status quo.

So far, the focus has been on the charismatic leader, but what about his/her followers? What roles do the leader’s followers/audience play in the rhetorical force of charisma? The fact that acknowledgment of charismatic authority depends on the followers who find a particular leader charismatic proves the essential role an audience plays in argument from charisma. However, we seem to have a contradiction here: if charisma is a rhetorical talent and it is a natural gift, then the existence of charisma does not depend on those who acknowledge the talent. When we look further, we see there is no contradiction between these two assertions: natural rhetorical gift and audience-dependent rhetorical capacity. Like any other natural gift, Charisma, broadly speaking, needs a supportive environment to be fully realized. However, the existence of the talent itself is nature-dependent, not environment-dependent. An audience that acknowledges the charismatic force of an arguer is an essential feature of a supportive environment for charisma to be realized. Thus, we can redefine a charismatic leader as the following: someone who has:

[A] capacity to elicit from a following [audiences/ supporters] deference, devotion, and awe toward himself [a leader] as the source of authority. A leader who can have this effect upon a group is charismatic for *that group*” (Willner & Willner, 1965, p. 79; emphasis is in the original text).

So far, we have explained what charisma and charismatic authority is. We have not yet thoroughly explored how charisma and charismatic authority are relevant to the focus of this dissertation: extremism. In the next section, we will explore the extremist tendencies of charismatic authority.

#### **4.5 Charisma and Extremism: Personification of Ideology**

In the context of politics, "ideology operates in charismatic relations through the leader: The vision is given a voice" (McIlwain, 2012, p. 3). Here, it can be argued that we are dealing with a serious type of argument from authority in which both the argument and the arguer are unified and become one entity. Because a charismatic leader embodies or personifies the ideology, people (followers, to be exact) see a charismatic argument as an internal part of the arguer and see an arguer as an internal part of the charismatic argument. I call this phenomenon the "personification of ideology." If most people accept an ideology, and people perceive a charismatic leader as the embodiment of that ideology, then the charismatic leader would have a tremendous power that can, and historically did, create catastrophes.

Among other types of argument from authority, charismatic authority is most capable of producing extremism. Here, "selfless devotion" develops from followers to the leader (McIlwain, 2012, p. 5). Basically, the followers are ready to die for their leader voluntarily because he is no longer one person among others; he is the one who embodies the ideology which they believe in wholeheartedly. With such power, a charismatic leader can modify his beliefs and come up with non-sensical, even disastrous, policies on how to manage complicated issues, which can lead to

the death of millions, as happened during the Jewish genocide under the leadership of Hitler and the Kurdish genocide under the leadership of Saddam Hussein.

Another reason that makes a charismatic leader dangerous is that his popularity increases during crises. Times of crisis have proved to be a rich environment to strengthen charismatic authority. During the crisis, the charismatic leader has an opportunity to present himself as the only *one* capable of taking a nation out of its misery of crisis. Again, this would give a charismatic leader a tremendous power that can be tragically misused. One of the fundamental factors that paved the way for Hitler's rise to power was "the weakening of Germany's pride as a result of postwar sanctions" (McIlwain, 2012, p. 3). Crises will "catalyze the emergence of charismatic authority by setting the social context that shapes an audience susceptible to the influence of charismatic leaders" (Hofman & Dawson, 2014, p. 352) because the audience, let this be the general public, is seeking an immediate solution and the charismatic leader confidently claims to have the solution. Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that charismatic leaders have a broader opportunity to practice their power more freely during a crisis.

Here, we can argue that an argument from charismatic authority is a magnified or a maximized version of an argument from authority or expert opinion. Why might this be the case? Because an expert will address individuals, or at best, a group of individuals. For example, a doctor exerts his authority of medical expertise on his patients or a group of people who have a particular disease. This is true for other experts as well. However, in the case of authority from charisma, a whole society, or at least most of the society, will be affected by the "expertise" of the leader. I describe argument from charisma as a type of argument from expertise because, in



the eyes of the followers, a charismatic leader is an expert in knowing what is best for society. The stronger this belief is, the more unquestionably they follow him. With such a power that a charismatic leader has, the possibility of committing a fallacy (accepting his policies not based on the merit of the policies but because he, the leader, says so) will increase substantially. Trump's inflammatory Rhetoric in condemning the 2020 US presidential election and his role in inciting the attack on the capitol in January 2021 by his supporters is a current case in hand (Pilkington, 2021).

It can be argued that charismatic authority is more susceptible to extremism than other types of authority. This is because “charisma transforms all values and breaks all traditional and rational norms” seeking to cause a “*radical alternation*” of the central attitudes and directions of action with a completely new orientation of all attitudes toward the different problems of the ‘world’” (Weber, as quoted in Pappas, 2016, p. 2, emphasize in the original text). This makes charismatic authority a fundamental force of change because charisma “enables followers to trust the leader sufficiently to overcome their fear of change and resistance to change” (Shamir, 1999, p. 556). To understand the “radical alternation” of charismatic authority we should remember that the authority of the charismatic leader is neither based on traditional or legal structures. Charismatic leaders tend to have a personalized power and act beyond the established bureaucratic structure. Thus:

Unlike traditional and rational-legal forms of authority, charisma is free from conventional societal or traditional constraints and is virtually unrestricted in its scope. While an elected official is beholden to the law and a chieftain of a tribe is bound by custom, the

charismatic leader knows only inner determination and inner restraint (Hofman & Dawson, 2014, p. 350).

We can argue that if a charismatic leader behaved like other leaders in terms of respecting the rules of the game, he might not have been found charismatic by his followers in the first place. Extremist argumentation, defined as arguing for radical change, tends to be an inherent part of the argumentation system of a charismatic leader. Thus, charisma is a rhetorical talent that aims to persuade an audience of the legitimacy of radical departure from a status quo. Arguments from charisma then change minds to justify extremism. Trump's rhetoric of 'Big Lie,' 'Stop the Steal' and 'Save the Election' is a good example of how Trump aimed for "radical alternation" of peaceful power transition in American political tradition. In this sense, Trump was charismatic because no other president treated power transition as he did: step outside the conventional restraints of his legal authority as a president and to call his supporters to prevent a peaceful transition of presidential power.

Because of the 'personification of ideology,' a charismatic leader can have a powerful grip on the episteme of his followers. One phenomenon that is relevant to extremism, according to Wintrobe, is conformity. Wintrobe argues that "the greater or "tighter" the control a leader has over her followers, the more likely an extremist action is to be chosen. [...] conformism and extremism are mirror images is that conformist pressures induce extremism" (Wintrobe, 2014, p. 23). In a sense, charismatic authority is such that it is granted to a charismatic leader through total or semi-total submission of his followers to his demands. Thus, the rhetoric of charisma is that which obliterates critical engagement of the leader's argument by his followers. Those who

attended the Save America speech and later attacked the Capitol clearly depicted the conformity feature of extremism: they all conform to Trump's rhetoric of a stolen election and a duty of patriotic Americans to stop it.

The conformity of the followers is a process, not a sudden and one-off incident. On the other hand, acknowledging the charisma of the leader could also be a process. Here, we can talk about the process of "charismatization." Charismatization is a:

slippery slope that does not occur in lockstep, but through a gradual process of increasing devotion to the charismatic leader. Members reinforce their beliefs through daily actions which comply with the norms of the group and celebrate the extraordinariness of the leader. Group members then express their devotion to other members, further reinforcing the spiral of the legitimation process. In this way, the charisma of the leader is constantly being created and re-created hand-in-hand with the socialization of converts (Hofman & Dawson, 2014, p. 353).

The social identity theory, explained in chapter two, is useful to make sense of the charismatization process. According to this theory, the need, whatever its nature, for belonging entices individuals to hold and defend the group-accepted positions to the degree of shutting down self-critical reflection and transferring all the responsibilities of the in-group member's wrongdoing to the out-group members. A charismatic leader here is one who feeds this mentality and portrays himself as the ultimate guardian of the in-group interest against other groups.

The need for charismatic authority can be argued to be mutual: both the leader and the follower are in need of charismatic authority. As a result of the charismatization process, a

“charismatic bond” will occur. A charismatic bond results in the “exchange[ing] of mutual needs, where the charismatic leader is granted authority by the followers in return for recognition, affection, and reinforcement of worth” (Hofman & Dawson, 2014, p. 351). There is a degree of narcissism in Trump, which demands he be seen as charismatic, as someone who does politics beyond the “political correctness” border. His followers also need to be seen as real patriots who spill blood to save their country’s election. Through his self-confidence and rhetorical mastery, Trump successfully charged his audience with emotions of anger, pride, and courage and fed their sentimental needs, which are essential features of charismatic authority (Williams et al., 2018).

Charismatic authority can reach a level of “pure charisma” when “charismatic leaders view their missions as God-given, or at the very least divinely inspired” (Hofman & Dawson, 2014, p. 350). It is worth noting that both religious and non-religious charismatic leaders use religious language to depict themselves as a saviour of the nation. So, in the case of Trump, in slogans like “Making America Great Again” and “Save America,” we clearly see the messianic mentality behind his rhetoric. Extremist rhetoric as justification for radically changing a status quo seems to go hand in hand with charismatic authority.

#### **4.6 Defining Argument from Charismatic Authority**

Charismatic authority is neither based on coercion (such as naked power, e.g., violence) nor legal-legitimate force (institutional authority). Charismatic authority is “neither based on power nor knowledge “(Goodwin, 1998, p. 270) but is based on natural and inborn skills that make a person influential and persuasive (Weber, 1947) in some unaccountable manner (Goodwin, 1998). (This

does not mean the acknowledgement or effectiveness of charisma is socially irrelevant). Therefore, an argument from charismatic authority can be defined as an argument in which the arguer makes it appealing and persuasive through inborn rhetorical natural abilities. A charismatic arguer is someone who can exert influence on an audience (followers) because of their inborn rhetorical natural capabilities (natural talents), which makes him an influential and persuasive person (leader or orator). The nature of these capabilities/skills is anything that cannot be obtained through formal training (otherwise, it would be an argument from expertise) or by occupying a position in the upper levels of the hierarchy of power (otherwise, it would be an argument from administrative authority). Those talents might not even be *only* attributed to the arguer's good moral character (otherwise, it would be an argument from ethos). By rhetorical talent or capabilities, I mean any inborn skills that contribute positively to an arguer's persuasiveness.

For example, suppose two persons undergo the same formal training and run the same office. However, one exerts more influence through skills that are neither attributed to the formal training nor the office they run. In that case, charisma lies within those abilities. Those competencies might include mastery of verbal and nonverbal communication beyond ordinary communication skills, confidence, authenticity, charm, and seriousness. Charisma is what we can easily feel but find it hard to explain. For example, while you are enjoying your coffee and people are coming and going, suddenly, someone enters the coffeehouse, and your attention is drawn towards him, and you cannot help it. This is because you might be attracted to that person emotionally or sexually because of his/her beauty. However, you can also be attracted to him/her

because of his/her charisma. You could feel his charisma through his confident physical posture and pride even before he uttered a word. If you are influenced by an argument, not because of the arguer's expertise, social status, or moral character, then you may have been exposed to an argument by an arguer who has a charismatic character.

The fact that charismatic authority is not based on naked power, administrative authority, or even moral character does not make it irrelevant to them. Charismatic authority can be coercive against those who challenge the charismatic leader's authority, but as far as his followers are concerned, they voluntarily agree with his arguments. Legitimate and institutional acknowledgement of a charismatic leader (for example, in the case of winning an election) can make him even more influential by merging charismatic authority with administrative authority. If he is a person of good moral character, then he can enjoy the mixture of ethotic authority with administrative and charismatic authority. A good example would be Nelson Mandela after he was released from prison, won the election, and became the president.

There are many ways to show the reasonableness of this analysis. For example, people who grow up in more or less the same social environment still exhibit different competencies. This proves there is such a thing as inborn talents and not every skill is socially constructed. Talent exists in other domains of human knowledge. It is, therefore, reasonable to assume that rhetorical talent also exists in the domain of argumentation. People with the same credentials and administrative positions might vary in their rhetorical influence on the same audience. For example, why leaders who win elections and have legitimate authority are not equally influential, or why two instructors who have the same qualifications and teaching experiences influence their

students differently, and so on. I am not denying that there might be different explanatory reasons, but I am suggesting that rhetorical talents could be one of them.

Charismatic authority is different from administrative authority for two reasons. First, the authority in administrative authority does not come from the same source as charismatic authority: innate natural capabilities to influence others. Second, it is not a voluntary choice to obey the order from an administrative authority such as a judge, for example (but a follower voluntarily follows a charismatic leader). A judge is someone whose power is justified and given by an institution; therefore, she has the authority to impose her decision in a courtroom.

This question, among other questions, can challenge my reasoning: Although it might be easy to make a case in favour of the distinctiveness of charismatic authority from administrative authority and expert authority, can we make a case in favour of the distinctiveness of charismatic authority from ethotic authority or deferential authority? This is an interesting and important question, but a subject for a different project. Here, suffice to say, an argument from charisma can be categorized as a version or type of argument from ethos since both of them are based on the arguer's worthiness in the audience's eyes and as an argument type relevant to the argument from deference because charisma also stimulates a positive habitual presumption in the mind of the followers in favour of their charismatic leader. This line of reasoning helps argumentation scholars who work on argument from authority to connect argumentation theory to the literature on charismatic authority and charismatic leadership, especially in the domain of political argumentation.

#### **4.7 Charisma and Appeal to Trump**

The appeal to Trump is not a simple phenomenon and cannot be attributed to one factor: charisma. As Jackson (2019) explains, Trump is many things simultaneously, such as populist, nativist, and charismatic. He is populist by portraying himself as someone who represents all, including long-ignored people. However, he is also nativist by arguing that some are the real Americans; some are not. For example, he told not just ordinary citizens but high officials, such as four congresswomen of colour, including Ihan Omer, to "go home [leave America]." According to Jackson (2019, p.2), this statement and many others are examples of "taboo-breaking behaviours." These types of statements could be explained through charisma. A charismatic leader has a degree of self-confidence that makes him reckless enough to engage in taboo-breaking behaviour, ironically making him appealing to many people. Trump has shown again and again this type of reckless self-confidence. Thus, it can be argued that reckless self-confidence lies at the heart of charisma and charismatic authority. Have you ever found someone charismatic who is not confident? I do not think so.

Charisma is fundamentally a rhetorical force because not only the vision that a leader proposes but also how the vision is delivered through "displaying a sense of power and confidence" is effective to the degree that it can counter-balance the negative effect of narcissism and increase trust in a charismatic leader, especially in the time of election (Williams et al., 2018). In an attempt to make sense of the 2016 election between Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump, many scholars have used charisma as one of the factors behind Trump's success, such as "Berger 2017; Guilford 2016; Khazan 2016; Minton 2016 and Sullivan 2017" (Aswad, 2019, p.57). The



Washington Post published a story titled "Looking for the Surgeon for Hillary's Charisma Transplant" to portray how uncharismatic Hilary was compared to Trump (Pruden, 2016). Surprisingly, during his presidential campaign, "approximately 50 percent of everything Trump claimed was not factually true" (Wilber, 2017, p. 25). So, this tells us charisma has the ability to frame lies so powerfully that they could equally be persuasive to factual claims, if not even more.

Understanding the appeal to Trump through charisma is relevant because, according to the iconic figure in charismatic authority studies, Max Weber, charisma is a new political component in the Modern era. Historically speaking, "monarchies relied on tradition, democracies on legal-bureaucratic systems and modern dictators on charisma" (Jackson, 2019, p. 8). Of course, I do not mean to imply that the American political system is undemocratic, and that Trump was a dictator. However, the relevance of charisma in appeals to Trump comes from the fact that leadership could be a mixture of the three components mentioned (tradition, legal and charisma). This is not hard to understand since not all elected presidents, for example, are influential in the same way. The degree to which two presidents are different in success and popularity is complicated and cannot be reduced to one factor, but charisma could be a relevant factor.

Charisma is a personal characteristic, but in a political context, it is manifested from a shared belief in a mission held between leader and followers. In this sense, the appeal to Trump can be understood as the manifestation and amplification of a large portion of Americans' thinking. Therefore, portraying Trump as exotic to American society is simplistic and untrue.

Trump's charisma facilitates and amplifies Americans' tendency to engage in "taboo-breaking behaviour." The attempt to besiege the Capitol by Trump supporters influenced by his hostile rhetoric is a good example to help understand this line of reasoning.

In the interview by Olga Khazan, with the authors of the book *Why We Ignore the Facts That Will Save Us*, Sara E. Gorman, and Jack M. Gorman (2016) categorized Trump as having anti-science charisma. According to them, Trump portrays features shared with anti-science charismatic leaders. He is making grand promises and claims. To make his claims appealing, he depicts himself as an "outsider and being on the fringes" (2016, p. 5) so that he protects himself from the doubt and questions that we have against "already known and inside politicians." With that, he "creates a very strong sense of him being able to come in and create a totally different order and a revolution" (Gorman & Gorman, 2016, p. 5).

Moreover, he advocates for an "us versus them" mentality. He attributes all the desired features to himself and his followers while attributing all the undesirable features to his opponents and anyone who disagrees with him. Once the charismatic leader successfully creates this polarization, then "it is harder for individuals who are part of groups to make independent judgments and decisions" (Gorman & Gorman, 2016, p. 5). At this stage, individuals are even more susceptible to a charismatic leader's unscientific claims because a follower's point of reference is no longer science or even his own critical thinking but rather what his leader and his group affirm and reject.

Inciting strong emotions is probably another core feature of argument from charisma in the political context, and Trump uses it well. Charismatic leaders aim to incite strong emotions in

their audience because, usually, in the presence of strong emotions, it is hard to listen to reason. Fear is one of the effective emotions to make an argument from charisma convincing. A charismatic leader uses fear to suppress rational engagement with his arguments. Once a leader establishes an “us versus them” mentality and associates danger and fear with others, persuading the audience of his argument is much easier. There are scientific facts that support this line of reasoning. According to Sara Gorman (2016, p. 8):

Fear is one of the most primitive, most basic parts of the brain. But it is very powerful, and the part of the brain that works against that, which is the prefrontal cortex, it actually takes a lot of energy for us to engage that part of the brain. If the first thing you hear about a topic is something that is associated with fear, that will often suppress the rational part of the brain. It will be placed into long-term memory [...]. If you do fear conditioning in a rat so that it learns to associate a tone with an electric shock, it never goes away for the rest of the rat's life. It will always freeze when it hears the tone, even though you are not giving shocks anymore.

When Trump talks about immigration, for example, all he has to do is make sure he associates fear with immigration and then portrays himself as the leader who will protect us against that fear. For his followers, data about the type of crimes and background of criminals or what Homeland Security says is not as effective as a couple of fearful stories that Trump tells about immigrants' crimes. Once a charismatic leader successfully associates a subject with fear, he has a grip on his audience's emotions. He does not need to tell the story in detail each time he wants to make a case against immigration to discredit his opponent's policy on immigration,

no matter how strongly supported by evidence. All he has to say is, "These immigrants are going to kill you," and his entire message about immigration is immediately recalled.

Charismatic leaders know emotions, especially fear, are useful tools to sell their point uncritically. Unfortunately, we are designed to be more emotional than rational because emotions are less costly, energy-wise, and more effective at putting us into action. Gorman and Gorman (2016, p. 9) explain this point nicely:

It requires a lot more effort to use the reasoning part of the brain. The default is to use the faster parts of the brain. So, if you are in a state of stress or there are too many facts coming at you or too much information, the default mode is to say, "I cannot handle all that stuff, it is too much, or it is too frightening, or it's too complicated. I am going to default to the more rapid-acting part of the brain and make immediate decisions."

On Friday, February 15, 2019, President Trump declared a national emergency over illegal immigration on the American-Mexican border. He said he would take other necessary executive actions to make sure he got enough money to start working on building the wall on the border for more than 200 miles. In a follow-up press conference, a CNN reporter, Jim Acosta, challenged the president about the justifiability of his decision; obviously, things did not go smoothly. Acosta raised the issue of inconsistency between, on the one hand, what the president called "illegal invasion at the border" and "women with duct tape on their mouth," on the other hand, with data from Homeland Security. Acosta argued that data from Homeland Security shows border crossings at a near-record low and undocumented immigrants committing crimes at lower levels than native-born Americans (Global News, 2019). Acosta's comment does not say there is no

problem at the border; it shows that, according to relevant data, the president's declaration of national emergency on illegal immigrants is not justifiable. So, he simply asked Trump to comment on this. Trump, in response, said (Global News, 2019):

What do you think? [Do] you think I am creating something [fabricating a national emergency]? Ask these incredible women [points his hand at the audience] who lost their daughters and their sons. Okay, because your question is a very political question because you have an agenda, you are CNN, [and] you are fake news. You have an agenda. The numbers that you gave are wrong.

In Trump's response, we can identify negative charismatic features in the sense that Gorman and Gorman explained above when discussing anti-science charismatic leaders. Trump's response is appealing not because he has more facts than Acosta does but because he targets emotions. By referring to "incredible women who lost their daughters and their sons," he reminds the audience that you should fear illegal immigrants; otherwise, you may also lose sons and daughters, as did these women. Once he creates fear by referring to members of the audience who lost their family members, he attacks CNN and his opponent as fake news and having political agendas. With that, he discredited their critiques.

Moreover, by discrediting them, he presents himself as the one who genuinely cares. When Trump created a fearful environment that discredited his opponent and confidently said, "I am the one who genuinely cares, and I am the one who will declare a national emergency to build the wall to protect you from illegal immigrants," he made a persuasive argument from charisma. For most of the audience, Trump's appeal to emotions is much more effective than just

mentioning cold statistics, as Jim Acosta did. However, just because charisma makes a persuasive argument, logically speaking, this does not necessarily make it a good argument.

#### **4.8 Elements of Charisma and Extremism in the ‘Save America’ Speech**

Though the man was a fake, the longing was real. (David Aberbach as quoted in Mazzarella 2022)

In this part of the chapter, I will analyze the Save America speech which Trump presented on January 6, 2021. The Save America speech continued for more than an hour, and I will not comment on all the rhetorical strategies Trump used. What I will do *mainly* is identify elements of charisma and extremism in his speech. What happened on January 6 can be argued, at least partly speaking, to have been caused by charisma. Indeed, “Trump’s base [is] tied to him by one of the most remarkable charismatic relationships in American history” (David Bell, as quoted in Mazzarella, 2022). How do we justify this claim? The essential research question of this section is: Where in his speech did Trump embody charisma and extremism? This question cries out for criteria: What criteria do we need to have to justify labelling an argument as charismatic and extremist? The discussion in the first two parts helps provide a theoretical and conceptual understanding of the argument from charisma, but in this section, I will suggest more precise criteria.

One of the most useful criteria to measure charisma is discussed by Pappas (2016). Pappas explained two features of charismatic leadership versus non-charismatic/ ordinary leadership. The following diagram is a useful introduction (2016, p.3):

	Legal-rational ("ordinary" leadership)	Charismatic ("extraordinary" leadership)
Rulership	Impersonal	Personal
Rule aims	Moderation	Radicalism

An ordinary leader acts within a given bureaucratic structure. However, even if they occupy a ruled-based office, i.e., a non-personal legal office, charismatic leaders still often bring their personal way of doing things that might violate the authority of their office. Since their power is bound by bureaucratic boundaries granted to their office, a non-charismatic leader's arguments usefully aim to moderate changes within legal boundaries. On the other hand, charismatic leaders aim for radical changes because their authority has a personal component that enables them to aim beyond bureaucratic limitations. Pappas (2016) defines charismatic leadership which is directly related to a perspective of extremism I propose: "political charisma as a *distinct type of legitimate leadership that is personal and aims at the radical transformation of an established institutional order*" (Pappas, 2016, p. 3 emphasis in the original). So, it can be concluded that when a leader argues for a radical change, and his authority is not directly bound to their legal office if he has one, then we are very likely witnessing an argument from charismatic authority.

Arguments from charisma have a unique nature. Charisma in argument can be best defined as a non-syntactical additional rhetorical value/force of an argument. Meaning in the context of argumentation, we can only see the shadow of charisma, not charisma itself. This is to say that charisma is always represented through an additional non-charismatic tool, whether

verbal or non-verbal. How do we make sense of this approach to charisma? Well, if the same argument was presented to the same audience by an ordinary speaker and a charismatic speaker, the level of adherence to the argument is more likely to be higher in the case of the charismatic speaker. This is the case because, in addition to the force of the syntactic presentation of the argument, in the case of the charismatic speaker, the argument also has an additional rhetorical value/force: charisma. However, if we try to pin down charisma, there *seems to be* nothing tangible because what we have is only the shadow of charisma depicted through verbal and non-verbal communicative tools.

But then, how can we identify an argument from charisma, let alone evaluate it? Analyzing (identifying the components of arguments) and evaluating (judging the quality of an argument) are essential for argumentation studies, especially in the logical perspective of argumentation. But if charisma is defined as a rhetorical talent that is an additional force beyond the linguistic manifestation of an argument, then how do we capture and analyze it? These questions prove the need for the rhetorical study of argument from charisma. We need to go beyond the syntactic limitation of premise-conclusion argument evaluation. I know this can be uncomfortable because it is challenging, but the fact remains: charismatic leadership does exist, and charismatic leaders do make arguments, in fact, consequential ones.

#### **4.8.1 Identification Criteria for Arguments from Charisma**

One way to identify an argument from charisma is when we notice an additional force operating within the persuasion process beyond the linguistic expression of an argument; then, we may have a charismatic element. Having said that, I propose several criteria here to identify arguments



from charisma that also have linguistic manifestation. This is to say that when we encounter argumentative features like the following, we likely have charismatic elements operating in an argumentative situation. Here is a working list:

- When an arguer argues for a radical change;
- When an arguer justifies his/her proposals, not because of his/her legal/traditional authorities, but because he/she says so;
- When an arguer has legal authority but demands something that goes beyond his/her legal authority;
- When an arguer achieves adherence through inciting strong emotions;
- When an arguer depicts a level of confidence that can be called reckless-confidence yet increases his charm in the eyes of his audience;
- When an arguer feeds a charismatic bond: you acknowledge how important I am as a leader, I acknowledge how patriotic (and whatever sentimental needs an audience craves) you are;
- When an arguer is seen by his followers not as a leader who is elected to see how truthful he is to his promises but rather as a person who is no longer a person: he is the embodiment of what the audience wholeheartedly believes in (this manifestation of charisma is seen more in religious argumentation than political: consider the status of Muhammad for Muslims, Jesus for Christians);

Having these criteria, plus the intangible nature of charismatic force, in mind and given the theoretical discussion in the previous sections, let us examine at Save America's speech for

elements of charisma and extremism. We should remember that this speech contributed to the January 6 attack on the Capitol, which threatened the fundamental pillar of American democracy: the peaceful transition of power.

#### **4.8.2 Analyzing the Save America Speech**

The overall claim that Trump argues for is that the election was stolen. Everything he says attempts to prove that the election was stolen, who to blame, and what to do about it. In other words, he questions the integrity of the election and challenges the legitimacy of the institutions responsible for a fair and free election. As a result, he suggests abnormal strategies to stop the validation of the election. Just by understanding the overall claim of the speech, we know that extremism and charisma are relevant to this speech because his claim demanded a non-institutional response and resulted in threatening the fundamental pillar of democracy: the peaceful transition of power.

Right from the beginning, he starts by exaggerating how big the crowd is and how bad the media is at showing the real size of the crowd (see 41:17-42:50).<sup>41</sup> Exaggeration is a common feature of Trump's speech; it helps him to evoke emotions and downgrade his opponent while boosting his ego. Exaggeration is an important element of argument from charisma because it, above all, depicts the leader's confidence. A charismatic leader is not in the business of careful, balanced, and reason-based argumentation. He wants to set minds on fire. Extremism, by nature,

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<sup>41</sup> Since the source is a video, I chose this reference style to refer to the exact time. See this source in the bibliography: Trump, D. (2021, January 6). *Watch live: Trump speaks as Congress prepares to Count Electoral College votes in Biden Win*. YouTube.

needs charismatic leaders to enhance the radicalism that lurks beneath it. Trump, in the early minutes of the speech, said:

It is just a great honor to have this kind of crowd and to be before you and hundreds of thousands of American patriots who are committed to the *honesty* of our elections and the *integrity* of our glorious republic. All of us here today do not want to see our election victory stolen by emboldened radical-left Democrats, which is what they are doing. And stolen by the fake news media (43:07- 43:26, emphasis added).

Right from the beginning, without beating about the bush, Trump speaks with all certainty and tells his audience that the election was stolen from them and that they, as true American patriots, should do something about it. Now we know what happened on the same day: the Capitol was attacked by his followers, and the glory of the republic was indeed assaulted by threatening the peaceful transition of power.

In a nutshell, the “Stop the Steal” slogan is what the rally was about. For Trump and his rally, the election was stolen from them. Trump reassured his audience that “We will never give up; we will never concede. It does not happen. You do not concede when there is theft involved” (43:38). The rhetoric of “Stop the Steal” is extremist in nature. It is extremist because it radically challenges the procedures in place to safeguard the integrity of elections in America, and with that, it suggests radical alternatives to institutional procedures in place for a peaceful transition of power. When Trump confidently and passionately tells his audience, “You do not concede when there is theft involved,” he argues for a radical departure from the institution-based procedure of

power transition to something of his liking. For that, he is charismatic, arguing for radical change based on personal authority.

A charismatic leader has a degree of confidence that cannot be tamed by reasonableness, respect, or moderation, which is why exaggeration, sarcasm and a degree of humiliation are common features of the speeches of some charismatic leaders. Trump embodies all of these when he talks about the election and his opponent, Joe Biden:

Does anybody believe that Joe had 80 million votes? Does anybody believe that? He had *80 million computer votes*. It is a disgrace. There has never been anything like that. You could take *third-world countries*. Just take a look. Take third-world countries. Their elections are more honest than what we have been going through in this country. It is a disgrace. It is a disgrace (45:13, emphasis added).

With these words, his audience's belief is not just reinforced about a stolen election but also emotionally charged with anger. When Trump says, "We will not let them silence your voices. We are not going to let it happen, I am not going to let it happen" (45:54), the audience shouts back, "*Fight for Trump*" (46:03). Now all he has to do is to decide how they fight for him, that is why when he mentions walking down to the Capitol, they did it regardless of the police request not to enter the building. Here, we witness an important element of charisma: the mutual need for a charismatic bond: You, the audience, acknowledge how important I am as a leader, and I acknowledge how patriotic you are (or whatever sentimental needs you crave).

Later in the speech, Trump reuses the same strategy: sarcasm to the degree of humiliation. This helps the charismatic force of his arguments because first, it shows his reckless confidence;

second, by inciting strong emotion, positive about the speaker or the audience or negative about the opponents, the audience is more susceptible to the force of his arguments. Here is how he brought Hilary Clinton to the rhetoric of a stolen election:

And the only unhappy person in the United States, single most unhappy, is Hillary Clinton. Because she said: "Why didn't you do this for me four years ago? Why didn't you do this for me four years ago? Change the votes, 10,000 in Michigan. You could have changed the whole thing." But she is not too happy. You know, you do not see her anymore. What happened? Where is Hillary? Where is she? (1:03:38)

Right there, we witness charisma as an additional rhetorical force of an argument. If this argument, with its sarcastic and exaggerated features, was presented by someone else as a reason to support the controversial claim of a stolen election, we might simply reject it as, at best, a bad joke. Yet, when a charismatic leader says it, it has the force of a compelling argument. Charisma, then, can be used to make a bad argument appear good.

Going against the institutional boundary and demanding the violation of institutional rules are essential features of charisma in a political context; thus, an argument from charisma often justifies that violation. A charismatic leader demands those violations because of his authority; even if he occupies an office, he brings a personal-non-legal touch to the order of things. A clear example in Trump's speech is his demand to Mike Pence to stop validating the election results. Trump says:

Because if Mike Pence does the right thing, we win the election (47:18)... States want to revote. The states got defrauded. They were given false information. They voted on it.

Now they want to recertify. They want it back. And I actually, I just spoke to Mike. I said: "Mike, that doesn't take courage. What takes courage is to do nothing. That takes courage (48:13).

According to Trump, Pence, the president of the Senate, had all the constitutional rights to do exactly what Trump asked him to do. Yet, it does not take much research to find out that Pence's authority is to "preside over Congress' certification of the results as detailed by the 12th Amendment. But he cannot intervene in the process" (Timm, 2021). Trump's charisma is what justifies his extremist demands: In the name of protecting the Constitution, I demand to violate it; in the name of respecting the integrity of the election, I demand to violate it. His radical demands are extremist because they want to radically change how election result validations are done; his authority to demand this radical change is charismatic because, as a president, he did not have the authority to ask the president of Congress to violate the rule of the game to his satisfaction. Yet, he requested, and without hesitation, he declared to the public his demand. Here, we witness both the personism (as opposed to rule-legal based authority) and reckless-confidence elements of arguments from charisma.

Charisma recognition is a mutual need: both the leader and the followers are in need of it. The role of the audience is central for any argument type; this is especially true for arguments from charisma. Both Trump and his base needed to believe the story of a stolen election. Trump urged Pence just to send the election result back to the states to recertify, and then he said, "we [will] become president and you are the happiest people" (47:46). The audience chants, "*We love Trump*" (48:50). Charisma can generate the personification of ideology, and once this happens

followers of a charismatic leader are ready to do everything for their leader. As much as Trump's confidence and charisma reinforced the belief that he must have won the election, it was his charisma that convinced his followers that everything was on the table to make sure Trump was reelected: "If I have to lose it all, I need for him to win" (a Trump voter's statement, Mazzarella, 2022).

The charismatic bond between the leader and the followers might not always be explained through rational theory because there is a distinction between "transactional" and "transformational" leadership; between the leader, I might follow because there is something in it for me, and the one who makes me feel that my work is *more than a job*" (Mazzarella, 2022). Trump's charisma is successful in depicting him as a transformational leader. He frames the January 6 rally as the following: "We are gathered together in the heart of our nation's Capitol for one very, very basic and simple reason: To *save our democracy*" (50:32 emphasis added). He reminds his followers that they are serving a goal far more important than selfish and short-term goals; he makes them feel they are part of a grand purpose, and submission to Trump is the way to achieve those goals. Trump told them to just remember this: "You're stronger, you're smarter, you've got more going than anybody. And they try and demean everybody having to do with us. And you're the real people, you're the people that built this nation" (52:25). The charisma is such a force that without him the "country will be destroyed" (51:28). His followers look at Trump as a leader that makes them feel good about themselves as the real patriot that save America from destruction. Once we understand this, attacking the Capitol to 'Stop the Steal' is actually a fight

to prevent America from destruction. With this mindset in his followers, Trump's charisma successfully transcended from transactional leader to transformational leader.

Then, we should not be surprised if the audience chanted, "We love you, Trump," and "We fight for you, Trump." Indeed, Trump did not hesitate to demand his followers "to fight like hell. And if you do not fight like hell, you are not going to have a country anymore" (1:51:21). Trump's charisma plays an important role in drawing a picture where a grand purpose such as saving America from self-destruction and acknowledging the paramount importance of Trump being re-elected are intertwined to the degree that for his followers to feel really patriotic, they intuitively take what he tells them without any grain of salt. Charisma is what helps the process of personification of ideology.

Trump is a serious arguer. He knows, *intuitively*, there are many rhetorical strategies to make his case persuasive, and he knows one of them is an argument from logos: make an argument persuasive by virtue of its reasons.<sup>42</sup> I am not claiming his reasons were false or true; I am saying we should not label Trump's argumentative style as always being unreasonable just because we may disagree with his politics. However, even when he mentions numbers and

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<sup>42</sup> (1:14:57) There were over 205,000 more ballots counted in Pennsylvania. Think of this, you had 205,000 more ballots than you had voters. That means you had two. Where did they come from? You know where they came from? Somebody's imagination, whatever they needed. (1:15:17) So in Pennsylvania, you had 205,000 more votes than you had voters. And the number is actually much greater than that now. That was as of a week ago. And this is a mathematical impossibility unless you want to say it's a total fraud. (1:15:40) So Pennsylvania was defrauded. Over 8,000 ballots in Pennsylvania were cast by people whose names and dates of birth match individuals who died in 2020 and prior to the election. Think of that. Dead people, lots of dead people, thousands. And some dead people actually requested an application. That bothers me even more.



*'facts?'* as reasons to support his arguments, there is still an element of charisma because he attaches them to a grand purpose or mission, hence further consolidating his charismatic picture. Just before bombarding his audience with numbers about changing the election result, he says: "Today, for the sake of our democracy, for the sake of our Constitution, and for the sake of our children, we lay out the case for the entire world to hear..." (1:12:47). For his audience the question no longer is whether these numbers are correct or not, but the question is what they mean and what kind of citizens they would be if they accept and/or ignore the meaning Trump attached to them. These numbers for them clearly mean the election was stolen, and there is no doubt about it. Moreover, if they do not want to be seen as 'weak Republicans' but rather saviours of the country, then attacking the Capitol, even if it costs lives, seems reasonable.

For a leader to be charismatic, an audience should find a connection with the leader and some grand purpose or meaning, and Trump gives them this. Yes, on the surface, the January 6 rally might look like a riot by angry and violent citizens. Yet, on a deeper level, they see themselves as warriors and Trump as their master. They fight for democracy, election integrity, constitutions, etc. Therefore, "when followers accept their obligation to serve that mission, then, [...] the mission's embodied leader becomes 'their master.' That is, they obey him without question" (Weber as explained in Light, 2022, p. 530). When the audience responds to Trump's rhetoric by chanting "Fight for Trump," we are witnessing a leader whose charisma made him seen as the master of his followers.

#### **4.9 Concluding Remarks**

We cannot fully comprehend the richness of argument in some domains, such as the political domain, if we neglect the forces that go beyond and above the mere force of an argument. If we only examine the arguments put forward, we will fail to understand fully, for example, the reasons behind voters' decision-making or for believing in a leader to the degree of seeing him as the master who embodies an ideology. The fundamental reason for this is that sometimes, the question of who the arguer is can be more important than the question of what the argument is in the domain of political argumentation. In this chapter, I looked at charisma as a way to make sense of the arguer's role in political argumentation.

Charisma played a crucial role in inciting the January 6 incident. Trump successfully persuaded thousands that the election was stolen from them, and until they 'fight like hell,' and unless he was re-elected, they cannot be the 'happiest people.' Charisma can connect ideology and a leader to the degree of personification of ideology. Whatever the disappointed Republican voters believed as the result of the 2020 election, Trump's charisma played a role in intensifying it. For that, he was a successful rhetor because he was able to speak their language. As Burke said, "You persuade a man only insofar as you can talk his language by speech, gesture, tonality, order, image, attitude, idea, identifying your way with his" (Burke as quoted in Metcalf, 2021, pp. 4-5). Trump was able to identify his way with his followers, and his followers responded by chanting, 'We love you, Trump, we fight for Trump.' Charisma can make bad arguments appear good, and Trump can serve as a useful candidate to assess this claim.

Charisma creates all sorts of interesting challenges to argumentation. Above all, identify and evaluate charismatic components in arguments. To locate arguments from charisma in the literature of Argumentation Theory, in this project, I investigate argument types that can be called cousins of charisma: the argument from ethos and the deferential argument (argument from authority in Whately's account). An argument from charisma can be categorized as a version or type of argument from ethos since both are based on the arguer's trustworthiness in the audience's eyes, and as a relevant argument type to the argument from deference because charisma also stimulates a positive habitual presumption in the mind of the followers in favour of their charismatic leader. As an attempt to demystify charisma, I have suggested a working list of criteria to identify the semantic manifestations of charisma in an argumentative situation (see section 4.8.1)

This research is relevant to a growing literature of thick descriptions of arguments in which there is a need to go beyond the mere propositional representation of an argument. The moment we feel puzzled about how fallacious arguments can mobilize the public toward all sorts of controversial positions, we need to zoom out and examine the non-propositional factors in argumentation. This research suggested and examined charisma to help us appreciate the non-propositional factors in argument adherence. More research is needed, especially in political argumentation, to examine the role of charisma in understanding how the public reacts to political leaders' arguments. As shown in this research, even though charisma plays a crucial role in political argumentation, reviewing the critical texts on argumentation schemes shows that no attention has been given to charisma (as mentioned in the introduction). This research bridges

Argumentation Theory and the literature on charismatic authority and charismatic leadership, especially in political argumentation.

## Chapter Five: Extremism's Vices and Virtues: Towards a Consequentialist Virtue Argumentation

The whole problem with the world is that fools and fanatics are always so certain of themselves, but wiser people so full of doubts. (Bertrand Russel as quoted in Vaughn & MacDonald, 2019, P. 124)

### 5.1 General Introduction

The title of the chapter is problematic if you adopt the dominant view of extremism, which I call the essentialist approach to extremism: extremism has a negative essence. According to this approach, since extremism is necessarily and essentially flawed, there is no need to talk about the possible goodness of extremism. By the same token, since extremism is essentially vicious, then there is no point in researching the virtues of extremism. For example, Cassam, a leading scholar in studying extremism philosophically, explored the possibility of virtues of extremism; however, his conclusion, once again, feeds the essential approach to extremism: "There is [...] no reason to revise the initial verdict that extremism is a vice" (Cassam, 2022b, p. 184). By rejecting this essentialist approach, the possibility of extremism's virtues becomes a subject worth investigating, which is what this chapter promises to undertake.

Within Argumentation Theory, there is Virtue Argumentation, which is most applicable theoretical framework to the mission of this chapter that we find in Argumentation Theory.<sup>43</sup> Since Virtue Argumentation Theory (VAT) studies both the virtues and vices of arguers, we can connect extremism to VAT by asking: what are the virtues and vices of extremist arguers? The

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<sup>43</sup> There are multiple approaches under Virtue Argumentation Theory, so even though I refer to this theory with "the" article, that does not mean scholars of this field do not take different approaches in their studies of argumentational virtues and vices.

focus here is on the character of an arguer, not just the quality of an argument. This is not to say the argument is not relevant to VAT as Aberdeen writes, “vicious arguments are characteristically those made by vicious arguers (acting in accordance with their vices)” (2016, p. 416). So, argument and argumentation, i.e., exchanges of arguments, are still relevant and important, but not as much as the arguer.

In addition to VAT, I will use vice epistemology as a theoretical framework in this chapter. Having said that, this project also challenges virtue argumentation theory and vice epistemology by suggesting that sometimes we need the consequentialist approach to virtue to make sense of extremist vices and virtues. So, my approach is pluralistic. I use three theoretical frameworks: virtue argumentation, vice epistemology and consequentialism. A pluralistic approach to virtue studies is not unique to this project. For example, Heather Battaly argues that virtues can have good motives, good consequences, or both (2015). In the section ‘A Consequentialist Approach to Vice and Virtue,’ I will elaborate further on my and Battaly’s accounts. For now, it is sufficient to note that in the context of this project, by a consequentialist approach to virtue argumentation, I mean these two propositions:

- 1- X is a liberatory virtuous character trait that, if X affects one’s argumentation style, will tend to align one’s argumentation with spreading true beliefs to overturn an unjust status quo.
- 2- X is a liberatory vicious character trait that, if X affects one’s argumentation style, will tend to align one’s argumentation with spreading false beliefs to maintain an unjust status quo.

My consequentialist approach to virtue argumentation takes good motive, good action, i.e., good arguing, and good outcomes into consideration when judging an arguer's vices and virtues. I have to say that justice is not the only praiseworthy outcome; for example, we can argue that freedom and equality are also praiseworthy outcomes and virtuous arguers should argue for them. However, the nature of the case studies I examine makes justice the most relevant ideal to judge extremists' vices and virtues. For easy reference sometimes, I write consequentialist rather than a consequentialist approach to virtue argumentation.

Battaly's approach helps make sense of my approach. She defines virtues and vices in a pluralistic language: any quality that makes us a better person would be a virtue; in contrast, any quality that makes us worse would be a vice (2015). Her account is pluralistic in the sense that:

[...] different qualities can make one a better person in different ways. One way that qualities can make us better people is by enabling us to attain good ends or effects—like true beliefs, or the welfare of others. But this isn't the only way for qualities to make us better people. Qualities that involve good motives—like caring about truths, or about the welfare of others—also make us better people, and do so even if they don't reliably attain good ends or effects (Battaly, 2015, p. 9).

She classifies these aspects of virtue into two *general* types, which she calls VGE and VGM:

According to one concept [type] of virtue, which I will call VGE, reliable success in attaining good ends or effects is both necessary and sufficient for a quality's being a virtue. But, according to another concept of virtue, which I will call VGM, being successful at attaining

good ends or effects is not enough, and may not even be required, for virtue” (Battaly, 2015, p. 9).

The approach I endorse is close to a subtype of VGM, which, in addition to good motive, also considers effects or ends. She calls this subtype the motives-actions-and-ends variety. To this variety of VGM, “to be virtuous, one must have *good motives, perform good actions*, and be reliably successful at producing *external goods*” (Battaly, 2015, p. 15, my italics). In the two propositions I suggested above, good motives, good actions, and external goods are roughly translated into good character traits that encourage and enable an arguer to engage in good argumentation for the sake of making society more just.

My approach is in debt to Aberdein (2010) and Battaly (2015). As a result of merging Aberdein’s “spreading true belief”<sup>44</sup> as a telos of virtue argumentation and Battaly’s pluralistic framework, a good motive can be translated into a good motive to spread true belief, good action can be translated into good argumentation, and successfully spreading true beliefs can be translated into good ends.

Within this expanded version of virtue argumentation and pluralistic account of virtue, I argue that sometimes an extremist arguer violates some argumentative virtues, such as respect for reliable authority, respect for public opinion, respect for commonsense and open-mindedness, yet resulting in spreading true belief such as anti-racist, anti-sexist and anti-colonialist beliefs. As Battaly argues in the context of the Garrisonian anti-slavery movement,

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<sup>44</sup> Aberdein argues that “where virtuous knowers are disposed to act in a way that leads to the acquisition of true beliefs, virtuous arguers are disposed to spread true beliefs around” (Aberdein, 2010, p. 173).



even though they were closed-minded, they had liberatory virtues. She writes, “For a disposition to be a liberatory virtue, it must have liberatory content: the agent must be aware of oppression, and must be motivated to resist it” (Battaly, 2023, p. 19). In this chapter, I argue some extremist arguers can have both liberatory virtues and argumentational virtues.

Thus, I argue that virtue argumentation should consider both character-based virtues and end-based virtues. The key lesson here is that sometimes, extremist arguers, with their steadfast mindset, progressive spirit, and praiseworthy sense of duty, can be crucial agents for spreading true beliefs needed for socio-political changes in line with justice and freedom for all. Movements like abolitionism, suffragism, and anti-colonialism speak to this judgment. Therefore, as Wintrobe argues, “a society that tries to stamp out extremism is trying to stamp out its capacity to dream” (2012, p. 260). Senator Barry Goldwater’s famous saying is also relevant here: “I would remind you that extremism in the defense of liberty is no vice. And let me remind you also that moderation in the pursuit of justice is no virtue” (Goldwater, 1964). As we will see throughout this chapter, some of the manifestations of extremism were in defence of liberty and in pursuit of justice.

This brings us to the four main research questions of this chapter:

What are the vices and virtues, argumentatively speaking, that extremists embody?

What is a consequentialist approach to virtue argumentation that I endorse?

How does a consequentialist approach differ from virtue argumentation theory and vice epistemology?

What are the shortcomings of virtue argumentation theory and vice epistemology?

I will divide the chapter into three main parts to answer these questions. In part one, I will introduce VAT and its relevance to extremism. In part two, I will introduce vice epistemology and its views on extremism. A significant section in part two will elaborate on the consequentialist approach of virtue argumentation and why, at times, it is a better theoretical framework for studying vice and virtue of extremism than other theories. Part three investigates the vices and virtues of extremism, taking examples from both civil and uncivil extremism, such as the women's suffragist movement, the anti-slavery movement, and violent anti-colonialist struggles.

The immediate challenge for this chapter is my account of extremism: a neutral and multidimensional account. Since I identified two classes and four members of extremism, then theoretically speaking, I need to examine their virtues and vices separately, or at least I need to be mindful of their differences. For example, a philosopher who is extremist in his position against animal cruelty and a Salafi-jihadist leader who argues for beheading non-believers are expected to embody different virtues and vices, argumentatively speaking. So, as it slowly becomes apparent, the task is more complex than it may look.

The overall thesis of this chapter is that the Aristotelian cornerstone of virtue argumentation and virtue and vice epistemology, which defines virtue as that which lies between deficiency and excessiveness, is, *at times*, misleading us in studying virtues and vices of extremism. Therefore, instead of the Aristotelian doctrine of the mean, *at times*, we need to employ the consequentialist approach to the question of virtue and vice of extremism. By a consequentialist approach to virtue argumentation, in the simplest terms, I mean judging virtue

and vice of an arguer by the consequences she generates or help generate which reflects her motives, and her argumentation styles.

One of the terms I will use to comment on some of the vices of extremism is the minimum principle. I will say more about this term in the next chapter; for now, suffice to note that the fundamental precondition of public argumentation is the guarantee of freedom of thought and speech. For citizens, extremist or not, to be able to engage in public argumentation and to be able to address disagreements, the minimum principle must be respected. The minimum principle, in short, guarantees freedom of conscience, speech and assembly in the public sphere. How can we engage in sincere political argumentation if we cannot express our disagreements publicly and freely? Any extremist vices which challenge this principle, I will call them 'gravest argumentational vice' because they threaten the very existence of public argumentation. With this note, let us move to the second section.

## **5.2 Introducing Virtue Argumentation Theory**

This section identifies key features of Virtue Argumentation Theory (VAT). I start this chapter as such because the most relevant tool we can find in Argumentation Theory to examine vices and virtues of extremism is this theory. As it will be apparent throughout this chapter, we can find argumentation virtues and vices that are identified by key scholars of this field that are also vices and virtues of extremist arguers. Another reason for this theory's relevancy is that it allows us to see the distinctive features of the consequentialist approach to extremism that enable us to see particular virtues of extremism that other theories, such as vice epistemology and virtue argumentation overlook.

### 5.2.1 Key Features of Virtue Argumentation Theory

One way to start is to consider challenges raised against an argument type traditionally considered as a fallacy: ad hominem. Ad hominem “falls under the general umbrella of ethotic arguments, that is, arguments that deal with some feature of the character of the speaker” (Tindale, 2007, p. 81). Thus, ad hominem rejects an argument by questioning the ethos, the character of an arguer. This happens in two ways: “One involves some kind of shift from the person’s argument to the person, and the other involves showing the person to be inconsistent in some way” (Tindale, 2007, p. 82). Ad hominem is a personalized attack “in which the thrust is directed, not at a conclusion, but at some person who defends the conclusion in dispute” (Copi et al., 2014, p. 118). So, traditionally, if someone rejected an argument by showing the flaw of the character, then they might be charged as though they committed a fallacy, ad hominem. However, “more recent treatments have appreciated that it is often quite appropriate to draw attention to some feature of a person’s character or circumstances when it has a direct bearing on what that person says” (Tindale, 2007, pp. 81-82). The core of Virtue Argumentation Theory (VAT) is judging arguments based on the character of the arguer. So, VAT is an agent-based approach to argumentation.

However, if all ad hominem arguments against the character of the arguer were necessarily fallacious, VAT could not have gotten off the ground. On this point, Andrew Aberdein echoes Tindale: “It is not hard to find arguments that satisfy the description [of the ad hominem fallacy], and yet seem perfectly sound” (2010, p. 170). Aberdein takes this idea back to Aristotle because Aristotle, as Aberdein reads him, acknowledges the justifiability of ad hominem tactics

by arguing that it “sometimes becomes necessary to attack the speaker and not his thesis” (Aristotle, as quoted in Aberdein 2021, p. 221). On the same point, Tindale draws attention to Aristotle, who writes, “This solution will not suit every argument . . . but is directed against the questioner, not against the argument” (2007, p. 82). So, VAT invests in an appropriate attack on the arguer as a way to evaluate an argument. In VAT, among the arguer, argument, and audience, the three essential components of any argumentative activity, the focus is more “on the arguers’ character rather than on her arguments” (Gascón, 2015. p. 467). However, this focus is appropriately based on new developments in the analysis of the ad-hominem fallacy.

The centrality of an arguer does not mean the other two critical components of argumentation are not important in VAT. For VAT, “The good of argumentation is the bettering of belief systems. [... and it] is praiseworthy because it leads to the improvement of belief-systems; those of the arguers, those of the audience, those of the opponents” (Radziewsky, 2013, p. 2). The quality of an arguer’s argument can tell us something about the character of the arguer in terms of following logical rules of good arguments and rhetorical considerations of the audience. Thus, “a single bad argument does not make a bad arguer, of course, but the habitual production of bad arguments indubitably does” (Gascón, 2015, p. 468). Generally speaking, instead of judging the character of an arguer based on how logical measurements of a good argument are deployed in one’s argumentation, in VAT, the virtues and vices of an arguer are used to judge the quality of an argument (Aberdein, 2010).

Moreover, since good arguments may lead to true or reasonable beliefs, the virtues of argumentation that encourage us to produce and pursue good arguments ought to sway us from

committing fallacies. As a result, it can be argued that “where virtuous knowers are disposed to act in a way that leads to the acquisition of true beliefs, virtuous arguers are disposed to spread true beliefs” (Aberdein, 2010, p. 173). So, it is not sufficient to have mastery of logical skills to commit as few fallacies as possible; to be a virtuous arguer, one also has to engage in argumentation that leads to distributing the result of their good thinking. Thus, I argue that VAT must have a rhetorical edge, and some of the argumentational virtues must fall under the rhetorical approach to argumentation. This is because one cannot spread true beliefs, or at least fails to do it effectively, if she ignores audience consideration in her argument construction. Audience consideration is central to the rhetorical approach to argumentation. Thus, virtue argumentation brings insights from logical and rhetorical considerations of a good argument, in addition to an arguer's character-based virtues and vices.

Even though the focus is more on the arguer than the audience and argument in VAT, examining the key clusters of argumentation virtues shows that the audience is also relevant. Aberdein develops his list based on the four main vital virtues that were first suggested by Daniel Cohen, which are willingness to engage in serious argumentation; willingness to listen to others; willingness to modify one’s own position; willingness to question the obvious (Cohen as quoted in Aberdein, 2021). The first and the last are more relevant to an argumentative agent in the role of arguer. In contrast, the second and the third are more relevant to an argumentative agent in the role of a receiver of an argument, an audience. Moreover, it is clear that for X to be able to propagate true belief or reduce false belief, first, she must know what a true belief or reasonable

belief is. Thus, virtues that are conducive to knowing what is true are a necessary precondition to virtues that are conducive to spreading what is true.

Another common theme in VAT is that in addition to logical skills and knowledge of what makes an argument strong or weak, something else is needed to produce sound arguments. That something else could be called a “virtuous state of mind” and “conscious manner” (Gascón, 2015). A virtuous state of mind is needed in VAT because one can produce good arguments but “still be biased, intellectually arrogant, or dogmatic, to name but a few vices” (Gascón, 2015. p. 482). Moreover, in a particular circumstance, one who is known for producing bad arguments can produce good arguments, but this does not make them virtuous arguers since this could be accidental and not consciously made (Gascón, 2015). One may ask: Is all this weight given to the arguer in VAT legitimate? Gascón (2015) argues that the quality of arguments will improve once the character of the arguer is virtuously cultivated. In other words, a virtuous state of mind is conducive to not just producing good arguments but also advocating and promoting them (advocating and promoting, as we will see in part three, are key features of extremist argumentation). Thus, the goodness that comes from good arguments that produce true belief is no longer just beneficial to the knower but to his audience as well because to be argumentatively virtuous, it is not sufficient to hold reasonable beliefs; you need to spread them, too. However, is a virtuous state of mind sufficient to be a virtuous arguer? I will come back to this question.

Argumentational virtues (AVs) can be categorized under thick virtues as opposed to thin virtues. The critical difference between thick and thin virtues is that the former has a motivational

component that the latter lacks (Thorson, 2016). So, AVs are part of action-oriented virtues, meaning if one has them, one will act upon them. Thus, thick virtues are “producing rules for actions” (Annas and Hursthouse, 1999, as quoted in Thorson, 2016, p. 359). Thorson argues that we can find both thick and thin concepts in argumentation. Examples of thin concepts would be skills that do not have motivational force. For example, he writes, “If I am studying propositional logic, I may be motivated to use modus ponens and use it correctly, but the rule itself offers me *no* advice on when it should be used” (Thorson, 2016, p. 361, emphasis added). It follows that we, arguers, also need thick concepts that motivate us to argue in a certain way; AVs are part of those thick concepts. We should remember that for Aristotle, a key feature of virtue is habituality, meaning in order for me to claim to have the virtue of truthfulness, I should not be truthful only when it suits me. So, it makes sense that if one embodies an AV, for example, being charitable, they will almost always be charitable. To be able to do that, the virtue of charitableness must have a motivational force. Otherwise, one will be charitable only when it suits them. This is also true for argumentation vices. Someone like Baghdadi who was a vicious arguer, his arguments were thick in the sense of having a motivational force for believing and doing what Salafi-Jihadism demands to believe and do. So, we can argue that both argumentational virtues and vices are thick concepts since, generally speaking, both are rhetorically successful in achieving adherence and in having motivational force that make arguments an action-generator, a bridge that connects thought to action. As we will see, arguments as a bridge between thought and action is another essential feature of extremist argumentation: extremist arguers do not just argue but also do.



Returning to this question: is a virtuous state of mind sufficient to be a virtuous arguer? Logical skills are important and having argumentational virtues (AV) are not sufficient reason to be a virtuous arguer. Logical skills and virtues are needed to produce and share true and reasonable beliefs. For example, the case of using equivocation in an argument could “result from either a failure of virtue, if deliberately intended to deceive, or from a failure of skill, if the utterer did not notice the double meaning” (Aberdein, 2010, p. 176). So, it can be argued that AVs are needed to prevent the misuse of logical skills. However, logical skills are also needed for AVs since having good motivation to argue virtuously cannot always provide the tools that one needs to argue virtuously. The difference then seems to be that skills lack the good passion that virtue has, and virtue lacks the how-to-do knowledge that skills have. So, virtues like “intellectual care, thoroughness, perseverance, fairness, and courage are not technically difficult. Their difficulties arise primarily from a lack of sufficient passion for the truth” (Ball, 2016, p.425). In other words, AVs are needed for argumentation skills to be used properly, i.e., virtuously. On the complementary relations between skills and virtue, Andrew Ball concludes that:

...Even though virtues are defined as having a prior cognitive/motivational component and skills are defined by their technical mastery, genuine *virtuous* agents are motivated to obtain the skills conducive for acting virtuously. (Ball, 2016, p. 425, emphasis in the original).

Talking about virtues is one thing, but being virtuous is another. Argumentational virtues are not easy to cultivate, and sometimes, they are even contradictory. Above all, one’s co-arguer might not be interested in the truth of the matter or resolving a disagreement fairly. This is

particularly true when much is at stake in an argumentative situation. Political argumentation, in general, and extremist political argumentation, in particular, often contain consequential subject matters. The tension is already high, and if one's co-arguer lacks virtues such as cooperation or fairmindedness, being virtuous might not be the smartest strategy. Let us examine the adversarial and cooperative argumentational activities to further elaborate on the difficulties of being a virtuous arguer.

Understanding a virtuous arguer as the one who improves the belief system of himself and his audience: getting the arguer and audience closer to truth or knowledge or being open to arguments that have similar effects, then a virtuous arguer needs to engage in argumentational activities that, at times, are contradictory such as being adversarial and cooperative. The demands of adversarial and cooperative argumentation, Radziewsky rightly argues that cannot be met simultaneously because "It is psychologically – if not logically – almost impossible to be at the same time and in the same respect" adversarial and cooperative in an argumentative situation (2013, p. 11). In a nutshell, for proponents of an adversarial account of argumentation, the adversarial approach is the best way to evaluate an argument because "the best way of evaluating claims objectively (...) is to subject those claims to the strongest or most extreme opposition" (Burrow, as quoted in Radziewsky, 2013, p. 4). So, it follows that we should be adversarial to get rid of bad arguments, which promotes good arguments and improves beliefs, which is the aim of virtuous argumentation.

On the other hand, the cooperative model "asks arguers to develop the attitude of teachers and students and to learn from each other's perspectives and ideas, striving to nurture

each claim and argument to its strongest possible form, correcting their weak points” (Radziewsky, 2013, p. 5). However, both of these approaches, at times, could have shortcomings. The cooperative ideal’s shortcoming is that it always assumes there is a misunderstanding. Therefore, it always begins with a charitable approach to argument evaluation. The adversarial approach assumes that the argument has been presented in its strongest and fullest version. However, as is often the case, especially in verbal argumentation, it takes time for an arguer to present their arguments in the strongest version. The adversarial and the cooperative arguing can co-exist in one person but cannot be used simultaneously. So, at the end of the day, an ideal virtuous arguer seems to be the one who enjoys the virtue of prudence (practical wisdom) and knows when he deploys adversarial skills and when to deploy cooperative skills. In the value hierarchy of virtues, “the most important virtue in Greek virtue ethics was practical wisdom. [Because a] person who has cultivated all the other virtues but lacks practical wisdom will still act wrongly” (Radziewsky, 2013, p. 11). By the same token, an arguer fails to argue virtuously if she embodies all the virtues and logical skills yet fails to know when, where, and to what degree which virtue or skills should be used.

### **5.2.2 Lists of Argumentational Virtues and Vices**

Now, it is time to provide a list of argumentational virtues and vices to put some flesh on the bones. Aberdein has already nicely provided a tentative list of argumentational virtues and vices (see Table 1 and Table 2). For conciseness, I will provide them as they are and move to another section. Later, I will comment on them once we start examining the virtues and vices of extremist arguers from the lens of virtue argumentation, vice epistemology and consequentialist approach.

Table 1 A tentative typology of argumentational virtue (Aberdein, 2016, p. 415)

<p><b>(1) willingness to engage in argumentation</b></p> <p>(a) being communicative</p> <p>(b) faith in reason</p> <p>(c) intellectual courage</p> <p>(i) sense of duty</p>	<p><b>(3) willingness to modify one's own position</b></p> <p>(a) common sense</p> <p>(b) intellectual candour</p> <p>(c) intellectual humility</p> <p>(d) intellectual integrity</p> <p>(i) honour</p> <p>(ii) responsibility</p> <p>(iii) sincerity</p>
<p><b>(2) willingness to listen to others</b></p> <p>(a) intellectual empathy</p> <p>(i) insight into persons</p> <p>(ii) insight into problems</p> <p>(iii) insight into theories</p> <p>(b) fairmindedness</p> <p>(i) justice</p> <p>(ii) fairness in evaluating the arguments of others</p> <p>(iii) open-mindedness in collecting and appraising evidence</p>	<p><b>(4) willingness to question the obvious</b></p> <p>(a) appropriate respect for public opinion</p> <p>(b) autonomy</p> <p>(c) intellectual perseverance</p> <p>(i) diligence</p> <p>(ii) care</p> <p>(iii) thoroughness</p>

(c) recognition of reliable authority	
(d) recognition of salient facts	
(i) sensitivity to detail	

Table 2 is a tentative typology of argumentational vices (Aberdein, 2016, p. 416). (It is important to note that the (-) and (+) are signs to describe deficiency and excessiveness: anything with (-) is deficient, and anything with (+) is excess.

<p><b>(1-) unwillingness to engage in argumentation</b></p> <p>(quietism)</p> <p>(a) being uncommunicative</p> <p>(b) mistrust of reason</p> <p>(c) intellectual cowardice</p> <p>(i) dereliction of duty</p>	<p><b>(1+) undue willingness to engage in argumentation</b></p> <p>(the 'argument provocateur')</p> <p>(a) being too communicative</p> <p>(b) over-reliance on reason</p> <p>(c) intellectual rashness</p> <p>(i) misplaced zeal</p>
<p><b>(2-) unwillingness to listen to others</b> (the 'deaf dogmatist')</p> <p>(a) intellectual callousness</p> <p>(i) indifference to persons</p> <p>(ii) indifference to problems</p> <p>(iii) indifference to theories</p> <p>(b) narrow-mindedness</p> <p>(i) injustice to others</p> <p>(ii) unfairness to others in evaluating their arguments</p> <p>(iii) closed-mindedness in collecting and appraising evidence</p> <p>(c) indifference to reliable authority</p> <p>(d) indifference to salient facts</p>	<p><b>(2+) undue willingness to listen to others</b></p> <p>(a) intellectual sentimentality</p> <p>(i) indulgence of persons</p> <p>(ii) indulgence of problems</p> <p>(iii) indulgence of theories</p> <p>(b) undue generosity</p> <p>(i) injustice to oneself</p> <p>(ii) partiality to others in evaluating their arguments</p> <p>(iii) impressionability in collecting and appraising evidence</p> <p>(c) misidentification of authority as reliable</p> <p>(d) misidentification of salient facts</p>

(i) insensitivity to detail	(i) obsession with detail
<p><b>(3-) unwillingness to modify one's own position</b> (the 'agenda pusher')</p> <p>(a) over-reliance on common sense</p> <p>(b) intellectual dishonesty</p> <p>(c) intellectual arrogance</p> <p>(d) intellectual intransigence</p> <p>(i) dishonour</p> <p>(ii) stolidity</p> <p>(iii) insincerity</p>	<p><b>(3+) undue willingness to modify one's own position</b> (the 'concessionaire')</p> <p>(a) lack of common sense</p> <p>(b) intellectual naivety</p> <p>(c) lack of intellectual confidence</p> <p>(d) intellectual acquiescence</p> <p>(i) sycophancy</p> <p>(ii) irresponsibility</p> <p>(iii) unsophistication</p>
<p><b>(4-) unwillingness to question the obvious</b> (the 'eager believer')</p> <p>(a) undue or misplaced respect for public opinion</p> <p>(b) gullibility</p> <p>(c) lack of intellectual perseverance</p> <p>(i) inanity</p> <p>(ii) carelessness</p> <p>(iii) superficiality</p>	<p><b>(4+) undue willingness to question the obvious</b> (the 'unassuring assurer')</p> <p>(a) contempt for public opinion</p> <p>(b) eccentricity</p> <p>(c) intellectual single-mindedness</p> <p>(i) pertinacity</p> <p>(ii) pedantry</p> <p>(iii) obsessiveness</p>

### 5.3 Vice Epistemology and Extremism

There is an emerging literature on the epistemological study of extremism from what is called vice epistemology. In this section, I will introduce key concepts of vice epistemology and examine similarities and differences between vice epistemology and VAT. In the next section, I will use both VAT and vice epistemology to examine the vices and virtues of extremism.

We learn from the previous section that “where virtuous knowers are disposed to act in a way that leads to the acquisition of true beliefs, virtuous arguers are disposed to spread true beliefs” (Aberdein, 2010, p. 173). If we take this distinction seriously, argumentation virtues can be defined as ways of arguing that make the audience more knowledgeable about what is reasonable or true. The opposite of this is argumentation vice, which means (at least following Aberdein’s distinction between virtuous knowers and virtuous arguers) ways of arguing that make the audience less knowledgeable about what a reasonable or true belief is. So, it seems to be the case that argumentational vices and virtues are about the character traits of the arguer, which will have epistemically positive and negative consequences on the recipients of an argument. Epistemic vices, as defined by Cassam, are similar but not identical to argumentation vices: “Epistemic vices can be understood as character traits, attitudes or thinking styles that get in the way of the gaining, keeping or sharing of knowledge” (Cassam, 2022b, p. 182). As the last clause shows, ‘sharing knowledge’ is a common feature between Aberdein and Cassam. However, Cassam’s approach is more inclusive than VAT, at least in Aberdein’s account, since Cassam also focuses on gaining and keeping knowledge. Moreover, Cassam identifies the differences between character traits, attitude and thinking style.



### 5.3.1 Cassam's Obstructivism Account of Vice Epistemology and Extremism

Cassam argues that the literature on epistemology focuses heavily on virtuous character, but to better understand controversial phenomena like extremism, we should also study vices. He defines vice epistemology as “the philosophical study of the nature, identity, and epistemological significance of epistemic vices” (Cassam, 2019, p. viii). He calls his account of vice epistemology obstructivism which is: “An epistemic vice is a blameworthy or otherwise reprehensible character trait, attitude, or way of thinking that systematically *obstructs* the gaining, keeping, or sharing of knowledge” (Cassam, 2019, p. 23, emphasis added). Cassam is a central author of the philosophical approach to extremism and vice epistemology, so I will spend some time introducing his arguments before expressing my concerns in the next section. In his obstructivism account, we see character traits, attitudes, and ways of thinking. So, let us unpack them briefly.

Character traits refer to “stable dispositions to act, think, and feel in particular ways” (Cassam, 2019, p. 12). For X to be a vice, on this account, X has to be thought, felt, and acted upon, more or less in a stable manner by an agent that negatively affects that agent’s ability to gain, keep and share reasonable or true belief. Cassam mentions arrogant as an example because an arrogant person will “(a) behave arrogantly, that is to say, in ways that are aggressively assertive, overbearing, or presumptuous, (b) think of themselves as superior to others, and (c) feel superior” (2019, p. 12). So, argumentatively speaking, an arrogance person will argue with a degree of certainty that is problematic because it is not backed up appropriately by evidence. As a result, they are not sharing knowledge but rather sharing bad arguments that are depicted as good arguments. Moreover, an arrogant person also tends to fail to be open-minded to counterarguments or criticisms that might lead to improvements in her arguments. Thus, a

character vice would be a stable trait that hinders gaining and sharing good arguments both as an arguer and an audience. Arrogance falls under the category of unwillingness to modify one's position (see Table 2, a tentative typology of argumentational vice, Aberdein, 2016, p. 416).

If we recall chapter four, there we explained that what makes Trump charismatic is partly self-confidence, which some authors call reckless confidence. In this sense, Trump is an arrogant person who thinks, argues and feels such that he is guilty of the vices that fall under the category of unwillingness to listen to others; in particular, he lacks the virtue of being open-minded to counterarguments. Trump's arrogant character is also relevant to his style of argumentation: he argues passionately and confidently. Let us call this arguing zealously. Trump's zealous argumentation style is a vice because a) he spreads bad beliefs, e.g., the election was stolen, and b) he is not open to counterarguments. However, is arguing zealously necessarily vicious? Consider the passion, confidence, and zealousness that Martin Luther King, Jr. exhibited in the I 'Have a Dream' speech (I will come back to this point in part three).

Epistemic vice can be depicted through attitude. Cassam argues, "An example of an epistemic vice that is neither a character trait nor a way of thinking is prejudice. To describe someone as prejudiced against something, or someone is to describe their *attitude*." (Cassam, 2019, p. 13, emphasis in the original). What distinguishes prejudice from arrogance is that the latter is more permanent or stable than the former. To be prejudiced means to be prejudiced toward particular individuals or a group, but to be arrogant means, roughly speaking, to be arrogant toward all people (consider, again, Trump). A related argumentational vice to prejudice might be an unfair evaluation of those one is prejudiced against, which falls under narrow-mindedness in Aberdein's list (see Table 2, Aberdein, 2016, p. 416).

In the context of extremism, Cassam identifies four ways of vicious thinking: “catastrophic thinking, utopian thinking, apocalyptic thinking and conspiracy thinking” (Cassam, 2022b, p. 179). In short, according to Cassam, extremists exaggerate their problems and portray them as catastrophic. Moreover, they suggest an ideal or utopian solution to them; for example, paradise is promised in the context of religious extremism. Apocalyptic thinking means, to reach the utopia, in an apocalyptic-like war enemies or evils must be destroyed. As for conspiracy thinking, Cassam argues that “Right-wing and left-wing extremists have both relied on the myth of a world Jewish conspiracy to justify their anti-Semitism, and both Hitler and Stalin were conspiracy theorists” (Ibid). I agree with Cassam that these patterns of thinking are relevant to extremist thinking but only to certain manifestations of extremism, such as unjustified violent extremism (see chapter two). I will elaborate on my disagreements with him in the following sections. However, for now, let us ask what argumentational vices are relevant to these thinking patterns.

Someone who is guilty of catastrophic thinking is guilty of exaggeration. If X exaggerates in her arguments, then X is guilty of vices that fall under the category of unwillingness to question the obvious, such as carelessness and superficiality. However, we have to note that this connection is only true if X is sincere in her thinking and does not purposefully exaggerate the magnitude of an issue in her arguments as a rhetorical strategy. Of course, we still have exaggerated arguments in the latter case, but it does not authentically reflect how X thinks; thus, it may not be a thinking pattern but rather a one-time or occasional rhetorical strategy. As for utopian thinking, it can be argued that, above all, we have a fallacy of oversimplification. Utopian thinkers oversimplify the complexity of a solution to the degree that makes it highly unlikely and unrealistic. An argumentational vice that is most relevant here is a vice that falls under the

subcategory of “close-mindedness in collecting and apprising evidence,” such as insensitivity to details (see Table 2). As for apocalyptic thinking, I believe it is the greatest vice, even though it has not been mentioned in Aberdein’s list, because it is the direct rejection of the minimum principle, in which, without it, we would not have argumentation. Thus, it is the greatest vice. For example, there were no arguments between Nazi generals and prison guards with imprisoned Jews because the minimum principle was violated in relation to Jews: they could not freely express their counterarguments. Still, we can imagine arguments to justify apocalyptic thinking were still argumentatively relevant to Nazi policymakers: top generals must have been convinced by arguments on the justifiability and necessity of, for example, the final solution. One argumentation vice of Nazi thinking, in believing, for example, racial superiority, was gullibility which falls under the category of unwillingness to question the obvious (see Table two).

### **5.3.2 More on Vice Epistemology: A Structuralist Approach**

In the literature on vices of extremism, intellectual vice, cognitive vice, epistemic vice and moral vice are used by different scholars. Intellectual, cognitive, and epistemic can be used interchangeably. For Cassam, intellectual and epistemic vices are used as “systematically harmful ways of thinking, attitudes, or character traits” (Cassam, 2019, p. viii). For Rick Peels, examples of cognitive vices are “closed-mindedness, dogmatism, and gullibility” (Peels, 2023, p. 3). All these examples are seen in the list of epistemic vices mentioned by Cassam (2019 & 2022b) and argumentational vices mentioned by Aberdein (2016). As for moral vices, Peels mentions “aggressiveness and vengefulness” (ibid). For Peels, the usefulness of cognitive vices and moral vices is such that we can explain extreme behaviour by moral vice, but cognitive vices help explain extreme belief (Peels, 2023). Peels’s definition of cognitive vice is similar to Cassam’s definition

of epistemic vice and Aberdein's definition of argumentation vice. Peels argues that cognitive vices are such that they “render it more likely that one maintains false beliefs and other kinds of ignorance rather than knowledge and understanding” (2023, p. 5). So, all in all, in the successful cases of gaining and sharing reasonable or true beliefs, epistemic and argumentational virtues are involved, but in the failed cases, then vices, epistemic and argumentational, are involved.

In the *Structure of Intellectual Vice*, Jason Baehr (2021) argues that both intellectual vice and virtues have four dimensions: competence, motivation, judgment, and affection. Roughly speaking, competence is a skill that is essential to have a virtue; motivation is a desire to apply that skill; judgement is the degree to which that skill should be used and where and when; the affective dimension is a feeling of joy that a virtuous person should experience because of being virtuous. Let us take an example: open-mindedness. Open-mindedness is an intellectual virtue that sits between gullibility (excess) and close-mindedness (deficiency). So, once again, as it is the case with Aberdein and Cassam, intellectual virtues and vices are measured by Aristotle's doctrine of mean. The competence dimension for the virtue of open-mindedness means the ability to engage in perspective changing; the motivation dimension means the desire to engage in perspective changing; the judgement dimension means where, when, and to what degree one should engage in perspective change; and the affective dimension means one feels joy for being open-minded (Baehr, 2021). On intellectual vices, Baehr first argues: “One possesses an intellectual vice only if one is defective concerning all four dimensions of one or more intellectual virtues” (Baehr, 2021, p. 24). Later, he makes a more precise claim: Deficiency in the competence dimension, motivation dimension, or judgment dimension is each by itself sufficient for

possession of intellectual vice, while the deficiency in the affective dimension is not by itself a sufficient dimension (Behr, 2021).

Because of the centrality of arguing for the sake of sharing true belief or arguing to reduce false belief, Aberdein argues that argumentational virtues are central to all virtue theories because what “the true virtue theory needs to have is an account of arguing in a way that is conducive to human flourishing” (2021, p. 227). So, the relationships between the virtue theory of argumentation (both argumentational virtues and vices), virtue epistemology and vice epistemology are one of complementarity. Because I endorse a pluralistic approach to virtue study, whenever relevant, I use all of them to examine the vices and virtues of extremism.

### **5.3.3 A Consequentialist Approach to Vice and Virtue**

Based on what we have learned from virtue argumentation and vice epistemology, we can summarize the following points:

- Virtues are conducive to knowledge gaining and sharing; thus, they are praiseworthy.
- Vices are obstacles to knowledge gaining and sharing; thus, they are blameworthy.
- The benefits of knowledge gaining and sharing are inclusive: the arguer, the audience, and even the opponent are better off (on this point, see Radziewsky, 2013).

My approach to the vice and virtue study of extremism is consequentialism. By this, I mean that when it comes to judging whether an extremist individual or group is guilty of this or that vice or is worthy of respect because of this or that virtue, *sometimes*, what counts *primarily*, not exclusively, is the consequence of their extremism, not their pattern of thinking, arguing or even the method used to achieve their goals. The main reason for suggesting a consequentialist approach is sometimes an extremist arguer (X) violates some argumentative virtues yet results in

spreading true belief. So, to avoid misjudging arguers like X as vicious arguers, I suggest we should also consider whether X's argumentations spread true belief or not. This approach differs from virtue argumentation theory, virtue and vice epistemology since their core measurement is the Aristotelian doctrine of the mean. In my approach, yes, in a vacuum, in a non-socio-political context, this measurement might help us theoretically make sense of vices and virtues. However, in the context of extremism, what we need to use as the fundamental measurement is a consequence of an argument, an argumentative style, or a method suggested to achieve a goal.

What plays a crucial role in producing good consequences as far as arguments are concerned, excluding chance-based cases, are the *motivation* and *skills* of an arguer. Therefore, the consequentialist approach in this context is relevant to virtue argumentation and vice epistemology in acknowledging characters' significant roles. However, where I diverge from virtue argumentation and vice epistemology is in addition to the character traits, we should also consider, the telos, the result of those character traits. The telos that I am concerned with here is spreading true belief such as beliefs against racism, sexism and colonialism.

Any argumentative activity, whether as an arguer or as an audience, that helps gain and share knowledge for the betterment of the arguer, the audience and the opponent is a virtuous argumentative activity. By the same token, any argumentative activity, whether as an arguer or as an audience, that obstructs gaining and sharing knowledge that worsens or at least prevents changing a status quo for the betterhood of the arguer, audience, and opponent would be a vice. In the context of the consequentialist approach, extremism virtues and vices are effective-virtues and effective-vices. This is to say they can produce good or bad effects. Thus: "any stable disposition that produces a preponderance of good effects will count as an effects-virtue. [While]

a stable disposition will be an effects-vice if and only if it produces a preponderance of bad effects, or fails to produce a preponderance of good effects” (Battaly, 2023, p.17). So, in the consequentialist approach that I am endorsing, even though the character traits of the arguers are still relevant, what we are primarily concerned with is the consequences of arguments, and based on this, we identify virtues and vices.

Let us agree on knowledge in the case of virtue as gaining and sharing true beliefs that help change a socio-political system to be more just. In the case of vice, let us agree on ill-knowledge as making, holding, and sharing false beliefs that prevent a socio-political system from changing to become a more just system. So, to put it simply, we judge the vice or virtue of an arguer by what they help create or what they prevent from happening. Hence, we judge the vices and virtues of an arguer by the consequences of their arguments. As will be apparent in the coming sections, this consequentialist account is more helpful in identifying vice and virtues of extremism than the Aristotelian doctrine of the mean, which is the cornerstone of virtue argumentation theory, virtue, and vice epistemology. This consequentialist approach makes more sense when we consider socio-political changes and the role of extremism in these changes. To test the consequentialist approach, I will provide an argumentative analysis of the suffrage movement, the abolitionist movement, and the anti-colonialism struggle later. Moreover, to elaborate further on the consequentialist approach, I will briefly talk about some argumentative features of three key figures that have already been mentioned many times in this dissertation: Martin Luther King Jr., Donald Trump, and Abubakir Al-Baghdadi.

In studying extremism, one approach that has similarities to the consequentialist is the neutral contextual approach. The consequentialist approach has similarities to what Ian Kidd



(2021) calls “normative contextualism.” In explaining normative contextualism, Battaly writes, “This approach conceives of fanaticism and extremism as normatively neutral dispositions—it aims to propose descriptive rather than evaluative concepts of these phenomena” (Battaly, 2023, p. 1). My aim, however, is to judge extremism normatively: extremist vices are bad, and extremist virtues are good; the consequentialist approach, even though it has a dimension of description, ends with a normative evaluation of extremism. Battaly rightly challenges Cassam by arguing, “The decisive normative question isn’t whether or not an agent is a fanatic [or extremist]; it is whether or not the *object* of an agent’s fanaticism is valuable” (Battaly, 2023, p. 2, emphasis in the original). In the language of the consequentialist account, the primary question is not whether X has an extremist mindset or uses an extremist method, but rather the end goal; the consequences of X’s extremism are making society more just inclusively (the arguer, the audience, even the opponent). Another useful perspective Battaly provides for the consequentialist approach is what she calls “liberatory virtues.” “For a disposition to be a liberatory virtue, it must have liberatory content: the agent must be aware of oppression, and must be motivated to resist it” (Battaly, 2023, p. 19). On the other hand, for “a disposition to be a liberatory vice, it must be partly constituted by motives to restrict the freedom of others, deny them respect, or maintain one’s privilege” (Battaly, 2023, p. 20). When we apply consequentialism to extremism in the case of women’s suffrage and abolitionism, we can see that what looks like vice in virtue argumentation and vice epistemology are actually virtues because they are liberatory virtues.

There is another point of similarity in the role of character between the consequentialist and neutral contextual accounts. If the motivation of extremists is to make a society more just,

then “these motivations and values are good ones,” and they constitute “liberatory virtues” (Battaly, 2023, p. 19). These virtues “will have something in common with character virtues: both kinds of virtue will be partly constituted by good motivations and values, though liberatory virtues will be constituted by good motivations and values of a specifically liberatory sort” (ibid). So, for extremism to be a liberatory virtue, an extremist arguer must have good motivation to make a society more just, and these motivations should be reflected in one’s arguments. This means that to have a liberatory virtue, it is not enough to know what is unjust; one has to be able to argue against it and engage in argumentation to help bring about what is more just. In this sense, extremist argumentation is potentially a liberatory virtue because activism is inherent to extremism: extremist people are loud and action-orientated arguers. So, if they happen to be arguing for a more just outcome, they must have liberatory virtue (see part three).

Despite the fundamental similarities between these two theoretical approaches, they are not identical. The fundamental criterion for the consequential account is whether extremist agents actually moved society a step toward a more just. The neutral contextual approach focuses on the goal, not the result. The consequentialist is an evaluative framework to judge the consequences of extremism as bad or good normatively; however, the neutral contextual account is descriptive rather than evaluative. Another difference between them is that the consequentialist account is sensitive to the typology of extremism, but the neutral contextual account does not have this level of sophistication. However, it acknowledges the possibility of a positive outcome of extremism. Having said that, what they have in common is more important than their differences. I also share the aim of Heather Battaly in studying extremism when she writes (Battaly, 2023, p. 2):

Ultimately, my hope is that this approach might be a resource for liberatory struggles.

Persons in power sometimes denounce acts of resistance as ‘fanatical’ [or extremist] in a twisted effort to ‘justify’ further repression.

Based on these remarks, we can talk more precisely about virtue and vice in the context of extremism, as I suggested in the introduction:

1- X is a liberatory virtuous character trait that, if X affects one’s argumentation style, will tend to align one’s argumentation with spreading true beliefs to overturn an unjust status quo.

2- X is a liberatory vicious character trait that, if X affects one’s argumentation style, will tend to align one’s argumentation with spreading false beliefs to maintain an unjust status quo.

Because agents will necessarily engage in argumentation to make a case for change or against change, then liberatory virtuous or vicious character traits necessarily have argumentative dimensions. So, now, we are in a better place to identify what vices and virtues an extremist arguers would possess. However, I am not claiming that virtue argumentation, virtue and vice epistemology are no longer helpful. In the case of negative extremism, such as unjustified violent extremism, they are useful. However, in the case of positive extremism, such as critical and uncritical civil extremism, the consequentialist account is better to help us identify the liberatory virtues of extremism. The main reason we need a consequentialist account along with other theoretical frameworks is that in the case of positive extremism, the Aristotelian mean doctrine is violated, yet extremism results in a more just society. To make sense of this, the

consequentialist approach helps us to be mindful of the shortcomings of other theories. It also helps us to understand why extremism is sometimes needed for socio-political changes.

#### **5.4 Identifying Vices and Virtues of Extremism**

Having briefly introduced virtue argumentation theory, vice epistemology, and a consequentialist approach, let us examine extremism to identify its vices and virtues. The thesis that I defend throughout this part is that the most accurate way to judge vices and virtues of extremism is a consequentialist approach, meaning among ways of thinking, ways of acting, goals and consequences of action, we should put more weight on the last one to identify vices and virtues of extremism.

This part has three sections. In section one, I will mainly focus on the vices of extremism. In this section, I will use virtue argumentation, vice, and virtue epistemology more than the consequentialist account. This is because they have a better analytical power in explaining unjustified violent extremism. In the second and third sections, I will focus on the virtues of extremism by focusing on three extremist movements: suffragist, abolitionist, and anti-colonialist struggles. In the fourth section, I will focus on the argumentation style of King, Trump, and Baghdadi to further examine the explanatory capacity of the consequentialist approach.

##### **5.4.1 Identifying Vices of Extremism**

Cassam's work on extremism and the vice epistemology of extremism draws much attention. Here, I will engage in a discussion with him. He rightly identifies many vices of extremism. However, where I disagree with him is that in his approach extremism is necessarily negative; therefore, there cannot be any virtues associated with extremism. I think the primary reason for this epistemic blind spot is his selection of cases. He writes: "It should be conceded, however,

that the extremist individuals, groups and organizations on which I have based my account – anti-Rohingya extremists in Myanmar, the Khmer Rouge, Anders Breivik and ISIS - are *all violent*” (Cassam, 2022b, p. 180, emphasize added). This note is important because it implicitly opens the possibility of virtues of non-violent extremism. However, after considering possible virtues of extremism, he concludes that "extremism is a vice" (Cassam, 2022b, p. 184). It can be argued that Cassam here is guilty of the argumentational vice of ignoring salient facts, which falls under the subcategory of insensitivity to details. He is ignoring two possibilities of extremism: civil extremism and justified violent extremism. My fundamental difference with Cassam is this: not all extremism is necessarily violent and vicious.

Cassam identifies two key features of an extremist mindset: persecution and purity. A persecution mindset is a victimhood mindset which calls for extreme measurement. Cassam writes:

Nazi propaganda made much of the threat to Germany posed by a supposed Jewish world conspiracy, and there are many other examples of extremists with lurid fantasies of victimization and persecution. Anders Breivik justified the killing of 77 people in Norway in 2011 partly on the grounds that Islam threatened Christian civilization. The threat of subordination to Islam is also a part of the mindset of Buddhist extremists in Myanmar, and many Muslim extremists see Islam as threatened by the ‘Crusader’ West. (2022b, pp. 175-176).

I agree with Cassam; extremists sometimes have a skewed and exaggerated view of the threat of those they disagree with. I also agree that an exaggerated sense of victimhood with a sense of purity, which can “take many different forms: racial or ethnic, religious, ideological, and

so on,” can produce deadly outcomes. I disagree that all extremism shares these mindset features because these mindsets, as the examples Cassam uses, all fall under the category of unjustified violent extremism. Clearly, we have argumentational and epistemic vices here (I am using them interchangeably). However, before identifying those vices, it is helpful to ask why extremists (more accurately, unjustified violent extremism UVE) have these epistemic vices. Russel Hardin (2002) uses ‘paranoid cognition’ and ‘sinister attribution’ to explain what he calls the ‘crippled epistemology’ of extremism that I believe is applicable here. Hardin writes:

Isolation of people in a group with relatively limited contact with the larger society generates paranoid cognition, in which individuals begin to suppose the worst from those they do not know or even from those with whom they are not immediately in communication. They therefore attribute unduly personalistic motivations to others and become increasingly distrustful of those others (2002, p. 11).

If we suppose that these epistemic features, victimhood, and purity mentality “may primarily be simple matters of the skewed epistemology that comes from lack of contact with and, hence, lack of accurate knowledge of relevant others,” then, we will be in a better position to identify argumentational vice and virtue. For example, any argumentation vice that hinders gaining knowledge on those with whom we disagree becomes relevant here. Moreover, I think the first two classes of argumentational vices are clearly relevant: unwillingness to engage in argumentation and unwillingness to listen to others. The first class includes these vices: being uncommunicative, mistrust of reason, intellectual cowardice, and dereliction of duty. The vices that fall under unwillingness to listen to others are intellectual callousness, indifference to persons, problems, and theories (See Aberdein’s second table). In short, we can imagine that if

members of unjustified violent extremism were able to engage in argumentation with their opponents to whom they attribute sinister features and if they were willing to listen to their arguments, they would not have developed a paranoid cognition. Moreover, they would not have justified and engaged in racial, ethnic, and religious cleansing for the sake of their racial, ethnic, and religious purity. Maybe inter-group argumentation would have taught them that their opponents were not as impure as they thought, and they themselves were not as pure as they had thought.

Sometimes, we need an argumentative mirror; those we disagree with could provide a more useful argumentative mirror than those we already agree with. I am not claiming that argumentation virtues and vices can solely explain a complex phenomenon like violent extremism; I am well aware of non-argumentative factors, as I have discussed them in chapter three in the context of Salafi-Jihadism. However, what I am suggesting is, given the factors mentioned by Cassam and Hardin, argumentation virtues can play a role in gaining a more comprehensive knowledge of those we disagree with, thus preventing the development of a crippled epistemology which justifies their cleansing. Thus, argumentational virtues might be a factor that prevents civil extremism from degenerating into unjustified violent extremism. As discussed in the previous sections, we should remember that gaining and sharing reasonable or true beliefs are the goals of argumentational virtue and virtue epistemology. So, unless persecution, a purity mindset, a paranoid cognition, and a sinister attribution are indeed true or reasonable epistemologically, they must, at least partially, be caused by epistemic vices and lack of argumentation virtues. As a result of the first two clusters of vices, then we can imagine that unjustified violent extremists would also be guilty of the last two clusters of vices: unwillingness

to modify one's position and unwillingness to question the obvious, which includes intellectual arrogance, intellectual intransigence, gullibility, intellectual single-mindedness, obsessiveness, and others (see the Table two).

Another epistemic vice that Cassam rightly identifies is the absence of self-doubt. He writes, "The extremist is totally convinced of the correctness of his principles even though, objectively speaking, there is plenty of room for doubt. [...] The extremist is not only doubt-free in relation to his doctrinal commitments but also in relation to his own grasp of the truth. It is not just doubt that he lacks, but *self-doubt*" (Cassam, 2022b, p. 177). A similar vice is identified as an epistemic feature of uncritical thinkers by Vincent Ruggurio in his book *Beyond Feelings: A Guide to Critical Thinking*. He writes that an egocentric person asks, "What incentive is there to learn when one already knows everything worth knowing? For that matter, why bother with the laborious task of investigating controversial issues, poring over expert testimony, and evaluating evidence when one's own opinion is the final, infallible arbiter?" (Ruggiero, 2012, p. 96). The danger of egocentric thinking is greater when individual egocentrics unite and form a cult-like group in which they all follow agreed-upon certain ideas and take them as self-evident.

Before explaining what specific argumentational vices are most relevant here, we should remember that extremists are not necessarily guilty of this vice. It is worth remembering that in chapter one and two, we have identified critical extremism as a subtype of civil extremism in which critical extremists are willing to entertain counterarguments. We also provided the example of a philosopher who argues against animal cruelty as a case of critical civil extremism. I think it is also plausible that towering figures like Martin Luther King Jr. and Nelson Mandela were, despite their extremism, able to consider arguments from their adversaries. They were open-



minded to the degree of engaging in public argumentation with their opponents. It is worth mentioning, however, that they were close-minded about the illegitimacy of the ideas they were fighting against: racism and apartheid, which were objectively wrong. However, this observation should not make us overlook Cassam's argument, but we should be mindful not to over-generalize it. The absence of self-doubt or egocentric thinking is an epistemic feature of violent extremism and uncritical civil extremism. For example, in my analysis of Salafi-jihadism, I explained Salafi-jihadist thinking patterns through religious logic. In religious logic, several claims are taken for granted, and no doubt whatsoever is permitted about them. For example, claims like the existence of God, hell, heaven, the absolute justifiability of killing unbelievers, and the duty of becoming jihadi as a way to enter heaven. A Salafi jihadi not only kills but kills with absolute certainty because he lacks self-doubt.

Now, let us ask, what argumentation vices are most relevant to epistemic vices of the absence of self-doubt? I think in relation to unjustified violent extremism, such as ISIS, the list contains, above all, violating the minimum principle, which I already explained, is the gravest vice since, without this principle, public argumentation is impossible. Another vice is misplaced zeal, which Aberdein classifies under intellectual rashness. If one is absolutely sure about X, one is more likely to feel passionate about X. Clearly, ISIS members are zealous people, but zealousness in itself is not a vice; it can even be an ethical, epistemic and argumentational virtue if the end goal is just. Key figures against racism, such as King Jr., were zealous arguers. The problem with ISIS members is that they are zealous about ideas that lead to genocide, as happened in the case of the Yazide people (see chapter three). Other argumentation vices that are relevant to the absence of self-doubt would be argumentational vices that fall under the categories of deaf

dogmatist and agenda pusher, such as intellectual callousness (indifference to person), narrow-mindedness, intellectual arrogance and more.

As a result of misplaced zeal and being a deaf dogmatist, those extremists are not concerned about the result of their thinking and actions as long as they fit what they believe in a doubt-free fashion. For example, ISIS committed all sorts of crimes, such as slavery, beheading and setting people on fire in public places. They glorified those actions by producing video clips about them and sharing them online. So, some extremists are not just doubt-free about the result of their crimes, but they celebrate it. “Extremism takes a political idea to its limits, ‘regardless of unfortunate repercussions, impracticalities, arguments, and feelings to the contrary, and with the intention not only to confront but to eliminate opposition” (Scruton 2007, as quoted by Cassam, 2022b, p. 177). Leaders of unjustified violent extremism, such as Baghdadi and other Salafist leaders are guilty of producing an army of barbaric killers who are hypnotized by what they believed. What they believed is explainable through religious logic (see chapter three).

What argument scheme can help us make a better sense of the thinking pattern of a murderous ideology such as ISIS? In chapter two, I suggested a scheme based on social identity theory that can help answer this question. The scheme is the following:

Premise 1: Our group (in-group) differs from their group (out-group).

Premise 2: Out-group (their group) is an existential threat to our group (in-group).

Premise 3: Our group (in-group) has a legitimate right to defend itself from their group (out-group).

Premise 4: Violence is the best strategy (or the only effective strategy) to defend our group.

Conclusion: Therefore, using violence (terror, for example) by our group (in-group) against their group (out-group) is legitimate.

If we translate the thinking pattern of Salaf-Jihadism extremism, such as ISIS, into this scheme, then we will have something like the following:

Premise 1: Our group (true Muslims: advocators and fighters of Caliphate) is different from their group (non-believers and Muslims who do not subscribe to the Salafi-jihadism reading of Islam)

Premise 2: non-believers and Muslims who do not subscribe to the Salafi-jihadism reading of Islam are an existential threat to our group (true Muslims).

Premise 3: Our group (true Muslims) has a legitimate right to defend itself from their group (non-believers and Muslims who do not subscribe to the Salafi-jihadism reading of Islam).

Premise 4: The best strategy to do our duty (or the only effective strategy) to defend our group against non-believers is violence (holy war: jihad).

Conclusion: Therefore, using violence (ethnic cleansing of Yazidi males and enslaving women, for example) by our group (true believers of Allah) against their group (non-believers such as Yazidis) is legitimate.

Of course, ISIS is just an example here; this scheme is relevant to all unjustified violent extremism, whether religious or irreligious. This is how Nazis thought about Jews, which led to the Holocaust (see chapter two), and this is how “Buddhist extremists in Myanmar see the Rohingya.” (Cassam, 2022b, p. 178). So, it is reasonable to conclude that argumentational vices that are relevant to all unjustified violent extremism are, above all, what I call the gravest vice:

violation of the minimum principle. However, argumentation is still relevant in unjustified violent extremism in relation to the members who subscribe to that extremism. As explained in chapter three, Baghdadi used argumentation, employing religious logic, to make a compelling case for thousands of Muslims around the world to immigrate to Iraq and Syria and join ISIS. So, the minimum principle is violated against what ISIS considers other groups, not towards their own members. This is not to say that members of ISIS did not use violence against each other at times. However, as far as the persuasion process concerned to bring people around the world to ISIS, argumentation was the primary mechanism at hand.

If we apply the consequentialist approach to these examples of unjustified violent extremism, the critical question is: What consequence did extremist arguers help achieve? Clearly, in all cases, extremist arguments were examples of oppression. Thus, regardless of their mindset, method, and argumentative style, they were vicious arguers. As suggested in the previous section, the consequentialist account is better suited to evaluate positive extremism cases. However, even in the cases of negative extremism, we cannot overlook the importance of the consequences of extremists. The primary reason why their thinking patterns and argumentation vices such as sinister attribution, absence of self-doubt, arrogance, misplaced zeal, and others are problematic is not because they violate the Aristotelian mean, but because of the tragedies, they brought on societies.

#### **5.4.2 Virtues of Extremism**

Now, let us consider possible argumentational virtues and examine the claim that in assessing epistemic vices and virtues of extremism, especially in the cases of civil extremism, above all, we

should consider the consequences of argumentation, not the pattern of the thinking or utilized methods.

In the following three sections, I will examine three cases of civil extremism and one case of justified violent extremism. The civil extremism cases are from the suffragist movement and the anti-slavery movement. I will study a violent anti-colonial struggle as a case of justified violent extremism.

Right from the beginning, if we accept that argumentational virtues and virtue epistemology are indeed about gaining and sharing knowledge, true or reasonable beliefs, and if we believe that main advocators against sexism and racism, were indeed had and shared knowledge, true or reasonable beliefs, then what it follows is that extremism must have some argumentational and epistemic virtues. For a simple reason: both abolitionism and suffragism were extremist movements in the sense of radically challenging and changing the sexist and racist status quo. By the criterion we developed before, X is a liberatory virtuous character trait that, if X affects one's argumentation style, will tend to align one's argumentation with spreading true beliefs to overturn an unjust status quo.

Both of these movements had made societies more just towards black people and women. Thus, those arguments presented by activists were necessarily virtuous. This overall observation allows us to approach extremist virtues with a virtue: open-mindedness.

Before looking at the cases, it is important to provide some clarifications. My claim here is not that these actors we examine were the only actors who brought the changes or that their arguments were immediately influential in changing a sexist and racist status quo. No, argumentation in the context of extremist social movements does not work like that. Sometimes,

it takes generations for what once was considered extremist to be accepted as a status quo.<sup>45</sup> However, the slow work of argumentation does not mean argumentation did not play a role. Extremist arguers, such as abolitionists and suffragists, were arguing for radical changes which threatened those who benefited from the racist and sexist status quo. Thus, they received all sorts of pushback. However, extremists' persistence in arguing for a just society where racism and sexism are no longer the status quo, as we can see now, has been eventually fruitful. This broad perspective is needed to appreciate the virtues of extremism fully.

### **5.4.3 The Case of Nellie McClung**

In the case of the women's suffragist movement, there are many examples, but I will limit my focus to two cases: one Canadian and one American. Nellie McClung (1873-1951) is a Canadian case at hand. McClung was a "writer, feminist, and politician. She was one of five women involved in the so-called 'Persons Case,' which opposed the judgment of the Supreme Court of Canada that women were not "qualified persons" and thus were not able to sit in the Canadian Senate" (Tindale, p. 2, forthcoming b). So, the logic of women's exclusion was the following: since only persons can vote, and women are not persons, therefore, they cannot vote. These epistemic positions, which are now ridiculous, were considered logical and rational and dominated how social-political roles between sexes were distributed. Historical examples of extremism's positive contribution to human development encourage us to re-examine the potential benefits of extremism from a radically new perspective.

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<sup>45</sup> When an extremist idea becomes a status quo, it is no longer extremist in that context because as Whately (2010) writes: "There is presumption in favour of every existing institution. Many of these [...] may be susceptible of alteration for the better; but still the "burden of proof" lies with him who proposes an alternation; simply on the ground that since a change is not a good in itself, he who demands a change should show cause for it." (p. 114)

In response to a Premier of Manitoba's claim, Rodmond Roblin, in 1914, that "I believe woman suffrage would break up the home and send women to mix up in political meetings," McClung, in her own ways, argues against men having the right to vote on the same grounds that the Premier had objected to women having it:

Man was made for something higher and holier than voting. Men were made to support families and homes which are the bulwark of the nation. What is home without a father? What is home without a bank account? The man who pays the grocer rules the world. In this agricultural province, man's place is the farm. Shall I call men away from the useful plough and the necessary harrow to talk loud on street corners about things which do not concern them? Shall I cheat the farm by turning honest ploughmen into dishonest and scheming politicians? I tell you no, for I was born on the farm and I am not ashamed to say so—the farm, the farm, the dear, old farm—we'll never mortgage the farm. (<https://greatcanadianspeeches.ca/2017/04/20/nellie-mcclung/> Accessed August 21, 2023.)

McClung here is not directly arguing for women's rights, even though that is her final goal. Instead, she uses the same logic of those who argue against women's right to vote, such as Premier Rodmond Roblin, and uses it to show that men also should not have entered politics. So, she cunningly argues that by the same logic that women should not enter politics, men also should not. However, men are already practicing politics, so to say the least, Premier and others should present other arguments so as not to look contradictory and shallow. Here according to Tindale (2023), the primary argumentative strategy that McClung has used is the peritrope:

She turns her opponent's arguments back upon him. Whatever Roblin had assigned to women, she switched to men. The breakup of the home that would follow should women enter politics is attributed here to men. Just as Roblin sees the home dependent on the presence and commitment of women, so McClung seen the home—and particularly the farm home—dependent on the presence and commitment of men. On such terms, neither women nor men can be spared for political activity. The contrast is stark. It seems unthinkable to make such claims about men, and by the same turn it should be unthinkable to say this about women (Tindale, p. 2, forthcoming b).

McClung thus puts Roblin and those who thought like him into a corner. Her rhetorical skills suggest that argumentation has a role in changing minds and arguing for changing the status quo. The Premier has to agree with her that neither men nor women should practice politics. Thus, he himself should go home or allow women to practice politics on the same grounds that men practice politics. Of course, socio-political changes, let alone extremist changes, are not that straightforward. However, regardless of how slow and painful changes are, we cannot disregard the power of those arguments that show the injustice of a status quo and present good reasons to make it just or at least less unjust. Extremism, with its activist spirit, is worth applauding here.

Later on, commenting on another argument in her piece "A New Chivalry," Tindale (forthcoming b) identifies the strategy of dissociation, which is introduced by Chaim Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969) as a way to modify reality. In response to Roblin's arguments that it would be unchivalrous to allow women to vote because it would introduce women into the corrupt world of politics, she responded by giving a new meaning to Chivalry. She disassociates chivalry from the term's traditional meaning, which presents women as in need of



protection from chivalrous men. She gives it a new meaning: giving women what they need to defend themselves, such as the right to vote and enter politics. Chivalry is not about defending women but giving them the political tools to defend themselves. She writes:

One of the oldest and falsest of our beliefs regarding women is that they are protected – that some way in the battle of life they get the best of it. People talk of men's chivalry, that vague, indefinite quality which is supposed to transmute the common clay of life into gold. "The truly chivalrous man, who does reverence all womankind, realizing this, says: "Let us give women every weapon whereby they can defend themselves; let us remove the stigma of political nonentity under which women have been placed. Let us give women a fair deal!" This is the new chivalry – and on it we build our hope. (McClung 1915, Chapter V).

If men keep women at home not because they want but because it is in women's interest, then keeping them at home is honourable and "chivalrous." Of course, this narrative must have worked for centuries, convincing women it is in their self-interest to stay at home. This line of reasoning is powerful because then oppressed people do not even know they are oppressed; even oppressors do not know they are oppressed; they had just been chivalrous. By disassociating chivalry from the traditional meaning of the term and by giving it new meaning, McClung here undermines the power of arguing against women's right to vote by men on the grounds of chivalry. With this new meaning of chivalry, men cannot argue for keeping women at home yet keeping their images as noblemen. Nobility then requires men, in McClung's words, to say, "Let us give women every weapon whereby they can defend themselves." So, now, chivalry has two meanings. In Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca's words, Type One, and Type Two (Perelman &

Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969). Type one is the old meaning, it would be unchivalrous to allow women to enter politics, yet in the type two meaning, it would be unchivalrous if you do not allow women to enter politics. It takes time for type two to gain adherence as more important value in value hierarchy, but introducing the type two meaning is, to say the least, the first important step.

McClung's argumentation in the suffragist movement captured the attention of other scholars. Janice Fiamengo writes on her overall argumentation style: "Using language with which her audience was intimately familiar, she adroitly freshened and reshaped it, revitalizing clichés, redefining overused words, and enlivening standard phrases with her wit, humour and command of anecdote. This strategy, which is evident in her speeches and particularly so in her essay collection, was brilliant in its simplicity" (2008, p. 194).

One lesson that we can draw from Fiamengo's observation is that knowing your audience is fundamental for a successful argumentation. Even though in the quotations we examined, McClung's direct audience is politicians, she speaks to a larger audience, the general public. Thus, gaining support from the public by using a language that is familiar and simple was a smart rhetorical strategy. Moreover, although she argues about a serious topic, her witty and humorous style makes her an enjoyable read. However, as we saw, under this simplicity, she is criticizing the reasons that her opponents provide for maintaining an unjust status quo in which women were deprived of their fundamental political right: the right to vote. Thus, we can say McClung was a very effective arguer rhetorically speaking because, above all, she considered her audience in her arguments not just by encouraging them to consider her arguments but by considering them while they enjoy doing that.

My focus here is not on examining all of McClung's argumentative strategies but just providing enough material so that we can identify her argumentational virtues and vices. Let us look at the subject from the consequentialist approach. The answer is categorically positive: the consequences of suffragists' argumentation, such as Nellie McClung, were positive because they helped gaining the suffrage right to women and other democratic changes that suffragist movements brought. Thus, from this perspective, her argumentation was virtuous. We should remember that the key criterion for virtue argumentation and virtue epistemology is gaining and sharing knowledge or true beliefs. So, unless we prove that depriving women of, for example, the right to vote is better than respecting their rights, there is no way to question the virtuous nature of suffragist argumentation on the consequentialist account.

Now, let us be more specific and briefly identify particular argumentational virtues. Judging from Aberdeen's list, McClung was a virtuous arguer on many fronts. Above all, she was willing to engage in argumentation, which means she has these virtues: being communicative, faith in reason, intellectual courage, and a sense of duty. Even though all these virtues played a role in her argumentation, intellectual courage and a sense of duty were arguably the most important. Extremism, especially unjustified violent extremism, can be guilty of many vices, but what cannot be denied is that extremist arguers, regardless of their types, are courageous and have a sense of duty. Behind the success of any extremist movement, these two virtues always play an important role because they make extremist people willing to fight, violently or peacefully, for their extremist ideas. If McClung and other feminists were cowards, which is a vice, and had not spoken up, women's roles in society might be different now.

We can identify other virtues based on the rhetorical strategies that Tindale (forthcoming b) and others identified in her argumentation. Above all, she had insight into persons, problems, and theories. Without insight into the problems of sexism and theoretical and practical knowledge of what to do about it, she would not even have started to speak up against it. However, what is more interesting is her insight into persons. Persons here means the audience of her arguments. A direct audience was people in power, but her indirect audience was much broader: Anyone who founded her reasoning of why women are also persons and worthy of voting at some time became her indirect audience. The fact that she played a role in achieving women's right to vote proves her arguments were effective, proving that she has insight into her audience.

Much more can be said about her argumentation virtues, but now I examine some of her argumentation vices that become virtues once we judge them from the consequentialist approach. Above all, she and other feminists were close-minded in relation to their extremist standpoints: Women are persons and, thus, have the right to vote. I am aware that an argument can be put forward about their open-mindedness regarding being open to new ideas such as suffragist rights for women. However, once they were convinced of the legitimacy of women's right to vote, they became closed-minded about it.<sup>46</sup> They were not ready to give up this position, and the fact that they were finally able to change the status quo was mainly because of their

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<sup>46</sup> Closed-mindedness could have two meanings: not being able or willing to consider counterarguments and not engaging in perspective changing by giving up one's perspective. When I say some extremist arguers were close-minded, I mean the latter: they were not willing to give up their anti-status quo perspective. If the ability to perspective-changing is a necessary condition of open-mindedness, then the lack of this ability is a necessary condition of closed-mindedness. In this sense, their closed-mindedness made them steadfast in their anti-status quo extremist belief.

unwillingness to change their mind about women's equality. They were also guilty of violating virtues such as respecting common sense. The common sense in a sexist society was that women's role is within the household, yet because of being extremists, suffragists were arguing against the sexist common sense. However, was their close-mindedness vicious, or was their rejecting of common sense vicious? Aristotelian doctrine of mean is not very helpful here because we may end up judging suffragists as dogmatic and close-minded, therefore vicious arguers. Yet, judging from the consequentialist account, our criterion is different: X is a liberatory virtuous character trait that, if X affects one's argumentation style, will tend to align one's argumentation with spreading true beliefs to overturn an unjust status quo.

In their unshaken belief in women's equality, McClung and other suffragists embodied liberatory virtue, which led to a more just society. So, the argumentation vices of extremists are liberatory virtuous when the end goal of an extremist is just. Let us move to another interesting suffragist case: Elizabeth Cady Stanton.

#### **5.4.4 The Case of Elizabeth Cady Stanton**

Let us consider the background of Elizabeth Cady Stanton's (1815-1902) case. Stanton was part of the first women's rights convention. She advocated for several reform movements: women's rights and the abolition of slavery (Tetrault, 2014). In the "Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions" that Stanton wrote, because of her extremist demands, she surprised some of the members of the movement by arguing, "He [the man] has never permitted her to exercise her *inalienable right* to the elective franchise" (Goodwin & Innocenti, 2019, p. 673, emphasize added). This bold statement about the right to vote as an inalienable right made people like Lucretia Mott, who was co-organizer and a Quaker minister, say, "Oh Lizzie! If thou demands that,

thou will make us ridiculous!” (ibid). Considering the historical context, we see the extremity of Stanton’s demand even more. The dominant viewpoint about the roles of women in society was such that “the Declaration of Sentiments was widely characterized as “impracticable, absurd,... ridiculous...excessively silly...[and] unnatural” (McMillen 2008, as quoted in Goodwin & Innocenti 2019, P. 673). To fully appreciate Stanton’s arguments as extremist, we need to proceed with this quote in mind. Without remembering how normal it was for women to be subjugated by men, we will underestimate her and other suffragists' contributions. Thus, we will fail to see the beneficial contribution of extremism. It is useful for us as readers to entertain a possibility. Let us imagine for a minute that we would argue against, whatever it might be, that by a society's secular and religious laws would be considered normal and natural. How brave and committed must we be to do so? How “extremist” we would appear in the eyes of the rest of society who accept the status quo wholeheartedly. This short exercise will help us better appreciate the arguments of extremist arguers discussed in this chapter.

Stanton’s argumentation strategy differs from McClung's, even though the end goal was the same: women’s right to vote. McClung’s argumentation is more witty, fun, and sarcastic. Stanton is a serious arguer. Her focus is mainly on the content of her arguments rather than the rhetorical richness. In the Aristotelian sense, roughly speaking, McClung employs pathos, but Stanton uses logos. The end goal, however, for both was to have an ethotic impact: to prove the credibility of women as rational beings worthy of the right to vote. Stanton’s arguments “displayed cogent reasons” for believing—that women are not inferior to men, that women have the same civil rights as men, and more” (Goodwin & Innocenti, 2019, p. 673). Among other strategies, McClung used stories to expose a greater audience to her ideas; for example, she used

a popular fictional character, Pearlie Watson, in her novel *Purple Springs* to promote her views. However, in the case of Stanton, rather than storytelling, she followed principles of cogency and clarity to make it apparent to everyone that she was a reason-giving arguer and that she was rational because she makes rational arguments (Goodwin & Innocenti, 2019).

I will not present all her arguments, just enough to get a sense of her extremist mindset. She begins by commenting on the equality of men and women in a religious context. This is to say, by virtue of being created by God, both men and women have *certain inalienable rights*, which, if they were violated, then those whose rights are violated have the right, even duty, to push back and fight for their rights. The gap between thought and action, which usually occupies non-extremists' arguments, does not exist in Stanton's extremist arguments. She is not just arguing for the rights of women to vote as an inalienable right; she also demands activism and action to achieve them. Extremist arguers are warm-blooded arguers, and sometimes rightly so. She writes:

We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men and women are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights governments are instituted, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. Whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of those who suffer from it to refuse allegiance to it, and to insist upon the institution of a new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to affect their safety and happiness. (Stanton, 1848).

Later, she shows how ridiculous it is to establish rights based on gender because then what happens is a situation in which all women are deprived of the rights which are “given to the most ignorant and degraded men.” She argues that the right to vote is the first and critical right because no one represents women and seeks their interests without it. Thus, women are “oppressed on all sides.” She goes on to argue that women are “civilly dead” in the case of marriage. She makes a case for the multidimensionality of women’s oppression:

He has taken from her all right in property, even to wages she earns. He has made her, morally, an irresponsible being, as she can commit many crimes with impunity, provided they can be done in the presence of her husband. He has endeavored, in every way that he could, to destroy her confidence in her own powers, to lessen her self-respect and to make her willing to lead a dependent and abject life. (Stanton, 1848).

After showing many reasons for how women are oppressed and how unreasonable those reasons are for their oppression, she demands many resolutions. Based on the proposition of “man [men and women] shall pursue his [her] own true and substantial happiness,” as the “law of Nature being coeval with mankind, and dictated by God himself [which] is of course superior in obligation to any other.” Among those resolutions are:

- Resolved, That all laws which prevent woman from occupying such a station in society as her conscience shall dictate, or which place her in a position inferior to that of man, are contrary to the great precept of nature, and therefore of no force or authority.
- Resolved, That woman is man's equal - was intended to be so by the Creator, and the highest good of the race demands that she should be recognized as such.



- Resolved, That the women of this country ought to be enlightened in regard to the laws under which they live, that they may no longer publish their degradation by declaring themselves satisfied with their present position, nor their ignorance, by asserting that they have all the rights they want.
- Resolved, That inasmuch as man, while claiming for himself intellectual superiority, does accord to woman moral superiority, it is pre-eminently his duty to encourage her to speak and teach, as she has an opportunity, in all religious assemblies.
- Resolved, That it is the duty of women of this country to secure to themselves their sacred right to the elective franchise. (Stanton, 1848).

Before returning to the question of the virtues and vices of Stanton's argumentation, it is helpful to ask if her arguments had any impact. Of course, there is no one way to answer this question. Here, I will draw on insights from Goodwin and Innocenti (2019) and Tindale (forthcoming b) on how and why her arguments were effective. According to Goodwin and Innocenti, Stanton's speech was not effective in convincing her audience of her reasons why women should have the right to vote. Yet she was successful in doing something else with her arguments, which said something positive about the identity of women: women are capable of rational argumentation. Thus, they are rational beings. Changing the perception of women's identity from irrational to rational in the long run played an essential role in women's suffragist struggle. In other words, Stanton's arguments were initially effective as argument<sub>1</sub>, not as argument<sub>2</sub>. Later, her arguments gained strength as argument<sub>2</sub>. To understand this, we need to briefly explain argument<sub>1</sub> and argument<sub>2</sub>.

Goodwin and Innocenti's normative pragmatic approach<sup>47</sup> to Stanton's speech draws on Daniel O'Keefe's (1982) distinction between arguments<sub>1</sub> and arguments<sub>2</sub>. According to O'Keefe (1982), there are few fundamental differences between them. When a speaker makes an argument that articulates "a promise, commands, apologies, warning, invitations, orders" (p.3) without engaging the listener, this would be an argument<sub>1</sub>. So, the form of argument<sub>1</sub> is monologue. However, when both the speaker and listener engage in exchanging arguments, then this would be argument<sub>2</sub>. So, argument<sub>2</sub> is dialogical in nature. Examples of argument<sub>2</sub> would be "bull sessions, heart-to-heart talks, quarrels, discussions" (p.3). More relevant here is the purpose of argument<sub>1</sub> and argument<sub>2</sub>, and how we assess them concerning achieving their purposes. According to O'Keefe (1982), "one speaks of argument<sub>1</sub> as being refuted, valid, or fallacious... while one speaks of argument<sub>2</sub> as coming to blows or being pointless or unproductive" (pp. 3-4). So, argument<sub>1</sub> is about an arguer making an argument as a premise-conclusion unit, but argument<sub>2</sub> is about arguers exchanging arguments. For normative pragmatics even if argument<sub>1</sub> fails to convince an audience of an argument's claim, it could still do something else. It tells something about the identity of an arguer, for example, in the case of logical argument<sub>1</sub>, then the intellectual identity of an arguer.

So, in the context of Stanton's argumentation, since women were considered irrational beings who were incapable of reasonable thinking, thus they should not have a say in matters of public affairs. In such a context, if women actually depicted themselves as rational beings by producing good arguments, then this would question the validity of the belief that women were

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<sup>47</sup> Normative Pragmatics is a member of the Argumentation Theory family. Normative Pragmatics examines argumentation as it operates in actual communicative acts and identifies the strategies adopted by the arguers involved.

irrational. Stanton's reason-based arguments did something. That something was not convincing politicians to grant the right to vote, at least not in the short term. That something was "the demonstrated ability that constituted the argumentative performance. By making reasons apparent, they prevented audiences from simply saying that as women they lacked reason" (Tindale, forthcoming b). In other words, even if argument<sub>1</sub> fails to achieve adherence to the main claim of an argument, it does something else, which is saying something about the character of the arguer; in the cases of women suffragism, argument<sub>1s</sub> said something positive about the character of women who argued for the right to vote: by virtue of making rational arguments, women are rational beings.

The technical term to explain the power of argument<sub>1</sub> in our case is enactment. Enactment, in a sense, is a unification of an arguer with her argument. It is the embodiment of the claim by the claimer. In enactment, "the speaker incarnates the argument, is the proof of the truth of what is said" (Campbell & Jamieson 1978 as quoted in Goodwin & Innocenti 2019, p. 674). Thus, in enactment, "the subject of one's discourse is rendered in the very form of that discourse" (Mendelson 1998, p. 38, quoted in Goodwin & Innocenti 2019, p. 674). So, Stanton "used argument<sub>1s</sub> to demonstrate—i.e., display, make visible, manifest, [make] apparent—that she had reason as well as emotion, a vision of affairs beyond the domestic sphere, the fortitude to stand up for her views and the voice to defend them" (Ibid). Goodwin and Innocenti, from the perspective of the normative pragmatics theory of argumentation, summarize what Stanton's argument<sub>1s</sub> achieved as the following: (2019, p. 674):

1. In her speech, Stanton made many argument<sub>1s</sub> in support of her claims for women's rights, and for suffrage in particular.

2. In light of the opposition the movement was already experiencing, it was unlikely that her audiences would seriously consider, much less be moved by, her demands for the vote.

3. Nevertheless, by making argument<sub>1s</sub>, Stanton accomplished something: she showed to her audiences that she, a woman, was a person capable of making argument<sub>1s</sub>.

The power of Stanton's arguments has a temporal dimension that Tindale argues is important yet not fully considered by Goodwin and Innocenti. He argues that the temporal dimension "shows the *indirect* power of argumentation at work: It is incremental change that eventually makes it difficult if not impossible to continue to think in previous terms, that modifies the values underlying ideas" (Tindale, p. 14, forthcoming b). Tindale's note is important to fully appreciate the virtues Stanton embodied. To fully appreciate the power of arguments in changing a status quo, we need to acknowledge the role of arguments in injecting the cognitive environment with new ideas, thus "providing indirect audiences with ideas that were not previously available to them in the same way. In addition to the direct influence, argumentation can have on direct audiences, there is the way in which argumentation "plants seeds" for future development" (Tindale, p. 14, forthcoming b). So, we can conclude that Stanton's arguments did more than changing women's identity from being seen as irrational and incapable of reasoning to a rational being who is capable of reasoning. Tindale's observations allow us to see the roles of arguments in suffrage movements beyond the immediate enactment role, because those arguments provide not just past but future audiences with reasons to support women's right to vote. For Goodwin and Innocenti, Stanton's argument<sub>1s</sub> made it *apparent* that women are rational arguers; for Tindale, her arguments made reason *available* for an indirect audience to

see the legitimacy of women's demand for the right to vote. Whether argument<sub>1</sub> makes reason apparent, makes reason available, or both, extremist arguers are a force of change. In our case, it is a force for good change.

We have enough material to return to our main question: What are Stanton's argumentative virtues and vices as an extremist arguer who argued for a radical change in women's role in society? In such a hostile status quo in which talking about women's right to vote was considered ridiculous, it is legitimate to ask what good, if any, Stanton's arguments did achieve. Historically, it took more than seven decades for women's right to vote to become the law of the land in the U.S. (Goodwin & Innocenti, 2019). So clearly, neither Stanton nor other activists in their time could change their opponent's mind about women's right to vote. Yet, argumentation plays a role in bringing about changes in minds and eventually in replacing a sexist status quo with a more or less gender-neutral status quo. Though the process was slow and painful for women, eventually, it yielded promising results. On this fact, I draw on the consequentialist approach to show that Stanton was a virtuous arguer. Again, let us be reminded of the criterion of virtuous arguer in the consequentialist approach: X is a liberatory virtuous character trait that, if X affects one's argumentation style, will tend to align one's argumentation with spreading true beliefs to overturn an unjust status quo. So, to make the story short, because she helped change a sexist society to a more inclusive and just one in which women can practice their political rights, such as voting, she was an extremist virtuous arguer. Let us further explore this conclusion.

Considering the hostility of the context and radicality of her demands, she must have been a courageous arguer, which is a virtue. This virtue is common among all extremist arguers.

However, since not all the consequences of extremism are such that it makes society more just, being a courageous arguer is not always virtuous. Again, virtue argumentation theory and virtue epistemology cannot explain this since their foundation is the Aristotelian doctrine of mean. For identifying whether arguing courageously for a just cause, like the right to vote, is a virtue or a vice, we should not ask about the degree of courageousness as the doctrine of mean encourages us. Instead, we should look at the consequences of arguing courageously. So, Stanton's vice or virtue in relation to her courageousness is not about the degree of courageousness; instead, it is fundamentally about the effect, the impact, in the short or long term, an extremist arguer would have on society. The fundamental question should be: Was she a force of good or bad? Was she arguing for a just cause or an unjust cause?

On the Aristotelian account, all those brave women, indeed all brave activists in other legitimate social movements, who suffered, even died, which is clearly excessive in braveness, for the success of the suffrage movement or other legitimate goals, were vicious arguers. This is not just wrong; it is also disrespectful. The consequentialist account will warn us not to be vicious in the name of being virtuous. We should remember that X is a liberatory vicious character trait that, if X affects one's argumentation style, will tend to align one's argumentation with spreading false beliefs to maintain an unjust status quo. Judging courageous arguers, regardless of their extremism in the just cause like suffragism, as vice would be a liberatory vice character trait.

The fact that Stanton engaged in public argumentation proves her faith in reason and sense of duty, which are argumentational virtues. Extremist arguers are passionate arguers and make change their duty. In a sense, we owe respect for extremist arguers' sense of duty, extremists like McClung and Stanton who translated their sense of duty into an argumentative

force for good changes. Stanton's sense of duty is fuelled by another virtue: insight into the problems. For us, it is evident that women and men are equally entitled to voting rights. In Stanton's time, it was obvious that women were not equal to men and, therefore, not entitled to suffrage rights. So, the fact that they were cognizant of women's oppression, despite their extremism, proves they were virtuous.

Now, let us move to a more interesting and controversial part of our discussion and see why some of Stanton's argumentative features were vicious on accounts of virtue argumentation yet virtuous on the consequentialist account. Under the category of willingness to listen to others, we find the virtue of "recognition of reliable authority." What were considered reliable authorities religiously and politically in a sexist society were simply in support of the domination of men over women. One aspect of that domination was depriving women of voting rights. We should remember that, as mentioned above, in her time, women's suffrage right was considered "impracticable, absurd,... ridiculous...excessively silly...[and] unnatural" (McMillen, 2008, as quoted in Goodwin & Innocenti, 2019, p. 673 ). So, in this context, we see why NOT recognizing a reliable authority is a virtue, not a vice. Reliable authorities then were in favour of women's subordination to men. Although sometimes not recognizing reliable authority is a mistake and a vice by extremist arguers, in the case of the suffragist movement, it is precisely because of not recognizing those who were in power, religiously, politically, and legally, that activists such as Stanton were able to move a society a step forward. Again, judging by the consequences of their defiance of the sexist authority, we can see why they were virtuous arguers. There were virtuous arguers not by standards of virtue argumentation because virtue argumentation considers not recognizing a reliable authority as a vice.

Another virtue that Stanton violates is respecting commonsense and respect for public opinion. Now we know what common sense was and what was considered public opinion at Stanton's time: it was natural for women to stay home and not have political rights, such as the right to vote. The public opinion was that women were emotional and were not fully human. Thus, they lacked the right to vote. According to virtue argumentation, Stanton would have been a virtuous arguer if she had argued within the boundaries of what was then common sense and public opinion. Of course, I am not arguing that virtue argumentation theorists *now* would accept Stanton's rejection of a then misogynistic status quo as vice. However, if we judge Stanton by past status quo, she would be a vicious arguer for not respecting common sense and public opinion. However, if we judge Stanton through the lens of the consequentialist approach, then, we must, rightly so, label her as a virtuous arguer because of what she helped achieve: a more just society where both men and women have the right to vote.

#### **5.4.5 Garrisonian Abolitionism**

Another interesting case of extremism in which we can find argumentation virtues that are liberatory in nature is the anti-racism movement, primarily what is known as Garrisonian Abolitionism.

The Garrisonian movement is named after William Lloyd Garrison (1805-1879). Garrison was a journalist and abolitionist who "opposed violence, [but] he did support the right of enslaved people to rebel" (Jirik, 2020). His significant contribution to abolitionism was *The Liberator* newspaper (1831-1865), an influential anti-slavery newspaper (BlackPast, 2011). Garrison was "the outspoken and uncompromising activist-editor whose newspaper dramatically signified a new and strikingly aggressive phase in American antislavery reform" (Kroh, 2009). A



complete account of Garrison and the Garrisonian contribution to the anti-slavery struggle cannot be sufficiently presented here. However, I will present some of Garrisonian's key perspectives as a movement and then some arguments presented by Garrison in his speech: *No Compromise with the Evil* (1854).

Garrisonian abolitionists were different from other abolitionists for their extremism in their immediate demand for the abolition of slavery. Several factors played a role in creating the Garrisonian movement as a distinctive abolitionist movement, such as:

Participants' emotional ties of loyalty and friendship to William Lloyd Garrison; their common belief that antislavery organizations should be fundamentally inclusive—regardless of individuals' views on society, religion, and politics—and should require of members only their devotion to *immediate emancipation*; and their collective allegiance to the government of God (as opposed to its human counterpart), which required direct obedience to divine law and merely submission, and disobedience when their consciences dictated, to its man-made analogue. (Kroh, 2009, emphasis added).

In addition to immediatism (demanding an immediate end to slavery), another feature of Garrisonianism was moral suasion as an argumentative strategy. Moral suasion was an argumentative strategy of persuasion directed to “white Americans’ sensibilities to see slavery as a sin and demanded immediate abolition... Moral suasion was most successful in expanding the movement’s constituency, mainly by converting northern white evangelicals to the cause” (Jirik, 2020). The role of moral suasion in anti-slavery is a clear example of extremist argumentation as a discourse for change through making anti-status quo reasons available in the markets of ideas. Avoiding sin was a priority in the way evangelicals lived their lives. So, if they

could be convinced of the sinful nature of slavery, it is expected that they would, to say the least, start questioning the legitimacy of slavery. Planting the seeds of doubt in the minds of religious slaveholders about the moral legitimacy of slavery through moral suasion was one of the crucial contributions of Garrisonians. “Indeed, moral suasion was the foundational tactic on which Garrisonians elaborated their extremist doctrines; in so doing, they greatly radicalized what was essentially an evangelical revivalist method designed to inspire religious rebirths” (Kroh, 2009). Of course, slavery had an economic base. However, we can imagine that for committed Christians, the more they were convinced of the sinful nature of slavery, the less they were concerned about the economic aspect of slavery. Moral suasion also had another crucial ideological role for Garrisonians because it filled “the theological void left by the denominations and the formal dogma they disclaimed.” Understandably, even Garrisonians were not born as Garrisonians. They were convinced at some point of the evil nature of slavery and the need for immediate abolitionism. Even though they faced all sorts of backlashes, their belief in the moral superiority of their case played an important role in fueling their struggle and not surrendering to the obstacles, no matter how serious they were.

Garrisonian Abolitionists were extremists because they “endorsed immediate emancipation, whereas Moderate abolitionists endorsed gradual emancipation” (Battaly, 2023, p.21). In Battaly’s approach, Garrisonian Abolitionists’ activism satisfies conditions of extremism and fanaticism. They were fanatics because “their motivations to abolish slavery trumped their other motivations, and they focused on, and acted in pursuit of, opportunities to abolish slavery at the expense of other things. Arguably, their motivations, perceptions, and actions also rose to the level of objective obsession” (Battaly, 2023, p. 21). Cassam’s observation on Garrison

illustrate my criterion of civil extremist because Garrison “aimed to change minds through rational argument, rather than eliminate minds through violence” (Cassam, as quoted in Battaly, 2023, p. 21). More specifically, I argue they were uncritical civil extremists as Battaly, in agreement with Cassam, writes:

I note that Cassam is *right* to characterize the Garrisonian Abolitionists as *unwilling* to revise their belief that slavery should be immediately abolished. This makes them *closed-minded*, but not viciously so [...]. In my view, closed-mindedness can be an effects-virtue for knowledgeable agents who find themselves in epistemically hostile environments. This presumably applies to the Garrisonian Abolitionists, whose closed-mindedness with respect to their beliefs about slavery produced a preponderance of good epistemic effects—it enabled them to preserve their true beliefs about the wrongness of slavery in the face of pervasive disagreement, which in turn contributed to the dissemination of their moral knowledge to others (Battaly, 2023, p. 22, emphasis added).

Moreover, Garrison himself also depicts his uncompromising mindset, which is a condition of uncritical extremism regarding the absolute wrongness of slavery and the immediate need to abolish it. He writes, “My fanaticism is that I insist on the American people abolishing slavery or ceasing to protect the rights of man. The abolitionism which I advocate is as absolute as the law of God, and as unyielding as his throne. It admits of no compromise.” Having a rough background of Garrisonian abolitionism, let us examine some arguments presented by Garrison himself in the speech *No Compromise with the Evil* (1854).

Starting with the title, we see the extremism of Garrison in two ways. First, he implies that those who are pro-slavery are “evils.” Therefore, there is no way they can have any legitimacy.

Second, which is the consequences of the first; therefore, no compromise with evil slaveholders is possible. The immediatism of Garrisonian is apparent here. The categorical claim of the speech is this: “By no precedent, no example, no law, no compact, no purchase, no bequest, no inheritance, no combination of circumstances, is slaveholding right or justifiable. Every slave is a stolen man; every slaveholder is a man stealer” (Garrison, 1854). So, absolutism and immediatism are central themes of the Garrisonian movement: slavery is absolutely evil, and it has to be ended immediately. It is as extreme as you can get when extremism is defined as challenging the status quo for the sake of radical change. When a status quo is that which slavery is accepted and justified, extremism is no less than demanding the eliminating of slavery immediately and framing it as an act of evil which has no legitimacy whatsoever. Because Garrisonians were mainly peaceful and used argumentation such as moral suasion against the sinful nature of slavery, then they are a perfect example of the category of civil extremism. If we want to be more precise, as I mentioned before and will become clearer later, Garrisonianism can be categorized as a case of uncritical civil extremism.

Returning to Garrison's speech, we see several interesting arguments for his extremist position. For example, he uses The Declaration of Independence document to support his abolitionist position in a way that for a crucial document such as the Declaration to be valid, abolitionism has to be valid, and for slavery to be legitimate, the Declaration has to be illegitimate. What follows is that either we abolish slavery and uphold the Constitution or keep slavery and disregard the Constitution. This dichotomous reasoning is powerful because of its clarity and consequences: it makes clear what the price of keeping slavery would be, which is abolishing the Declaration. He writes (Garrison, 1854):

I am a believer in that portion of the Declaration of American Independence in which it is set forth, as among self-evident truths, "that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." Hence, I am an abolitionist. [...] Convince me that one man may rightfully make another man his slave, and I will no longer subscribe to the Declaration of Independence. Convince me that liberty is not the inalienable birthright of every human being, of whatever complexion or clime, and I will give that instrument [the Declaration..] to the consuming fire. I do not know how to espouse freedom and slavery together.

Another argument he presents is situating the right to freedom in God himself. He argues that even if slavery has some practical merits, it cannot be accepted since it would be worshiping Mammon (the devil of greed and wealth) over God. Garrison knows that the majority rejects his extremist position, but he also believes he is righteous, and hopes one day, the majority will be on his side. Like any other extremist proposition, an extremist idea starts as a marginalized idea; then, as time passes, extremist ideas move closer to a status quo until they sometimes become a status quo in relation to other newly emerged extremist ideas. In a sense, extremism and status quo are in a dialectical relation: thesis (status quo) will be replaced by anti-thesis (extremism). Considering the task's difficulty, extremist agents have, among others, a passionate spirit and a fixed mindset that are needed to finally overcome heavy pushbacks from those served by a status quo. Garrison was a passionate abolitionist arguer with a fixed mindset because God, "the author of liberty and the source of justice," was on his side. He writes:

I do not know how to worship God and Mammon at the same time. [...] If practically falsifying its heaven-attested principles, this nation denounces me for refusing to imitate its example, then, adhering all the more tenaciously to those principles, I will not cease to rebuke it for its guilty inconsistency. Numerically, the contest may be an unequal one, for the time being; but the author of liberty and the source of justice, the adorable God, is more than multitudinous, and he will defend the right. My crime is that I will not go with the multitude to do evil. My singularity is that when I say that freedom is of God and slavery is of the devil, I mean just what I say. (Garrison, 1854).

Another argument that Garrison provides is based on the strict contradiction between, on the one hand, not recognizing slaves as human and, on the other hand, treating them as humans who can understand, pray, and do skillful and sophisticated tasks. Garrison is compelling because he is a passionate speaker and because of his clarity and reason-based demands. He is not just appealing to documents and beliefs that are cornerstones to American society, such as The Declaration or to God, but also to the basic human understanding of the law of non-contradiction. Here is a reconstruction of this line of reasoning:

Premise 1: If slaves are not human but beasts, then they cannot use language, they cannot pray, do skillful jobs, etc.

Premise 2: Slaves use language, pray, and accomplish skillful tasks.

Premise 3 [sub-conclusion1]: Slaves are not beasts; they are human.

Premise 4 [sub-conclusion2]: Humans should not be enslaved.

Main conclusion: Therefore, slaves must be freed and live the lives of free people.

Here is this reasoning in his own much richer words:

If the slaves are not men; if they do not possess human instincts, passions, faculties, and powers; if they are below accountability, and devoid of reason; if for them there is no hope of immortality, no God, no heaven, no hell; if, in short, they are what the slave code declares them to be, rightly "deemed, sold, taken, reputed and adjudged in law to be chattels personal in the hands of their owners and [...]"; then, undeniably, I am mad, and can no longer discriminate between a man and a beast. However, in that case, away with the horrible incongruity of giving them oral instruction, of teaching them the catechism, of recognizing them as suitably qualified to be members of Christian churches, of extending to them the ordinance of baptism, and admitting them to the communion table, and enumerating many of them as belonging to the household of faith! Let them be no more included in our religious sympathies or denominational statistics than are the dogs in our streets, the swine in our pens, or the utensils in our dwellings. (Garrison, 1854).

There is much more in his speech, and I encourage readers to read it, but what we have covered gives enough material to see why he is an extremist and what type of extremism he subscribes to. Now, it is time to discuss the virtues and vices of Garrison and Garrisonians. Above all, Garrisonian abolitionists were virtuous arguers because their epistemic position was superior to their opponents. In the cases of anti-sexism and anti-slavery, we do not need to struggle with why they are superior ethical and epistemic positions: why anti-sexism and anti-slavery are superior to sexism and slavery. However, it is a valuable opportunity to appreciate the power of argumentation in achieving them. Argumentation across time can transform what is considered extremist to what is commonsensical: we now take racial equality and gender equality for granted.

However, the only way to make sense of *some* Garrisonian argumentational virtues is to question the epistemological cornerstone of virtue argumentation and virtue epistemology, which is the Aristotelian doctrine of mean: virtue is between deficiency and excessiveness. For example, we see close-mindedness, categorized in virtue argumentation and vice epistemology, as a vice; however, in the case of the anti-slavery struggle, it is a virtue. How do we make sense of this? We should judge the vice and virtue of argumentative activities based on the consequences they produce or help produce. Because the result of the anti-slavery movement was legitimate, any argumentative strategies that Garrisonians and others used became liberatory virtues.

Before identifying more virtues based on the consequentialist approach, let us identify some virtues as identified by the theory of virtue argumentation as listed in Aberdeen's list. Above all, Garrisonians were extremist virtuous arguers because they were willing to engage in argumentation. We should remember that they mainly used arguments to prove the sinful nature and its contradictory nature to religion, morality, The Declaration of Independence and basic human understanding of the law of non-contradiction. As a result of their willingness to engage in argumentation, they had the following virtues: being communicative, faith in reason, intellectual courage and a sense of duty (see Table One). They had faith in reason because they did not choose violence as a method to end slavery; instead, they provided reasons for its absolute evilness and why it must end immediately. They had intellectual courage because it does take courage to argue against slavery in the status quo, where slavery prevails and is legal. Above all, Garrisonians were virtuous because they embraced the sense of duty to stand against slavery. It is one thing to believe something is unjust; it is quite another to speak up against it. This sense



of duty is common in all extremist movements, whether for legitimate or illegitimate goals. That is why extremists are generally confident, loud and demanding. Extremism, in this sense, bridges the gap between knowing and doing; extremism is an action-oriented belief that demands radical replacement of a status quo.

Other virtues that Garrisonians had are the following: insight into persons and insight into problems (see table one). They had insight into persons in terms of understanding what a person is and why slaves are also persons. Moreover, they had insight into the audience of their arguments because they were providing effective arguments for them to abandon their slaveholding mentality. Acknowledging the personhood of slaves played a crucial role in initiating the movement. However, this was insufficient; they also had to have insight into their co-arguers, their audience, and the slaveholders. The fact that they use arguments, not violence, suggests they had faith in the influential role of arguments. Moreover, since their arguments were directed toward slaveholders, it suggests that they acknowledged them to the degree of talking to them in the argumentative language and convinced some of them of their arguments. So, insight into persons, in this case, was a virtue because without it, Garrison and Garrisonians would not have acknowledged Black people as persons, and they would not have had successful arguments to convince their opponents of the unjustifiability of slavery.

Now, let us look at the subject through consequentialist lenses and see why violating some virtues of virtue argumentation was actually virtuous in a liberatory sense of the term. Recognition of reliable authority is considered a virtue in Aberdeen's list. However, in a racist status quo, those who considered reliable authority were, by definition, pro-slavery. If they had been against slavery, slavery would not have existed in the first place. However, Garrisonians, by

not acknowledging that authority, embodied liberatory virtue, not argumentational vice. Here is what Garrison says about authority:

The law that makes him [a slave] a chattel is to be trampled underfoot; the compact that is formed at his expense, and cemented with his blood, is null and void; the church that consents to his enslavement is horribly atheistical; the religion that receives to its communion the enslaver is the embodiment of all criminality. (Garrison, 1854).

Of course, it is easy for us not to acknowledge those authorities, whether religious, legal or political, that were pro-slavery as credible today, but this is because racial equality is the status quo now. If we had lived in a time when slavery was the status quo, we may have thought differently, to say the least. This line of thinking suggests that if we are not extremist about anything in our lifetime, we should be worried that we may not be virtuous enough.

Common sense is another virtue that Garrisonians violated. It was common sense for Black people to be slaves. However, by rejecting this racist common sense, Garrisonians were virtuous because they helped bring a new non-racist common sense where racism is considered to be anything but commonsensical. Therefore, judging by consequence is a better way to judge whether X, as an argumentative strategy, is virtuous or vicious.

Another clear example of an argumentative virtue that Garrisonian rightly violated is open-mindedness. As we read above, Garrison himself calls himself a fanatic, and Battaly identifies fanaticism as an essential feature of Garrisonianism. Fanatics, in relation to what they are fanatical about, are close-minded.<sup>48</sup> In my terminology, they are uncritical. That is why, as explained above, uncritical civil extremism is the most accurate categorization of Garrisonian

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<sup>48</sup> See the previous footnote on closed-mindedness.

extremism. The uncritical mindset of extremists is needed to make them passionate and zealous activists and arguers. The fact that Garrisonians were close-minded to their belief that slavery is absolutely evil and must end immediately made them virtuous. However, we cannot reach this conclusion unless we get on board with the consequentialist approach.

#### **5.4.6 Arguing for Violent Extremism: Fanon and the Anti-Colonial Struggle**

This section might be the most controversial in the dissertation since I argue in favour of using violence. The case in hand is the anti-colonialism struggle, and the arguer of interest is Frantz Fanon, a political philosopher and psychiatrist. Fanon is one of the towering figures in post-colonial studies. In this section, I will briefly answer these questions: Why was he pro-violence? What was his justification? What are his virtues and vices, argumentatively speaking?

Fanon is a controversial thinker. He has been described by some, on the one hand, as a prophet of violence that posed “an even greater threat to the West than communism,” on the other hand, far from being a threat, he encourages us toward a “critique of the configurations of contemporary globalization” that is needed for developing a critical perspective toward injustices produced by colonialism (Macey 2001, and Gibson 2019 as by quoted by Castelli, 2022, p. 325). On the one hand, in support of Fanon’s thinking and against French’s army in Algeria, Jean-Paul Sartre writes in the preface of Fanon’s famous book *Wretched of the Earth* that “to shoot down a European is to kill two birds with one stone, to destroy an oppressor and the man he oppresses at the same time: there remain a dead man, and a free man; the survivor, for the first time, feels a *national* soil under his foot” (1963, p. 22). On the other hand, Hanna Arendt criticizes Fanon and argues Fanon is mistaken at three levels: violence is not an effective political tool against colonialism, violence is not needed for political and psychological recovery of the oppressed,

emotions that are stimulated by violence cannot help building a new social unity of the oppressed (Castelli, 2022, p. 333). The core of Arendt's position is that the struggle against the colonizers, although legitimate, does not have to be violent. In other words, “violence and rebellion do not necessarily coincide” (Castelli, 2022, p. 335). This paragraph shows that Fanon has generated interesting debates about the role of violence in changes in world politics.

Fanon was, at the same time, a participant, an observer, and an advocate of anti-colonial struggles. While he was writing one of his most important works, *The Wretched of the Earth*, published in 1961, he was witnessing “The Cuban Revolution (1956–1959); the independence of Morocco, Tunisia, and Sudan in 1956; and above all, the Battle of Dien Bien Phu (1954), which marked the defeat of the French in Vietnam” (Castelli, 2022, p. 326). It is reasonable to assume that these events affected his philosophical and psychoanalytic analyses of violence, and its role in gaining national liberation from colonial powers. He also participated in these struggles, for example, in the case of Algeria. Fanon was working as a psychiatrist, treating both French soldiers and locals in Algeria, while he was helping the Algerian National Liberation Front (FLN) by hiding weapons and then supplying them to the FLN members in 1954. Later, his involvement became more consequential as a thinker when he became friends with Ramdane Abane, a prominent revolutionary political leader in the FLN. Later, he joined the FLN central command in Tunisia (Castelli, 2022).

The above remark about Fanon’s involvement in a violent anti-colonial struggle is important because it answers an important question: Did he play a role in the national liberation of Algeria? The answer is yes since he was involved with hand and mind in the struggle. Therefore, as an arguer, both as a philosopher in a leadership circle and a psychiatrist who knew deeply both

oppressed and oppressor mindsets, it is reasonable to assume that his arguments were impactful in Algeria and beyond. This conclusion will allow us to examine his argumentation in relation to virtue and vice of arguments. Since there is an undeniable relation between thought and action, it is reasonable to assume that an important thinker like Fanon, now considered a key scholar in anti-colonial studies, has affected how colonizers and colonized thought about colonization and anti-colonization. Moreover, as a psychiatrist, he interacted with both the colonizer and the colonized as well. As a scholar, he provided his ideas to the cognitive environment and thus made his powerful pro-violence arguments available. Also, in one-to-one interaction with Algerian patients, he might have argued in favour of using violence since he believed in the psychological significance of violence as a cleansing force against an inferiority complex. So, I proceed with an assumption that Fanon's pro-violence arguments affected how Algerians and others thought about violence.

Fanon provides a comprehensive study from philosophical, political, economic, and psychological perspectives of anti-colonialism struggles. However, my focus is very limited to his approach to violence. Through his approach to violence, I study the vices and virtue of his reasonings. Before going further, we need first to examine whether anti-colonial struggles are extremist struggles and what type of extremism best captures them.

Defining extremism as challenging a status quo with an aim to replace it, then by definition, challenging a colonial power to replace it with national power, is a case of extremism. Since violence was used in the anti-colonial struggle, Algeria's struggle is a paradigm example; then the question would be whether the use of violence was justified or unjustified. I argue that in the period when Indigenous Algerians *did not have any choice but to use violence* against

French colonial power to force them to leave the country, they were justifiably violent. The FLN movement, despite its violent nature, also utilized non-violent strategies, but it was responded violently by French army. For example: “After the eight-day-long general strike called by the FLN in January 1957, the French government waged a fierce repression, characterized by systematic arrests, tortures, and killings. Robert Young gave a clear illustration of the Algerian situation in this period in writing: “Violence [...] is too clean and cerebral a word, too surrounded with the dignity of philosophical conceptualization, to describe the raging, sadistic and sickening “butchery of what went on in Algeria” (quoted in Castelli, 2022, p. 326). As discussed in chapter two, when fundamental political rights, such as freedom of expression and political assembly, are violated by a pro-status quo power, extremist movements are encouraged to use violence in their anti-status quo struggles. To make a long story short, then, in the case of the Algerian anti-colonial struggle, we have a case of justified violent extremism.

In the case of Algeria, since France was an occupier and used violence to occupy and sustain the occupied status quo, Algerians had an additional reason to use violence justifiably. This is to say that since they had a legitimate cause and violence was necessary to achieve their goal, a violent revolt for independence, then we cannot blame them for violating the minimum principles of argumentation.

Having said that, by no means am I justifying all the violence used in Algerian post-colonial history. As it is known, there was a decade-long civil war called as the Black Decade between the Algerian government and some Islamist groups decades after independence. Moreover, Fanon explains the role of violence at the individual level; for example, he writes: “At the level of individuals, violence is a cleansing force. It frees the native from his inferiority complex and from

his despair and inaction; it makes him fearless and restores his self-respect” (1963, p. 94). Again, for clarity, I have to say I am not providing an analysis of the virtues and vices of Fanon’s arguments for the use of violence in all dimensions. I am limiting my analysis to the role of violence in gaining independence. I limit my agreement with Fanon with his arguments for justifying a violent anti-colonial struggle for the sake of gaining independence, and I also limit my judgements accordingly.

Fanon's overall position regarding the use of violence in the anti-colonial struggle is positive. Fanon argues that no matter how we label the anticolonial struggle, it is always a violent phenomenon:

National liberation, national renaissance, the restoration of nationhood to the people, commonwealth: whatever may be the headings used or the new formulas introduced, decolonization is always a violent phenomenon. (1963, p. 35)

Fanon’s arguments are not only about the Algerian case. Oladipo Fashina argues that Fanon’s writing on violence also applies to the widely held belief “that revolutionary violence in South Africa is not only inevitable but *justified*” (Fashina, 1989, P. 180, my emphasis). Fanon’s position on violence is complicated, but what we need for our project at hand is the following: “According to the most popular interpretation, Fanon argued that the colonized ought to overthrow colonial rule through violence” (Fashina, 1989, p. 180). As for why violence was necessary for Fanon, it is also complicated, and we cannot discuss all his reasons in detail. Here are some rationales for the justifiability of anti-colonial violence: “frees colonized from an inferiority complex, brings back their lost self-respect, courage, and their sense of self-worth” (ibid). Another reason most relevant to our concern is that anti-colonial violence is justified: “The

natives' challenge to the colonial world is not a rational confrontation of points of view" (Fanon, 1962, p. 41). If we follow his logic, the colonized cannot convince the colonizer to leave his country. The colonizer needs violence to colonize, and the colonized needs violence to be free from the colonizer. "So it is useless to persuade the colonizer to end colonial oppression for the sake of the humanity of the colonized since the colonizer *denies* the humanity of the colonized" (Fashina, 1989, P. 186, emphasize added). What follows then is that violence was a necessary condition, for example, in the case of Algerians' anti-colonial struggle to gain independence. As Fanon argues: For a colonized people, the most essential value, because the most concrete, is first and foremost the land: the land which will bring them bread and, above all, dignity" (Fanon, 1963, p. 44). Since, in the case of Algeria, French colonizers were not ready to give back the country to Algerians peacefully, the colonized had no choice but to use violence against colonizers.

The violence used by the colonizer in colonizing produced a double Manicheism: "The Manicheism of the settler produces a Manicheism of the native. To the theory of the "absolute evil of the native," the theory of the "absolute evil of the settler," replies" (Fanon, 1963. p.93). In such a hostile environment where colonizer and colonized, each sees the other as an absolute evil, who is right and who is wrong? I argue that it is reasonable to sympathize with Algerians in their legitimate struggle against colonialism. First of all, they were the subject of violence daily; on the other hand, they had a moral superiority: the colonizer used violence to occupy and violated the principle of self-determination and sovereignty, to name a few violations, while the colonized used violence to gain national liberation through the principles of the right of self-determination and sovereignty. So, both deontologically and consequentially speaking, violent



extremism in the case of anti-colonial struggle is a case of justified violent extremism. Deontologically speaking, national liberation, the right to self-determination, and sovereignty are superior to colonization and subjugation. Consequently, anti-colonial violence was necessary for gaining national independence; therefore, it was justifiable.

But in this bloody picture of violent extremism, how does argumentation enter the hostile relationship between colonizer and colonized? It comes in different forms: the colonizer *attempts* to justify its colonization to its people and colonized people; the colonized attempts to convince the colonizer to leave the country; the colonized attempts to justify violent struggle against the colonizer. It is the last one I am interested in here mainly (although later, I will briefly comment on the role of ethical argument in questioning the ethical justifiability of colonization by the colonizer).

Many authors attempted to summarize Fanon's arguments for violence in the anti-colonial struggle. Fashina (1989), after sixteen premises, reaches a conclusion. However, Castelli (2022, p. 332) provides a much more concise summary as follows:

First, he [Fanon] described the conflict between colonized and colonizers as absolutely radical [violent and extreme]. Second, he had no faith that any moral pressure or dialogue could help to overcome violence against the colonized. Third, he strongly believed that revolutionary violence has a number of positive effects at the psychological and at the political levels [cleansing from the inferiority complex and gaining national liberation]. Fourth, he thought that the spontaneous rage of the oppressed is the driving force behind the revolution; but, fifth, such a force must be led, organized and controlled by the

awareness of the political leaders in order to build a nonoppressive society [in the post-colonial era].

The virtues and vices of Fanon as an extremist arguer have been stated here and there implicitly. Let us make them explicit. Above all, starting from the consequentialist approach to virtue argumentation, Fanon is a virtuous arguer because of what he helped achieve: national liberation as a result of spreading true belief: colonialism must end. Fanon enlightened the colonized through his brilliant analysis of how colonization works and what to do about it, including armed struggle. Because his arguments helped the anti-colonization struggle and gained national liberation, he was, by definition, a virtuous arguer. We should remember that virtuous arguers spread true or reasonable beliefs in virtue argumentation and virtue epistemology. So, as long as we consider anti-colonial awareness as reasonable and true and consider pro-colonial reasoning for invasion and oppression as unreasonable and false, Fanon is a virtuous arguer. Also, from the perspective of the consequentialist account, since his arguments helped achieve a freer, more just world, he embodied liberatory virtues.

On Fanon's consequentialist thinking, Fashina (1989) writes: "A nonutilitarian consequentialist may claim that justice and rights equality are to be valued for their consequences for people's overall well-being. This is just the kind of consequentialism implicit in Fanon. Fanon's consequentialism is not utilitarian because he does not evaluate options in hedonistic terms or in terms of aggregate satisfaction" (p. 202). This note is relevant to other virtuous arguers discussed in the women's suffragist and anti-slavery movements because the main focus, at least at the early stage of the struggles, was on rights and justice, not hedonistic demands. Of course, once questions of justice and rights are adequately addressed, that will lead to a society where the

possibility of realizing utilitarian consequentialism would be higher. Most often, material gain and rights go hand in hand.

Let us be more specific. Judging by Aberdein's (2016) list, we can identify several virtues in Fanon's argumentation. Although Fanon, at some point, was physically involved in the Algerian liberation struggle, he also wrote. This is to say, he had the virtue of "willingness to engage in argumentation." Under this category of virtue, we have the following virtues: being communicative, faith in reason, intellectual courage, and a sense of duty. He had faith in reason, not in the sense of proving rational argument to the colonizer, hoping they would be convinced by them and leave the country. But he believed in reason in the sense of understanding what colonialism is, what it does to the colonizer and colonized psychologically speaking, and what to do about it. His sophisticated analysis of colonialism's philosophical, political, and psychological aspects speaks to his faith in reason. He had intellectual courage par excellence because he was willing to argue against his home country, France, and fight against it. In other words, he was an arguer who did what he preached, an argumentative feature which is much easier to demand than to exemplify. It takes intellectual courage to detach yourself from biases towards your people, group, and country. He did that because he was courageous enough to think critically about colonialism and the necessary tools to eliminate it. As for the sense of duty, the fact that, as a thinker, he thought deeply about all sorts of colonialism-related issues and wrote about them shows he had this virtue. It is one thing to know what is wrong; it is another to argue against it and engage in the struggle to address it. Fanon falls under the latter category, and for that, he was an extremist who embodied liberatory virtues: being aware of oppression, engaging in action against it, and producing praiseworthy results.

Under the category of “willingness to listen to others,” among other virtues, we have insight into persons, insight into problems, and insight into theories. The fact that he was a psychiatrist and treated patients belonging to the colonizer and colonized groups suggests he had insight into persons both colonized and colonizer. This knowledge must have affected the way he argued. For example, as part of his complex analysis of colonialism, he also provides psychological analysis. He is an influential thinker, and this is partly because he knew the subject he was arguing about and for, verbally or in a written format, as an activist and a leader. He has the virtue associated with insight into the problems, which is why his ideas are essential in anti-colonial studies several decades after his death. As for insight into theories, he had a rich theoretical background, which affected his rich theoretical analyses that covered the obvious ones: political, psychological, and economic dimensions of colonialism and anti-colonialism struggles. This is also relevant to two more virtues: recognition of salient facts and sensitivity to detail. An important factor of the richness of his analysis is, at least partly, related to his ability to see salient facts and his attention to the details of the issues he was writing about.

As for vices, there are two possible candidates: misplaced zeal and intellectual arrogance. His life and writings prove that he was a zealous arguer since he joined FLN and wrote passionately. His writing style is such that one cannot read him but be moved by the wrongful nature of colonialism. However, might this be a vice? From the point of view of virtue argumentation and vice epistemology, his zealous argumentative style leads to violence, and violence is the end of argumentation. Thus, it was misplaced. However, as I argued, since he was zealous for a just cause, we cannot charge him with a vice of misplaced zeal. Fanon might be charged with a vice of intellectual arrogance since his confidence in his analysis makes an absolute

judgment about the necessity of violence in the anti-colonial struggle. Hannah Arendt's critiques mentioned before might be attributed, at least partly, to Fanon's arrogance as a scholar that blinds him to see only one way for struggle: the violent way. The fact that, in post-colonial areas, violence was a common feature in many freed countries might speak in favour of at least one of Arendt's critiques: emotions stimulated by violence cannot help building a new social unity of the oppressed. Fanon writes, "When they [colonized] have used violence to achieve national liberation, the masses allow nobody to come forward as 'liberator.' They prove themselves to be jealous of their achievements and take care not to place their future, their destiny, and the fate of their homeland into the hands of a living god" (1963, p. 94). Yet, the post-colonial era did not match this promising picture. For example, in the case of Algeria, there was a decade-long civil war years after France had left. In many other post-colonial countries, dictators and autocrats ruled newly freed countries. Thus, as far as this line of argument goes, Fanon could be criticized as an arrogant arguer. However, this line of critique does not mean Fanon was not right in arguing for a violent revolt against colonial powers.

In her book *Argument and Change in World Politics* (2004), Neta Crawford makes an interesting case for the role of arguments, precisely ethical arguments, in ending long-lasting phenomena such as slavery and colonialism. Here, I will not dive into the details of her theory, but it is worth mentioning that arguments, in addition to violence, played a role in ending colonialism. Here is a summary of how it works in her words:

Colonialism could still be considered legitimate and acceptable if the powerful still believed in human inequality and thought it was acceptable to take and hold territory by arms and dictate the life of others with brute force. Colonialism ended, ostensibly for

good, in the mid twentieth century, because most Westerners no longer think it is acceptable to control others in precisely that same way. The engine for this change was ethical argument, not force, or changing modes of production, or declining profitability. Ethical arguments, once used to support colonialism, were used to undermine and ultimately to eliminate [it] (2004, p. 4).

In other words, the debate over the legitimacy of colonialism within the colonizer societies engaged in three processes that resulted in ending colonialism. These three processes are deconstructing, reconstructing, and changing the social world. The ethical argument, defined as the justification of normative beliefs that are held as accurate (Crawford, 2004), played a vital role in all these phases. In simple terms, in the first phase, what is considered normal (for example, colonization) is questioned through persuasive ethical arguments, making it neither normal nor legitimate. “Deconstruction is crucial in this regard because it creates a moral space, an opening, through which new beliefs and arguments may be heard” (Ibid P. 103). In the reconstruction phase, the moral space would be filled by what is ethically argued as normal and legitimate (for example, respecting principles of sovereignty and the right to self-determination). As a result, the social and political world would be redesigned based on what is considered ethically superior (the world without colonization) (Crawford, 2004).

The role of argument in anti-colonial struggles, thus, cannot be restricted to justifying violence against colonial power from the colonized. Arguments, ethical arguments in particular, played a crucial role in undercutting the ethical and moral legitimacy of colonialism within the colonial societies. Pro-colonial ideas such as scientific racism and the lack of political equality were delegitimized through ethical arguments; thus, step by step, colonial powers were lost all

justification, which eventually, along with other reasons, such as violent anti-colonial struggles, led to giving up on colonizing all together.

#### **5.4.7 King, Trump, and Baghdadi**

Now, I will provide a general overview of the vices and virtues of three influential leaders mentioned in the previous chapters: Martin Luther King Jr., Donald Trump, and Abubakir Al-Baghdadi. I only briefly identify their argumentational virtues and vices and see where my consequentialist approach is applicable. If we can show that a common argumentation style produces and shares untrue or unreasonable beliefs in one case and true or reasonable beliefs in another, then this supports the consequentialist approach to vice and virtue argumentation because the only way to make sense of this is to look at consequences produced by an argumentative activity. Let us explore this possibility.

King, Trump, and Baghdadi were all charismatic leaders and arguers, and they were all impactful leaders. King is a symbol of the anti-racism struggle; Baghdadi played a crucial role in providing a rhetorically appealing justification of ISIS sympathizers, and Trump played a key role in providing a rhetorical mobilization of the January 6 incident. We applaud the first, loathe the second, and criticize the last. The fact that all of them were charismatic suggests there were common argumentative strategies or ways of arguing. The clearest example is a rhetorical mastery of arguing confidently and passionately. Borrowing from Aberdeen's list, they were zealous arguers. By zealous arguers, I mean they all argued with passion, confidence and emotionally charged language. We know that for Aberdeen, misplaced zeal is a vice. However, how do we define misplaced zeal? Should we focus on whether it is too much or too little (Aristotelian mean doctrine), or should we focus on the results produced by arguing zealously

(the consequentialist account)? King's zealous argumentative style, for example, in a speech like 'I Have a Dream,' was virtuous because it served a just cause: Ending racial inequality. Trump's zealous argumentative style, for example, in the 'Save America' speech, was not virtuous because it was not in service of a just cause: Threatening a fundamental pillar of a democratic system, rejecting election results through using violence. Baghdadi's passion in his speeches was vicious because it provided religious justification for the brutality of ISIS.

We can find more examples; for instance, they were all successful arguers because they had insight into their audience. In Aberdeen's list, we have "insight into a person." I think it is safe to argue that a person here includes an audience because, by definition, if there is an argument, there must be an audience, direct or indirect. So, a virtuous arguer has insight into their audience so that they can tailor their arguments accordingly. What follows is that King, Trump and Baghdadi were equally virtuous because they were influential rhetoricians, partly due to their understanding of their audience. So, they were all successful arguers in the sense of achieving audience adherence to one's arguments. Once again, this cannot be true. How could these three leaders be equally virtuous just because they had insight into their audience? The Aristotelian account is not very helpful here. We need to look at the result of their argumentation to render their insight into their audience as virtuous or vicious. Moreover, as part of their duty of leadership, all these leaders delivered many speeches (engaged in public argumentation). Engaging in argumentation because of one's sense of duty is a virtue in Aberdeen's list. However, King's sense of duty differed significantly from the other two leaders in relation to what they were advocating for. Again, we need to judge their sense of duty differently, not because they did not engage equally in argumentation but because of the different results they facilitated.



Having said that, the list that Aberdein provides, and examples mentioned by scholars of virtue and vice epistemology are helpful in identifying why a leader is more virtuous or vicious than others, but they are insufficient. My consequentialist approach is not a replacement for other theoretical frameworks; it is just an additional tool to use when we encounter problems with the nature of those we have discussed throughout this chapter.

### **5.5 Concluding Remarks**

Extremism and virtue argumentation have complicated relations. We cannot make one overall judgement about the virtuous dimension of extremism. As I have argued throughout this dissertation, the dominant attitude of scholars toward extremism is still negative: extremism is harmful and has no virtues. An influential figure like Cassam emphasizes that even if you search for virtues in extremism, you eventually find just vices. However, I have argued that this oversimplification needs to be revised. This is not to say extremism cannot be problematic. So, how do we make sense of these conflictual positions?

Above all, one judgment does not fit all cases of extremism. There are different types of extremism and different virtues and vices that can be attributed to them. We may be tempted to argue that civil extremism is good and violent extremism is bad. Yet, to add another layer of complexity, civil extremism is not always virtuous and violent extremism is not always vicious. As the case of anti-colonial struggle shows, sometimes arguing for violence is virtuous. However, to simplify the matter, let us summarize the vices and virtues of two extremism clusters: civil and uncivil.

Virtue argumentation and virtue and vice epistemology are doing an excellent job of identifying vices of violent extremism. The violent cases that Cassam and Hardin studied, for

example, inform us that violent extremists are guilty of close-mindedness, sinister attribution, paranoid psychology, a purity mindset, catastrophic thinking, utopian thinking, apocalyptic thinking and more. The arguments that reflect these mindsets are vicious because they produce an untrue and ill-formed picture of the world. A picture of a world in which one group is the victim and the other one a villain, and the victim has all the right to use violence, even genocidal violence, against the villain group. In simple terms, violent extremism, more specifically unjustified violent extremism, is guilty of the gravest vice argumentatively speaking: violation of the minimum principle.

When we move to liberatory extremist movements, virtue argumentation, virtue, and vice epistemology face challenges that are not easy to deal with unless we employ the consequentialist approach. The challenge is caused by, on the one hand, violating the doctrine of mean and, on the other hand, producing desired results, including spreading true beliefs, a telos of virtue argumentation. So, in cases like these, the consequentialist approach encourages us to judge the outcome of an argumentative activity, not the style of an argumentative activity. This is to say, even if argumentational virtues are violated, this violation is needed to argue for a more just society, then we have a case of virtuous argumentation because justice is aligned with true beliefs. Extremism, as a liberatory force, for example, in the cases of women's suffragist movements and anti-slavery movements, is encouraging us not to be misguided by idealistic theoretical frameworks of what counts as virtue or vice. Instead, we should examine empirical cases and judge the arguers as virtuous or vicious based on socio-political changes that they argue for or against.

It can be concluded that we need different theoretical frameworks to capture virtue and vices of extremism fully. In addition to virtue argumentation, virtue epistemology and vice epistemology, we need to add the consequentialist framework to our analytical toolbox.

## **Chapter Six: Conclusion: Lessons and Challenges**

### **6.1 Introduction**

In this concluding chapter, in addition to providing a summary of key findings chapter by chapter, I will reflect on the main lessons and challenges of extremism. These reflections are mainly, but not exclusively, from what I have discussed throughout the dissertation. Moreover, I will expand the discussion by commenting on civility because it is very relevant to the nature of these reflections. I will end the chapter by suggesting further research on argumentation and extremism.

In chapter one, I have set the stage for the whole project. I have introduced and defined key terms of the dissertation, such as a neutral definition of extremism, civil extremism, critical extremism, uncritical extremism, violent extremism, justified violent extremism and unjustified violent extremism. These terms show the novelty of this dissertation's approach to extremism. I have also introduced key research questions, chapter outlines, and research methodology.

The key findings of chapter two, Literature Review: Extremism and its Dimensions, can be summarized under three main points. First, the dominant view in extremism literature depicts extremism in unfavourable terms. The negativity of extremism in the dominant view is such that I call it the essentialist approach to extremism, which means there is an essence of extremism that, without it, A cannot be extremist. That essence is negativity. The second key finding is against the first point: extremism is not essentially negative. Even though extremism can be negative, it does not necessarily have to be. Against the essentialist approach, I argued for a neutral approach to extremism, which is mindful of the legitimate concerns of the proponent of the essentialist approach but also its shortcomings. Under the neutral approach, which brings us

to the third point, extremism can be divided into two main classes and four members, as discussed in chapter one.

These types of extremism were argued for in chapter two through critically investigating the literature on extremism. Moreover, real-world examples of each type of extremism were provided, and argument schemes were used to explain these types. I ended the chapter by arguing that we should be mindful of the fact that using the label of extremism as a rhetorical strategy to delegitimize radical demands and maintain a status quo has a long history and is an ongoing phenomenon in the political discourse. Moreover, to develop a comprehensive understanding of extremism, instead of viewing extremist demands from the perspective of those who benefit from the status quo, I suggested we should view those demands from the perspective of those whose interests/rights are not respected within the current status quo.

Chapter three, *How Do Jihadis Argue? ISIS, as a Case of Unjustified Violent Extremism*, was a contribution to an area of argumentation studies which, according to Ladd and Goodwin (2022), is understudied: the discourse of extremists. What we observed can be summarized as the following. In this chapter, we found the emergence of extremism, unjustified violent extremism to be specific, was multicausal. We identified socio-political factors in Iraq and Jihadi discourse as fundamental factors behind the emergence of ISIS. Despite the negative connotation of jihad, we saw that there are different types of jihad and not all of them are equally problematic. We may even argue that greater (internal) jihad is praiseworthy since it is about spiritual purification. We also saw how Abubakar al-Baghdadi misused the power of argumentation to make a persuasive case for joining ISIS. Identifying the misuse of the power of argumentation is useful for thinking about conditions for the good usage of argumentation.

We identified religious logic as a useful framework to understand why Baghdadi's arguments were convincing to his audience. Moreover, we recognized a particular appeal to authority, which I called an appeal to sacred authority. Baghdadi frequently used the appeal to sacred authority to support his claims. Moreover, he used analogical reasoning and exhortation, among other thinking patterns and rhetorical strategies. Baghdadi, as we saw, was a comprehensive arguer in the sense that he provided arguments from logos, ethos, and pathos.

In chapter four, *Expanding Argument from Authority: Argument from Charismatic Authority and the Case of Donald J. Trump*, I made a case for the relevancy of charisma to argumentation theory. First, I located the argument from charisma within the literature of argument from authority in argumentation theory by examining the relevancy of charisma to two argument types: argument from ethos and argument from deference. After developing criteria for identifying arguments from charisma, we examined Trump's Save America speech. What we discovered is that there are elements of extremism and charisma in his speech. Trump's charisma helped him to successfully persuade thousands that the election was stolen from them, and until they 'fight like hell,' and unless he was re-elected, they could not be the 'happiest people.' Charisma can bring together an ideology and a leader to the degree of what I call the personification of ideology. The finding of this chapter suggested that charisma is ethos in full force and should be taken seriously by argumentation scholars, especially political argumentation scholars.

In chapter five, I studied extremist arguers' vices and virtues. The approach that I have used is mainly consequentialist. However, I have also used virtue argumentation theory and vice epistemology. My approach to studying virtues is not unique, and it is in debt to Heather Battaly's

pluralist approach: virtues can have good motives, good consequences, or both (2015). Other scholars also studied virtues from a consequentialist perspective; for example, Cassam (2009) calls his account of vice epistemology Obstructivism, which he defines with consequentialist terms (Cassam, 2019).

We have examined a few case studies from the suffragist movements, the anti-slavery movements, and the anti-colonial violent struggles. What we found are the following. First, one theory, whether virtue argumentation, vice epistemology, or consequentialist theory, cannot alone fully explain what virtue and vice extremist arguers have; that is why I have used all three. Second, virtue argumentation theory and vice epistemology, generally speaking, are useful to make sense of vices of violent and uncritical extremism, but consequentialism is better suited to elaborate on the virtues of civil and justified violent extremism. Third, against the essentialist approach to extremism that defines extremism with negative terms, these cases show that certain manifestations of extremism were virtuous and played a key role in democratic development. To conclude, extremist arguers, at times, can be guilty of liberatory vices and praiseworthy, at other times, of liberatory virtues: they can stand against justice and be agents for justice.

## **6.2 Key Lessons**

In this short section, I will answer the following question: What lessons can we draw from extremism? Extremism, as a radical challenge against a status quo, is a good reminder of the fact that in political argumentation, there always will be disagreements, and sometimes for legitimate concerns. Extremism, by nature, generates challenging disagreements; that is why it usually takes time to fully appreciate the positive contribution of extremism. An extremist political idea,

because it challenges those in which a current status quo serves their interest, generates disagreements. However, as we have seen throughout this dissertation, especially in chapter five, some of the key phases of democratic development were extremist. So, what lesson can we draw from this?

Above all, no matter how just a status quo may look, there would be those who are served and harmed the most by it. Thus, as we saw in the introduction and second chapter, legitimate dissensus is an undeniable fact in political argumentation. The domain of political argumentation is a domain of interest clashes. Extremism is an exemplifier of these clashes. As it is apparent by now, these clashes are not necessarily bad. Extremism can result in overall democratic enrichment (but it can also be a source of threat to democracy such as violent authoritarian ideologies of 20<sup>th</sup> century).

The cases that I have discussed were both historical and contemporary. The historical cases, such as the suffragist movements, the anti-slavery movements, and the anti-colonial movements, were positive cases of extremism, but the contemporary cases were negative, such as Salafi-Jihadism and the January 6 incident. Let us now briefly reflect on a positive contemporary example: green radicalism. As a response to climate change, green radicalism has evolved as an extremist environmental movement. On green radicalism, John Dryzek writes:

In the last four decades or so green radicalism has come from nowhere to develop a comprehensive critique of the environmental, social, political, and economic shortcomings of industrial society. As such, it represents perhaps the most significant ideological development of the late twentieth century (2013, p. 227).



We may not appreciate the extreme demands of green radicalism now; the pro-status quo did not immediately appreciate arguments against sexism, racism, and colonialism. However, as time passes and as climate change becomes more and more apparent, the positivity of green radicalism will be more appreciated. The positive contribution of green radicalism for Dryzek (2013) is twofold: green consciousness and green politics. The manifestation of green consciousness is mainly on an individual level. For example, how we deal with 'garbage' at the individual level has changed in the last few decades. Or, when we shop, we tend to buy environmentally friendly products, and so forth. Green politics, however, is more about systematic changes politically and economically. It can be argued that the greener consciousness prevails at individual levels, the faster structural changes could happen since green consciousness might affect voting behaviour. However, a greener economy might also put a heavier financial burden on individuals, thus negatively affecting voting behaviour. So, all in all, as long as the human species exists, it is almost certain that there will be issues to solve, and extremism, as a radical proposal to solve those issues, could sometimes be beneficial.

### **6.3 Challenges of Extremism: The Question of Civility**

This section touches on an important dimension of extremism's lessons and challenges: the problematic relationship between extremism and civility. On the one hand, extremists can threaten peaceful co-existence in the name of the necessity of a radical change; on the other hand, in the name of being civil, civility proponents can delegitimize effective extremist political struggles. Both of these outcomes are problematic to a functioning democracy because they neglect the fact that the nature of political argumentation is such that "public judgments about complex political issues [...] diverge. Hence, political disagreement and disputation are inexorable

from democracy” (Talissee, 2021, p. 155). Because of freedom of expression and diverges in political and economic interests among individuals and groups, political argumentation by nature would have elements of adversarial argumentation. Political argumentation is “political disagreement in which we disagree about “the structure and aims of our collective life” (Aikin & Talissee, 2020, p. 13). Civility, as that which facilitates peaceful co-existence despite everlasting differences, is crucial for democracy. Living peacefully despite our differences could be argued to be the greatest achievement of democracy. So, it seems that for a vibrant democracy, both civility and extremism are needed: civility is needed to facilitate peaceful coexistence; extremism is needed to facilitate radical socio-political changes. Having said that, both civility and extremism can and do create problems for democracy. Let us explore this further.

The issue of how to deal peacefully with natural and unavoidable disagreements in political argumentation among individuals and groups suggests the necessity of civility in human organization. If political disagreements are unavoidable, then what should we do about them? The short answer is that we ought to be civil. But what is civility? Can it be argumentative virtues which enable us to manage our disagreement peacefully?

The fundamental precondition of public argumentation is the guarantee of freedom of speech. In the absence of civility, i.e., managing disagreements peacefully, the logic of naked force would be the only mechanism to resolve conflicts of interest. By the logic of naked force, I mean allowing the powerful to suppress and tyrannize the weak and suppress the opponent groups from presenting their disagreements. This would be a violation of the minimum principle of argumentation. Of course, even in a lifetime imprisonment in a single cell, one could still engage

in argumentation through self-deliberation. However, authentic public argumentation to address disagreements with others is impossible without respecting the minimum principle.

Respecting or violating the minimum principle by the pro-status quo forces can causally be relevant to the extremism type that I developed. For example, if the members of an extremist group believed in employing civil disobedience to achieve their extremist demands, but the pro-status quo force, usually a government and powerful groups, suppressed them by force, i.e., violating the minimum principle, then it is understandable to expect a transformation from civil to uncivil extremism. In a situation like this, then we may even witness justified violent extremism. As discussed in chapter five, a case of justified violent extremism was the violent anti-colonial struggle in Algeria. So, the minimum principle is a useful analytical term to understand extremism and its types. Perhaps, due to the fact that in Western democracies, this principle has become an integral part of the system, one may overlook how crucial it is in understanding extremism and its typology. However, we should be mindful that extremism as a political phenomenon is not limited to democratic regimes, and it is equally, if not even more, pervasive in undemocratic regimes.

As it could easily be imagined, there is a spectrum of managing disagreements when the minimum principle is respected by those who disagree. Generally speaking, there are three main possibilities. First, while respecting the minimum principle, citizens refrain from engaging in an honest and frank discussion with those who think differently. Second, respecting the minimum principle, but when we talk to our opponent, which we do not do much, we are merely interested in presenting and protecting our positions. In doing that, we do not shy away from employing any available rhetorical tools to the degree of questioning the political quality of those who deeply

disagree with us. Third, while respecting the minimum principle, we take time to engage with opponents honestly, frankly, and respectfully, not just to protect our perspectives but rather to examine and improve them. The different manifestations of peaceful disagreements are presented as different types of civility by Bejan (Bejan, 2017), as the following (I am, of course, significantly simplifying the complexity of these philosophical positions):

- Civil silence: how to deal with disagreements: suppress expressing disagreement in the public for the sake of order (Hobbesian civility).
- Civil charity: how to deal with disagreements: accept them without contempt; robust civility (Lockean civility).
- Mere civility: how to deal with disagreements: allow them but challenge them; if there is contempt, do not hide it. A proper (logical) argument is not required for civility, but the continuation of the conversation is (Williamian civility).

However, the picture is more complicated than it is depicted here. One reason is that, just like extremism, civility can be misused as a discursive tool to delegitimize demands for change. The logic is simple: in the common usage of the words, if you are labelled as extremist, then there must be something wrong with you, and your demands are illegitimate; by the same token, if you are labelled as uncivil, then there must be something wrong with you and your demands are illegitimate. So, in a nutshell, both extremism and incivility could be used as oppressive discursive tools.

In what follows, I will provide three perspectives on the relationship between civility and extremism. First, civility as an oppressive discursive tool; second, extremism as a threat to civility; third, civility as an argumentative virtue.

### 6.3.1 Charges Against Civility

The literature on civility has a theme that we can label as ‘pro-status quo civility.’ Civility here is depicted as “the perfect mask for defending a status quo that works well for elites” but not so well for those who are dispossessed (Zamalin, 2021, p. 14). Those who are in power, this line of criticism goes, will determine the meaning of civility, which will be in the service of maintaining a status quo that protects their interest. Being civil or uncivil, it follows, has connotations. If you are civil, you will operate within a parameter of a given system, and you will be a ‘good citizen.’ If you are uncivil, you are questioning a system and, thus, are not a good citizen. In short, civility here is a badge of a law-abiding citizen. You are civil because you “give to charity, you’re a good father, you don’t speed when you drive, you pay your taxes on time ...” (ibid. p. 7).

The danger here is if civility is associated with being a good citizen who is obedient and does not question the legitimacy of a system, then those who are disobedient, “[...], who don’t exhibit exemplary public etiquette, who aren’t deferential to authority” are necessarily uncivil (Zamalin, 2021, p. 8). The heart of this criticism is that civility is used as an oppressive discursive tool. When extremists, those who are not satisfied with the current status quo, demand a radical change, they will be charged with incivility. Then their demands, no matter whether legitimate or not, are questioned, if not delegitimized and rejected. On the other hand, those who are ‘civil’ are not under the same heavy burden of proof to support their positions because they get along with the status quo. Thus, this line of reasoning goes, “this is how rulers maintain a society in which inequality is the norm and injustice an incontrovertible fact: they silence opposition by disqualifying its legitimacy from the start” (Zamalin, 2021, pp. 7-8). Rhetorically speaking, attacking a character of a person or group of people and labelling them as uncivil is powerful

because it undermines their ethos as responsible citizens. Then, what follows is that reasons provided by extremists to demand radical changes are more prone to be disqualified by virtue of the violation of civility. Thus, civility, in such a context, can be used as an oppressive discursive tool.

As a pro-status quo force, a clear argumentative dimension of civility is deciding what can and cannot be expressed and how to be expressed in argumentation. In other words, civility establishes and maintains rules of 'proper' argumentation. To be civil, then, when arguing with an opponent, one "must avoid overly hostile or antagonistic language" (Aikin & Talisse, 2019, p. 11). This account of civility as an appropriate way of arguing that is complacent to a status quo is condemned, rightly so, by feminist scholars as being inherently patriarchal because it delegitimizes arguing with "excitability and emotionality that traditionally has been associated with women" (Aikin & Talisse, 2020, p. 15). So, civility, as this line of reasoning goes, is unjust because it "unduly favours the status quo by placing heavy burdens on those who feel most aggrieved by the way things are, and then privileges those who are already advantaged by the kind of upbringing and education that enables them to sustain a calm demeanour and tone of voice amidst conflict" (Aikin & Talisse, 2020, p. 15). Extremist arguers are, by default, the easiest target for being labelled as uncivil because they question the legitimacy of a status quo and aim to replace it, and in doing that, their argumentation style can be loud, rude, and annoying. What follows is that to counter this pro-status quo civility, 'radical civility' is needed for extremist argumentation to be an effective tool in changing a status quo. Extremist argumentation aims at radical civility because:

[...] Shocking and provoking people—no matter how impolite the words or actions might seem—is necessary to wake the majority of people from their moral slumber. Disobeying unjust laws and taking disruptive action puts pressure on the levers of political, cultural, social, and economic power, and that pressure is what moves ruling elites to take notice and come to the negotiating table (Zamalin, 2021, p. 9).

We can find support for criticizing civility as a pro-status quo force by examining the synonym of civility in the English language, which includes "comity, urbanity, and complaisance" (Reiheld, 2013, p. 70). Complaisance is clearly problematic because it is, by definition, in service of a status quo. If civility is complaisance, then those subjugated by a status quo have no option but to be uncivil because they are no longer civil when they refuse to be complacent. Being labelled as uncivil right from the beginning delegitimizes one's argumentational strategy. We should be mindful of the fact that we are, as argumentative creatures, prone to judge the quality of an argument by the character of the arguer. When someone or a movement is presented as uncivil, we likely evaluate their arguments with an unfavored epistemic position. This can be more serious than we can imagine because, in some contexts, the charge of incivility can be used to "hush up [...] oppressed sexual or racial or class groups, who [when they] point out violations of lack of respect [they] are deemed "inappropriate" [... because it] causes social disruption. Thus, it is claimed, they are uncivil" (Reiheld, 2013, p. 70). Extremist argumentation, because it challenges a status quo radically, can be useful to challenge and prevent civility from being used as an oppressive discursive tool to delegitimize adversarial argumentative strategies that aim at socio-political changes. By criticizing pro-status-quo civility, extremism injects a cognitive environment with an alternative account of civility: radical civility.

Another lesson that extremist argumentation can provide is that beliefs that, historically and contemporarily, are presented as neutral, natural, and just can be used as oppressive discourse tools to delegitimize legitimate concerns. Historically, monarchs had the right to rule because of 'divine law,' men dominated women because of the 'natural order' of things, colonial powers colonized countries because they had 'sovereignty,' but the colonized lacked, whites had the right to enslave blacks because whites had 'dignity' and 'self-ownership rights,' but blacks did not, and the list continues. As I showed in the above brief discussion, civility can also be used as an oppressive discursive tool. Against this, extremism demands radical civility, which "unsettles what civility assumes has long been settled: the kind of community we are and want to be" (Zamalin, 2021, p.10). Extremist arguers inform us of the fact that sometimes arguing civilly is a failed argumentative strategy because you will fail to draw the "attention of the powerful and force the latter into dialogue" (Lozano-Reich & Cloud 2009 as quoted in Love, 2021, 630). As we saw in chapter five, extremist arguers are troublemakers to those served by a status quo. Extremist arguers disturb what is considered 'normal,' 'natural,' and 'just,' and sometimes democratic development needs those troublemakers.

### **6.3.2 Charges Against Extremism**

So far, I have briefly discussed some lessons that remind us of the positive role of extremism. However, we should be mindful of the pitfalls of extremism to democracy as well. In this section, I will mention some of the key pitfalls.

It is given that one's thinking will affect one's actions. By the same token, extremist thinking will lead to, or at least facilitate, extremist action. Then the difficulty is: how do we prevent unjustified violent action without violating freedom of belief and speech? This is a



challenging task because “if there tends to be a correlation between extremist [ideological] positions and extremist (nondemocratic) methods, then it may be difficult for the state to combat the latter without imposing controls on the former” (Wintrobe, 2012, p. 106). On the one hand, allowing the cognitive environment to be modified by arguments that justify using violence for gaining socio-economic goals might result in actual violence. On the other hand, allowing the state to safeguard cognitive environments by not allowing or punishing any individual or groups who want to argue for achieving radical socio-economic goals is equally problematic. Then, the dilemma seems to be either risking security or violating fundamental political rights. To make the matter even more problematic, often extremist groups will not publicly argue for violence, yet violence occurs as a result of their argumentation (reconsider chapter four). This is not to mention that what counts as *violence* is also open for debate.

A relevant issue here is extremists' violation of the minimum principle of argumentation. This principle is crucial for public argumentation because, without it, we cannot openly and freely exercise our critical thinking in the public sphere. Both extremist groups, in the name of radically changing the unjust status quo, and governments, in the name of maintaining security and stability, can violate this principle. Sometimes, it might be easy to see whom to blame, but it is not always the case.

I briefly discussed how an account of civility can serve as a discursive force in favour of the unjust status quo; here, I will explain why extremism can threaten another account of civility, which is crucial for maintaining a healthy democratic system. This approach to civility can be called the ‘argumentative duty of civility’ or, in short, ‘argumentative civility.’ It is a duty of civility because it follows in the footsteps of Rawls’s duty of civility. However, it is also argumentative

because it sets the virtues of argumentation as a precondition for honouring that duty. Extremism can pose serious challenges to argumentative civility. First, let us see the essential features of this account of civility.

Civility can be defined as shifting from “coercion to persuasion” (Guinness, 2008, p. 136). To be civil means, above all, respecting the minimum principle of argumentation and being mindful that disagreement in political argumentation is legitimate and essential. In fact, to be civil is to be conscious of the fact that “disagreement between citizens is [...] the hallmark and the engine of democratic life” (Aikin & Talisse, 2021, p. 474). Moreover, to be civil means, you must acknowledge that you and your opponent are politically equal and both are argumentative creatures. This is to say that civility demands engaging in argumentation with your opponent. Thus, civility can be defined as taking the “need for the practice of persuasion in public life” seriously (ibid.) Civility then is a duty, as Rawls explains, which imposes upon citizens:

[...] a moral, not a legal, duty to be. . . able to explain to one another on [certain] fundamental questions how the principles and policies they advocate and vote for can be supported by the political values of public reason. This duty also involves a willingness to listen to others and a fairmindedness in deciding when accommodations to their views should reasonably be made” (Rawls, as quoted in Thunder, 2006, p. 677).

Clearly, the duty of civility demands citizens to be virtuous, argumentatively speaking. As discussed in chapter five, willingness to listen to others and fairmindedness are argumentational virtues. Thus, to be civil, one has to be virtuous. Extremism, especially uncritical civil extremism, and unjustified violent extremism are guilty of violating this duty. Uncritical civil extremism respects minimum principles but can be faulty of argumentational vices such as close-

mindedness and unfair-mindedness. Unjustified violent extremism can be guilty of a bigger sin, which is violating the minimum principle. Is it legitimate, however, to ask whether only extremists are guilty of violating argumentational virtues needed for civility? To fail the duty of being civil, one does not necessarily have to be an extremist.

Civility can involve argumentative exchanges that “do not preclude exchanges from being forceful, pointed, and even angry. Civility is not a matter of polite exchange, where one submerges how one feels about the issue and one’s interlocutors under a veneer of pleasant etiquette” (Aikin & Talisse, 2021, p. 477). However, even when civility involves adversarial exchanges, it must remain argumentative in a sense that civility is about making “reasons accessible to those with whom one disagrees” (ibid). So, when we make reasons available and accessible to our opponents, we necessarily activate the argumentative features of civility. What follows is that the virtue of willingness to engage in argumentation is crucial to civility. In a nutshell, being civil is being a *sincere arguer* (Aikin & Talisse, 2019, p. 212). Trudy Govier emphasized that the act of providing a reason is also an act of showing “respect for [arguers] as autonomous, thoughtful people” (as quoted in Love, 2021, p. 634). Therefore, anytime extremist or non-extremist arguers fail to be respectful (respect in Govier’s reading), they are guilty of being uncivil.

Now, we can define the argumentative duty of civility as arguing virtuously by making reason available for our opponents on issues that have public ramifications. In the process of providing reasons, we do not necessarily have to be nice or polite; of course, if we can provide reason politely, it is even better. However, what is crucial is our willingness to engage in argumentation. What follows is that one can be civil in degrees. The more argumentational

virtues we adhere to, the more civil we will be. Thus, the ideal civil arguer is an arguer who adheres to the maximum number of argumentational virtues. The more virtuous we are, the better we master “the art of living with our deepest differences” (Guinness, as quoted in Love, 2021, p. 632). But the moment we do not bother to provide reasons to our opponents on issues that concern public life, we cease to be civil, whether we are extremist or not. This account of civility is demanding. We should remember that the prime minister of Canada, Justin Trudeau, refused to sit down with Freedom Convoy leaders during the Freedom Convoy protest. With his rejection of engaging in argumentation with the leaders of a movement that gained global attention, the prime minister failed to be civil. Having said that, extremists are more likely to be uncivil (see Cassam’s arguments on extremists’ epistemic vices in chapter five).

#### **6.4 Recommendations**

Extremism in both positive and negative manifestations deserves more attention from scholars of argumentation. In this section, I will provide some suggestions for future argumentative studies of extremism. Above all, an argumentative analysis of the current cases of positive extremism is needed to better understand extremism in action—for example, the extremist position on climate change and the need for a greener economy. Argumentation scholars can investigate the arguments around the climate change debate and the need for radical approaches to combat it. Moreover, successful argumentative strategies can be suggested that are more likely to achieve adherence to a greener economy based on strategies used in past successful extremist movements. Another current extremist position that is worth argumentative studies would be transgenderism. Scholars of argumentation can study arguments that both opponents and proponents of transgenderism put forward. These studies allow us to understand extremism

while it unfolds and what roles argumentation plays. With that, we will be better positioned, epistemically speaking, to understand the dynamics of our contemporary societies.

Another area of research would be evaluating the roles of critical thinking in developing a mindset that, despite its extremism, remains civil in the sense of not using violence and shows a willingness to engage in argumentation. One way to do that is to include both negative and positive extremist case studies in critical thinking textbooks and encourage students to analyze them critically, then evaluate the impact of these educational activities on students. A relevant subject to study is researching argumentative virtues that are most conducive to developing a citizenry that, should they be extremist, remains civil, then incorporating those virtues in educational textbooks.

Another suggestion is to conduct a comparative argumentative study of charismatic and uncharismatic leadership. For example, studies can examine speeches made by charismatic and uncharismatic leaders to identify similarities and differences in their argumentative styles. These studies can shed more light on charisma's role in argument adherence.

My approach to extremism was mainly rhetorical, but other argumentative studies can be done through other perspectives. For example, the corpus of extremist discourses, both violent and non-violent, can be studied to identify argument types, dialogue types and fallacy identification. These studies can enhance our understanding of how extremists think and argue. The more we know about their ways of thinking and arguing, the better we will be at combatting the negative manifestations of extremism and encouraging the positive manifestations of extremism.

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