

Abstract

This work explores the links between extremist content and ontological security utilizing a single case study of the Christchurch manifesto. The objective is to apply Anthony Giddens's original concept of ontological security to radicalization and identify ontological security's role in radicalization. Radicalization occurs horizontally, meaning that a feeling of community is created and is engendered within the target individual. The existing literature primarily focuses on the role of theoretical models, which are largely multilayered and conceptualize the phenomenon as a process of escalation rather than integration. This explores how extremist content affects the individual on the level of ontological security and how ontological security may or may not be weaponized. It utilizes a mixed methods discourse analysis approach to reveal the intimate, intricate, and strategic nature of extremist discourse and finds that this discourse attempts to undermine an individual's sense of ontological security. Strategic goals are attempted by weaponizing grievances and socializing individuals through discursive tactics such as direct address, power and identity management, and framing. The findings are that extremist content and discourse is strategically oriented at destabilizing and undermining an individual's sense of ontological security.