

MIDAS-KAS CONFERENCE 2022

REGIONAL TERRORISM CHALLENGES AND COUNTER-VIOLENT EXTREMISM PERSPECTIVES

FUTURE OUTLOOKS ON TERRORISM AND COUNTER-TERRORISM

SOCIAL MEDIA AND EXTREMISM

THE TOOL FOR UNITY AND DIVISION

DR. NURUL MIZA MOHD RASHID

INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY OF MALAYSIA

“

AS THE UNITY OF THE MODERN WORLD
BECOMES INCREASINGLY A
TECHNOLOGICAL RATHER THAN A SOCIAL
AFFAIR.”

Marshall McLuhan
(Philosopher, Studies of
Media Theory, writer of "The
Medium is the Message")

SOCIAL MEDIA AND EXTREMISM

THE TOOL FOR UNITY AND DIVISION

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MEDIA AND
EXTREMISM

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IDENTITY, MEDIA
AND EXTREMISM

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FUTURE
PRACTICES

MEDIA AND EXTREMISM

“CONVOLUTED INTERRELATIONSHIP”

Matusitz (2015)

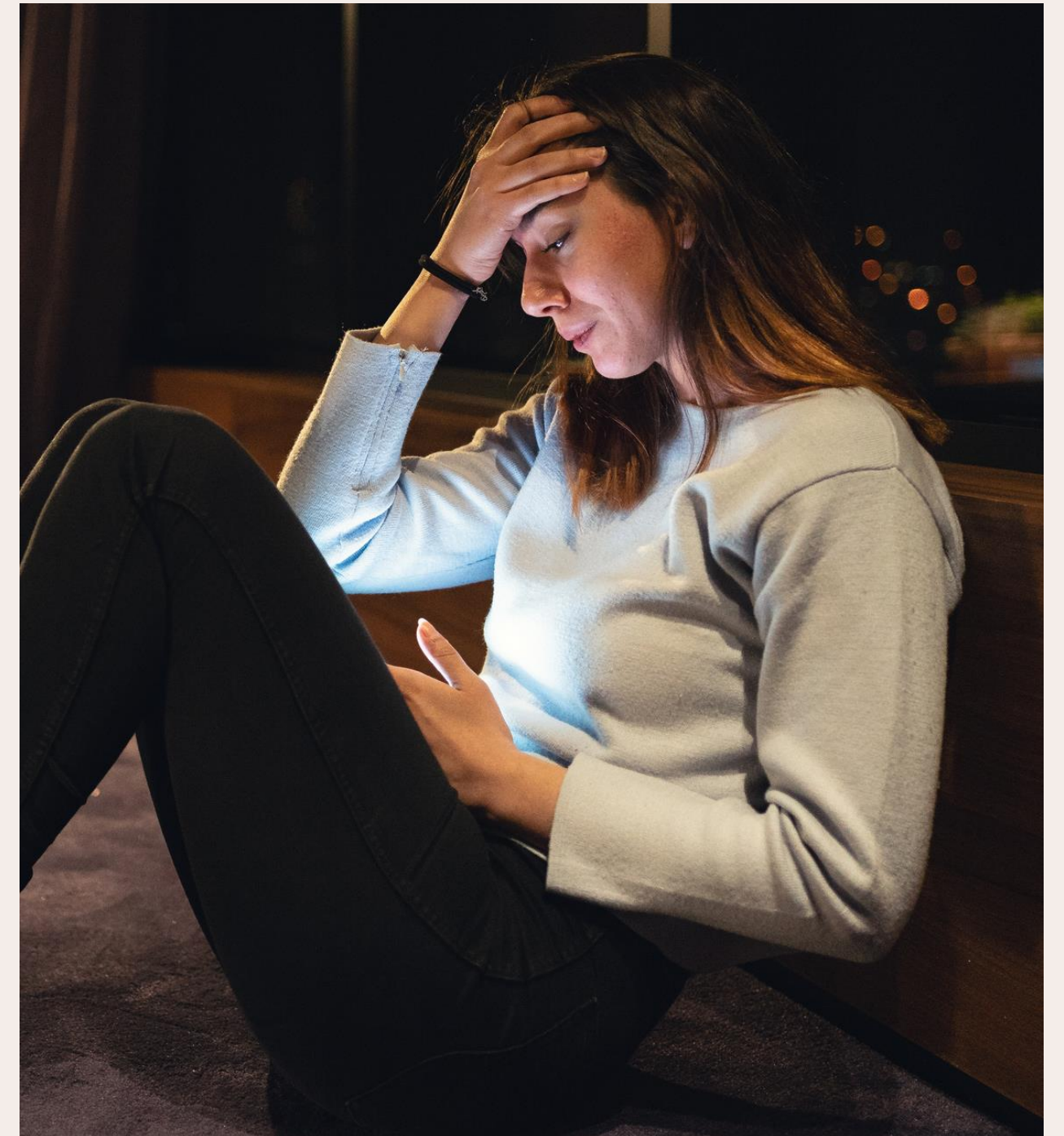


PUBLICITY IS THE OXYGEN OF TERRORISM

Margaret Thatcher

MEDIA AND EXTREMISM

Digital media itself is an open space for a wide range of audiences all around the globe that may find extremist content **interesting and attractive**. They might even search and **disseminate extremist content online**.



MEDIA AND EXTREMISM

Research and Practices need to consider:

- What are the **platforms** used?
- Whose **opinions** do they seek out? This could be a group or individual opinion.
- How do they engage and how frequently do they engage with the **content** and the **users** they identify on social media?

IDENTITY, MEDIA AND EXTREMISM

- Social identity theory posits that every individual **has a need to feel categorised or identify themselves with a social group to form an identity** (Abrams & Hogg, 1988; Stets & Burke, 2000; Tajfel & Turner, 2004).



IDENTITY, MEDIA AND EXTREMISM

- Creating an identity might allow an individual to identify to whom they belonged while teaching them those who are different to them.
- A process parallel to the radicalisation process creating extreme ideologies, there is “us” and there is “them”.

IDENTITY, MEDIA AND EXTREMISM



- Social media could assist individuals in continuously conducting activities to enhance knowledge related to their identity such as searching for information related to recent events to allow them to understand **how they should think and what they should do.**

IDENTITY, MEDIA AND EXTREMISM

- The **division** could occur due to differing values, opinions, and thoughts.
- **Unity** could occur as they identify more with those thoughts aligned with their identity.

INGROUP

HARMONY



INTERGROUP

CONFLICT



IDENTITY, MEDIA AND EXTREMISM

- The situation could be affected by **geopolitical factors**, e.g. war or pandemic.
- Users of social media all over the world not only rely on social media for news on recent events but also seek out for opinions of others to **know how they might or should feel about the situation.**
- Recruiters are well aware of this. There are instances where stories of events are personalised allowing users **to identify and feel more attached to the unfolding events.** These stories are shared on social media.

IDENTITY, MEDIA AND EXTREMISM

- It could be in two folds:
 - "**What if this happens to me?**" - identify with the story, UNITY
 - "**The person did something that harmed my people**" - labelling as "them", DIVISION
- Not just about the story - the divide could be also about finding people who agree or disagree with their thoughts and opinions.

FUTURE PRACTICES

- How do we overcome this?
 - Foster and encourage intergroup harmony through increased contact.
 - Encourage respectful intercommunication while valuing differences

FUTURE PRACTICES

- We need more research to look into this and more engagement among various academic experts, NGOs, professional practices, and community leaders down to our own citizens.

FUTURE PRACTICES

- There are still questions we need to ask:
 - How do we prevent individuals from being deeply influenced by the "us" vs "them" narrative to prevent violence?
 - In a democratic nation, is it possible to restrict social media communication to protect national and individual safety?

“

O MANKIND, INDEED WE HAVE CREATED YOU FROM MALE AND FEMALE AND MADE YOU PEOPLES AND TRIBES THAT YOU MAY KNOW ONE ANOTHER. INDEED, THE MOST NOBLE OF YOU IN THE SIGHT OF ALLAH IS THE MOST RIGHTEOUS OF YOU. INDEED, ALLAH IS KNOWING AND ACQUAINTED.

Surah Al-Hujurat (49) verse 13.



“

"THE ESSENCE OF THE BEAUTIFUL IS UNITY
IN VARIETY."

W. Somerset Maugham
(Novelist)

THANK YOU!

mizarashid@iium.edu.my