



## Perspektiven auf globale Politik

### AFK-EUPRA – 8: THEORIZE RADICALIZATION AND INEQUALITY

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#### AFK-EuPRA – Panel 8: Theorize Radicalization and Inequality

Chair: Thorsten Bonacker & Tarek Sydiq (University of Marburg, Germany)

Presenters:

#### Timothy Williams (University of Marburg, Germany): Conceptually Modeling Radicalisation in Genocide

Who is *Ângkar*? The nature of authority and responsibility under the Khmer Rouge. Former cadres of the Khmer Rouge today still speak of *Ângkar*, the organisation of the Khmer Rouge, with the utmost respect and subservience. Unlike in other genocidal regimes in which state actors played an important role, such as the NSDAP and SS in the Holocaust or Ittihad in the Ottoman genocide of the Armenians, *Ângkar* cannot be reduced merely to the name of the party organisation of the Khmer Rouge. Although *Ângkar* is a concept known to all in Cambodia and remains synonymous with absolute authority and the necessity for unwavering obedience, there is a broad variety of perspectives when trying to state who or what *Ângkar* actually is.

Literally, *Ângkar* means ‘the organisation’, but is commonly referred to as ‘the higher’ or as ‘the higher leaders’. However, when one digs a little deeper and ask who *Ângkar* actually is, various answers come up. The



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predominant understanding is that any higher ranking cadre than oneself was called *Ângkar*, but that a person never thought of himself or herself as part of *Ângkar*. However, *Ângkar* has a number of further connotations. While some people state that they do not know who *Ângkar* is specifically, others answer the question of who *Ângkar* is with the concrete naming of some of their superiors or Pol Pot, equating it with the Communist Party of Kampuchea, or even pointing to outside parties as *Ângkar*, primarily the Vietnamese. The paper then discusses how this conception of *Ângkar* has several consequences for how the regime was able to enact its authority, produce violence and how people remember their participation today. This understanding of *Ângkar* allowed people to unquestioningly follow its orders, displacing all responsibility for the consequences of these actions, while at the same time not feeling as part of the system. Also, it lent credibility to the omnipresent danger of being suspected of being an internal enemy as it gave *Ângkar* something akin to omniscience. And today, it means that people are still able to point to *Ângkar* when they talk about their participation in actions of the Khmer Rouge, distancing themselves from responsibility. Further yet, some former Khmer Rouge even claim victimhood for themselves, as they were also subject to *Ângkar*'s cruelty, as were the millions of others in the country, while negating that they themselves were perceived as part of *Ângkar* by the many others below them.

This paper draws on interviews conducted with 58 former members of the Khmer Rouge, conducted over a six month period of 2014 in ten different provinces of the country, as well as archival research in the Documentation Centre of Cambodia, particularly on notebooks of Khmer Rouge cadres written during the regime.

**Andreas Önnarfors (University of Gothenburg, Sweden) & Kristian Steiner (Malmö University, Sweden): Conceptualizing Radicalization. Cognitive and Behavioral Explanations in the Swedish Debate 2010-2016**

In December 2010, Sweden for the first time was hit by a home-grown Islamist terror attack. Taimour Abdulwahab detonated a bomb in central Stockholm but managed to kill only himself. Since this event, scores of Swedish nationals have participated in warfare in Syria and Iraq, a development that has placed the concept of 'radicalization' high on the agenda of security services, the debate in society in general and among scholars in particular. However, the contemporary discourse on radicalization in Sweden is trapped unproductively between two major positions. One of these positions can be branded 'securitizational' and behavioural and the other socio-cultural, cognitive and contextual.

In January 2016, the Swedish parliament organized an expert hearing on radicalization and recruitment to 'violence affirming' extremism in online environments where two governmental institutions displayed

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these two positions quiet obviously. Speakers from Centre for Asymmetric Threat and Terrorism Studies (CATS) at the Swedish Defence University claimed that tackling online radicalisation largely requires technical solutions and stronger national coordination/enforcement of (CT-) measures such as information exchange between public agencies. The Swedish Media Council (SMC) presented the outcome of a study on anti-democratic messages on the Internet aiming to incite young people to violence in the name of ideology or politics. They demonstrated that countering online radicalisation requires addressing its worldviews and narrative framings, thus, cognitive aspects such as the competence to critically analyse media content. Whenever the issue of radicalization is addressed, the debate unfolds around hard and soft approaches moving between proposals to raise either security or social coherence.

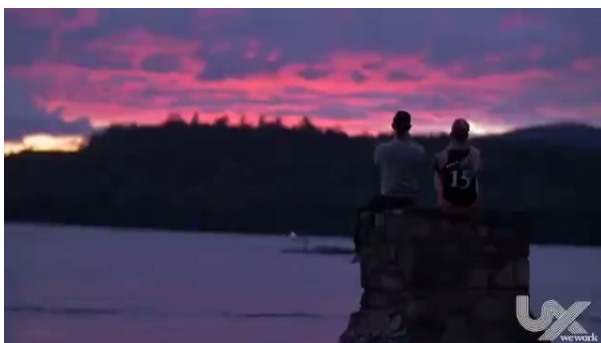
Our paper will investigate how the discourse on 'radicalization' in Sweden between 2010 and 2016 has been framed around these two almost irreconcilable vantage points and how policymakers and researchers alike have positioned themselves in relationship to them.

**Maik Fielitz & Philip Wallmeier (University of Frankfurt): Breaking (with) the System. Withdrawal as Radicalization**

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