

The role of propaganda in promoting ideological extremism and autocracy

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This chapter explores the role of cultural and historical vulnerabilities in the generation and maintenance of extremist political beliefs, focusing on the recent example of a once-democratic nation, Hungary, becoming an illiberal autocracy. Hungary is an especially interesting example of the rise and consequences of extremism, a European Union member country that has explicitly turned its back on liberal democracy by using extremist propaganda to promote autocracy. Data will be presented from representative national surveys and empirical analyses of linguistic representations from written historical documents to explore the origins and consequences of extremist beliefs. The chapter will conclude with a review of the implications of this analysis for (a) the empirical measurement of extremism, and (b) the prospects of linking populist beliefs to cultural and historical extremism.