

# Leor Zmigrod, PhD.

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## SUMMARY

Dr Leor Zmigrod's research utilises experimental psychology, computational cognitive science, political theories, social neuroscience, genetics, longitudinal empirical designs, and sensitivity to upbringing and culture, to tackle the question of what makes a mind ideologically extreme and prone to violence. This research is captured in over twenty publications in prestigious scientific journals including *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, *Politics and the Life Sciences*, *Current Opinions in Behavioural Sciences*, *Neuroscience & Biobehavioural Reviews*, *Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience*, *Current Directions in Psychological Sciences*, amongst others. She was recently the Editor of a state-of-the-art Theme Issue for the Royal Society on "The Political Brain: Neurocognitive and Computational Mechanisms" in *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B Biological Sciences*. Leor has spoken on this research widely, including the Festival of Ideas, TEDx, and BBC Radio, and received recognition through the Glushko Prize by the Cognitive Science Society, the Young Investigator Award by the European Society for Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience, Women in Cognitive Science Emerging Leader Award, Forbes 30 Under 30 in Science, and the United Kingdom's Women of the Future Science Award. Leor advises policymakers in the UK, USA, and Singapore on the psychological roots of radicalization and evidence-based counter-extremism policies. She also founded a cognitive science research assistantship scheme to promote STEM accessibility, diversity, and mentorship for people under 21. Leor is currently writing a popular science book titled *The Ideological Brain*.

## EMPLOYMENT

**Junior Research Fellowship** 2019-2022  
**Director of Studies, Psychological and Behavioural Sciences Tripos**  
Churchill College, University of Cambridge

**Guest Lecturer in Political Psychology and Neuroscience of Ideological Extremism**  
Department of Psychology, University of Cambridge

## EDUCATION

**PhD Psychology, University of Cambridge** 2016-2019  
*Supervisor:* Professor Trevor Robbins CBE FRS  
*Thesis Title:* The Cognitive Underpinnings of Ideological Thinking  
*Scholarship:* Gates Cambridge Trust; Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

**BA Hons Psychological and Behavioural Sciences** 2013-2016  
**Downing College, University of Cambridge**  
*Degree Class:* 1<sup>st</sup> Class  
*Ranking:* Ranked the best performing student in the PBS Tripos at the Department of Psychology, Cambridge for three consecutive years. Won the Cambridge University Press Psychology Prize.

## VISITING FELLOWSHIPS

**Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin, Berlin Institute for Advanced Study** 2022  
*Position:* College for Life Sciences Fellow

**Paris Institute for Advanced Study** 2021  
*Position:* Gretty Mirdal Junior Chair in 'Brain, Culture and Society'

**Legal Priorities Project** 2020  
*Position:* Summer Research Fellow on Ideological Cognition and Existential Risk

**Department of Psychology, Harvard University** 2019  
*Collaborators:* Professor Mina Cikara and Professor Fiery Cushman

**Department of Psychology, Stanford University** 2018  
*Collaborator:* Professor Russell Poldrack

## GRANTS & AWARDS

MHP 30ToWatchPolitics Gold Winner as Unifier of the Year	2023
Falling Walls Female Science Talent Champion	2023
BBC New Generation Thinkers Longlist	2023
Student-Led Teaching Commendation Award, University of Cambridge Student Union	2022
Women in Cognitive Science Emerging Leader Award Winner	2022
College for Life Sciences Fellowship, Berlin Institute for Advanced Study	2022
Beyond the Ivory Tower, The New York Times & Templeton Foundation Writing Grant	2021
Albert Einstein Fellowship Shortlisted Finalist	2021
Forbes 30 Under 30 by Forbes Magazine (Science & Healthcare)	2020
Women of the Future Science Award Winner	2020
Glushko Dissertation Prize, Cognitive Science Society & Glushko Foundation	2020
Young Investigator Award, European Society for Cognitive & Affective Neuroscience	2020
Legal Priorities Project Research Fellowship, Harvard Business School	2020
Junior Research Fellowship, Churchill College, Cambridge -	2019-2022
Paris Institute for Advanced Study Fellowship	2020-2021
Gates Scholarship, Gates Cambridge Trust	2016-2019
Fieldwork Award, Department of Psychology, Cambridge	2018, 2019
Treherne Studentship in Biological Science, Downing College	2018
John Maples Scholarship & Downing Association Prize	2018
International Convention of Psychological Science Travel Grant	2018
EnterpriseTECH Program, Cambridge Judge Business School	2018
PsyPAG Study Visit Award, British Psychological Society	2018
Alfred Monk Travel Grant, Downing College, Cambridge	2017
Vice Chancellor's Award, University of Cambridge	2016
Downing College Foundation Scholar	2016
British Psychological Society Undergraduate Award	2016
Cambridge University Psychology Department CUP Prize	'14 '15 '16
Downing College Association Prize, Cambridge	2016
Downing College Whalley Tooker Prize, Cambridge	2015
International School of Amsterdam Director's Award for Excellence	2013
Smith College Book Award for "Outstanding Young Woman in Community"	2013

## PUBLICATIONS

1. **Zmigrod, L.** (2022). A Psychology of Ideology: Unpacking the Psychological Structure of Ideological Thinking. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*. (IF=9.3; *Altmetric* = 45).
2. **Zmigrod, L.** (2022). Mental Computations of Ideological Choice and Conviction: The Utility of Integrating Psycho-Economics and Bayesian Models of Belief. *Psychological Inquiry*. (IF=6.3).
3. **Zmigrod, L.** (2022). Susceptibility to Violent Extremism and Cognitive Rigidity: Registered Replication, Corroboration, and Open Questions for Criminological Research and Practice. *Journal of Legal and Criminological Psychology*.
4. Ramakrishnan, S., Robbins, T.W., & **Zmigrod, L.** (2022). Cognitive Rigidity, Habitual Tendencies, and Obsessive-Compulsive Symptoms: Individual Differences and Compensatory Interactions. *Frontiers in Psychiatry*.
5. Gaffney, D. & **Zmigrod, L.** (2022). Historicising Creativity: An Interdisciplinary Perspective Between the Social and Natural Sciences. *One World Anthropology*.
6. **Zmigrod, L.**, Burnell, R., & Hameleers, M. (in press). The Misinformation Receptivity Framework: Political Misinformation and Disinformation as a Cognitive Inference Problem. *European Psychologist*.
7. **Zmigrod, L.** & Goldenberg, A. (2021). Cognition and Emotion in Extreme Political Action: Individual Differences and Dynamic Interactions. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*. (IF=4.7; *Altmetric* = 50).
8. **Zmigrod, L.**, Eisenberg, I. W., Bissett, P., Robbins, T. W., & Poldrack, R.A. (2021). A Data-Driven Analysis of the Cognitive and Perceptual Attributes of Ideological Attitudes. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences*, 376: 20200424. (IF=7.2; *Altmetric* = 588).

9. **Zmigrod, L.** & Tsakiris, M. (2021). Computational and Neurocognitive Approaches to the Political Brain: Key Insights and Future Avenues for Political Neuroscience. *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences*, 376: 20200130. (IF=7.2; *Altmetric* = 34).
10. **Zmigrod, L.** (2021). A Neurocognitive Model of Ideological Thinking. *Politics and the Life Sciences*, 1-15.
11. **Zmigrod, L.** & Robbins, T.W. (2021). Dopamine, Cognitive Flexibility and IQ: Epistatic COMT:DRD2 Gene-Gene Interactions Modulate Mental Rigidity. *Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience*. (IF=3.5).
12. **Zmigrod, L.**, Ebert, T., Götz, F.M., & Rentfrow, P.J. (2021). The Psychological and Socio-political Consequences of Infectious Diseases. *Journal of Social and Political Psychology*. 9(2), 456-474. (*Altmetric* = 101).
13. Ramakrishnan, S., Robbins, T.W., & **Zmigrod, L.** (2021). The Habitual Tendencies Questionnaire: A Tool for Psychometric Individual Differences Research. *Personality and Mental Health*, 1-14. (IF=3.9).
14. **Zmigrod, L.**, Rentfrow, P. J., & Robbins, T. W. (2020). The Partisan Mind: Is Extreme Political Partisanship Related to Cognitive Inflexibility? *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, 149(3), 407-418. (IF=4.9; *Altmetric* = 295).
15. **Zmigrod, L.** (2020). The Role of Cognitive Rigidity in Political Ideologies: Theory, Evidence, and Future Directions. *Current Opinion in Behavioral Sciences*, 34, 34-39. (IF=4.5; *Altmetric* = 214).
16. Rollwage, M., **Zmigrod, L.**, De-Wit, L., Dolan, R.J., & Fleming, S.M. (2019). What Underlies Political Polarization? A Manifesto for Computational Political Psychology. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 23(10), 820-822. (IF=15.4; *Altmetric* = 36).
17. **Zmigrod, L.**, Rentfrow, P. J., & Robbins, T. W. (2019). Cognitive Inflexibility Predicts Extremist Attitudes. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 10, 989. (IF=3.0; *Altmetric* = 106).
18. **Zmigrod, L.**, Zmigrod, S., Rentfrow, P. J., & Robbins, T. W. (2019). The Psychological Roots of Intellectual Humility: The Role of Intelligence and Cognitive Flexibility. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 141, 200-208. (IF=3.0; *Altmetric* = 119).
19. Ebert, T., Goetz, F., Obschonka, M., **Zmigrod, L.**, & Rentfrow, P.J. (2019). Regional Variation in Courage and Entrepreneurship—The Contrasting Role of Courage for the Emergence and Survival of Start-Ups in the US. *Journal of Personality*, 87, 1039-1055. (IF=5.1; *Altmetric* = 85).
20. **Zmigrod, L.**, Rentfrow, P.J., & Robbins, T.W. (2018). Cognitive Underpinnings of Nationalistic Ideology in the Context of Brexit. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 201708960. (IF=11.2; *Altmetric* = 268).
21. **Zmigrod, L.**, Rentfrow, P. J., Zmigrod, S., & Robbins, T. W. (2018). Cognitive Flexibility and Religious Disbelief. *Psychological Research*, 1-11. (IF=2.7; *Altmetric* = 84).
22. Zmigrod, S., **Zmigrod, L.**, & Hommel, B. (2018). The Relevance of the Irrelevant: Attentional Distractor-Response Binding Predicts Performance in the Remote Associates Task. *Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts*, 13(1), 15-23. (IF=4.3).
23. Khalighinejad, N., Schurger, A., Desantis, A., **Zmigrod, L.**, & Haggard, P. (2018). Precursor Processes of Human Self-initiated Action. *NeuroImage*, 165, 35-47. (IF=6.6).
24. **Zmigrod, L.**, Garrison, J. R., Carr, J., & Simons, J. S. (2016). The Neural Mechanisms of Hallucinations: A Quantitative Meta-analysis of Neuroimaging Studies. *Neuroscience & Biobehavioral Reviews*, 69, 113-123.
25. **Zmigrod, L.**, & Zmigrod, S. (2016). On the Temporal Precision of Thought: Individual Differences in the Multisensory Temporal Binding Window Predict Performance on Verbal and Nonverbal Problem Solving Tasks. *Multisensory Research*, 29(8), 679-701. (IF=2.5).
26. Zmigrod, S., **Zmigrod, L.**, & Hommel, B. (2016). Transcranial Direct Current Stimulation (tDCS) over the Right Dorsolateral Prefrontal Cortex Affects Stimulus Conflict but Not Response Conflict. *Neuroscience*, 322, 320-325. (IF=3.6).
27. Zmigrod, S., & **Zmigrod, L.** (2015). Zapping the Gap: Reducing the Multisensory Temporal Binding Window by Means of Transcranial Direct Current Stimulation (tDCS). *Consciousness and Cognition*, 35, 143-149. (IF=2.4).
28. Zmigrod, S., **Zmigrod, L.**, & Hommel, B. (2015). Zooming into Creativity: Individual Differences in Attentional Global-Local Biases are Linked to Creative Thinking. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 6:1647. (IF=3.0).
29. **Zmigrod, L.** (under review). Individual-Level Cognitive and Personality Predictors of Ideological Worldviews: The Psychological Profiles of Political, Nationalistic, Dogmatic, Religious, and Extreme Believers. <https://doi.org/10.31234/osf.io/srgup>
30. **Zmigrod, L.** (under review). Ideological Mind-Shaping or Brain-Shaping: Fusing Empirical Biopolitics and Political Philosophy of Mind. *Journal of Philosophy of Emotion*. <https://osf.io/45hx6/>

## EDITOR

*Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences* (IF=7.2)

“The Political Brain: Neurocognitive and Computational Mechanisms” (publication 22 February 2021).  
<https://royalsocietypublishing.org/toc/rstb/2021/376/1822>. Compiled and edited 18 manuscripts highlighting the use of computational, neurocognitive, and experimental approaches to the study of ideological behaviour.

*Political Psychology* (IF=4.8)

“Crowdsourcing the Next Generation of Ideas in Political Psychology” (call for submissions closed in January 2023  
- <https://www.next-gen-ideas.com/>)

## EDITORIAL BOARD

*Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences; Scientific Reports; Journal of Criminal Psychology*

## AD-HOC REVIEWING

*Nature Reviews Psychology; Perspectives on Psychological Science; Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences; Cognition; Scientific Reports; Journal of Experimental Psychology: General; Cortex; Current Opinions in Behavioural Science; American Psychologist; Nations and Nationalism; Attention, Perception, & Psychophysics; Self & Identity; Social Psychological and Personality Science; Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin; British Journal of Social Psychology; Journal of Research on Personality; Cognitive Neuropsychiatry; Frontiers in Psychology; Journal of Social and Political Psychology; Journal of Experimental Social Psychology; Journal of Philosophy of Emotion; Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences; European Psychologist; Behavior Research Methods; Group Processes & Intergroup Relations; Political Behavior; Politics and the Life Sciences; Psychological Science; Legal and Criminological Psychology.*

## SELECTED INVITED TALKS

Cambridge Festival, UK

United Nations Development Program Oslo Governance Centre, Norway

Department of Psychology, Harvard University, USA

Oxford Forum for Questioning Extremism, University of Oxford, UK

Hot Politics Lab, University of Amsterdam, NL

Political Behavior Seminar, SciencesPo, Paris, FR

Centre for Adaptive Rationality, Max Planck Institute for Human Development, Berlin, Germany

Michael S. Goodman Cognitive Seminar Series, Department of Psychological Sciences, Brown University, USA

Computational Political Psychology Seminar, City University of London, UK

Sorbonne and Paris School of Economics, Paris, FR

Hay Festival, UK

Social and Cognitive Neuroscience Colloquium, Hebrew University, IS

Political Psychology Preconference, Society for Personality and Social Psychology Convention, San Francisco, USA

4<sup>th</sup> Annual UK Political Psychology Conference, UK

Young Investigator Award Keynote, European Society for Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience, Budapest, HU

Cambridge Festival, University of Cambridge, UK

Ten Fourteen, German Federal Foreign Office and Goethe-Institut in New York, USA

Decision-Making and Voluntary Action Seminar, University College London, UK

Glushko Dissertation Prize Keynote Talk, Cognitive Science Society, USA

Advanced Data Analysis and Modelling of Executive Functions Workshop, NTU Singapore, SG

Harvard Intergroup Neuroscience Lab & Moral Psychology Research Lab, Harvard University, USA

Zlotowski Centre for Neuroscience, Ben Gurion University, IS

The Brains that Pull the Triggers Seminar, Paris Institute for Advanced Study, Paris, FR

Centre for Research and Evidence on Security Threats, Birmingham, UK

TEDx CambridgeUniversity, Cambridge, UK

BBC Radio Cambridgeshire

## MEDIA COVERAGE

*The New York Times, The Guardian, The Times, New Scientist, The Financial Times, TIME Magazine, BBC Radio, Guardian Science Weekly Podcast, Psychology Today, International Business Times, The Independent, Yahoo News, The Telegraph, The Harvard Gazette, Politics on the Couch Podcast With Rafael Behr, The Conversation, The Royal Society Blog, CAM, PsychCentral, The Cambridge Independent, Foreign Policy, South China Morning Post, N+1, Le Scienze, Science Presse, El Pais, De Standaard, Slate FR, etc.*

## INVITED ESSAYS

**Zmigrod, L.** (2021). Investigating Extremist Brains and Building Cognitive Resilience. *Partnership for Conflict, Crime, & Security Research*.

**Zmigrod, L.** (2021). Axes of Diversity in Peer Review Systems. *Royal Society Blog*.

**Zmigrod, L.** (2021). The Political Brain: Pioneering an Innovative Psychology of Ideology. *Royal Society Blog*.

**Zmigrod, L.** (2021). Will COVID-19 nudge minds and societies towards authoritarianism? *The Conversation*.

**Zmigrod, L.** (2020). Susceptible to dogmatism? New research suggests cognitive science can illuminate ideological extremism. *Brainwaves – CAM*.

**Zmigrod, L.** (2019). The Partisan Brain: Cognitive study suggests people on the left and right are more similar than they think. *The Conversation*.

**Zmigrod, L.** (2019). Extreme Democratic and Republican partisans display greater mental rigidity on cognitive tests. *PsyPost*.

**Zmigrod, L.** (2019). Cognition and religiosity: Who is most likely to believe? *PsyPAG Quarterly of the British Psychological Society (BPS)*.

**Zmigrod, L.** (2018). Brexit Psychology: Cognitive styles and their relationship to nationalistic attitudes. *London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) British Politics and Policy Blog*.

**Zmigrod, L.** (2018). Brexit: How cognitive psychology helps us make sense of the vote. *The Conversation / The Independent*.

*For an extended CV or more information on current research projects, policy engagement, or teaching, please contact Dr Leor Zmigrod at lz343@cam.ac.uk.*