**Social cognition \*in extremis\***

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Abstract:

Popular beliefs hold that danger brings out the worst in us. That is, people exposed to serious threats revert to antisocial and self-preservative behavior, leading to the disappearance of elementary social norms and the breakdown of social ties. In this talk, I will contribute to debunking this myth, and further explore what happens to human social cognitive capacities in threatening contexts. Specifically, (i) I will present data from a case study with survivors of the mass shooting that took place at Le Bataclan (13-11-2015 in Paris, France), to elucidate the nature of social reactions to deadly danger. Second (ii), I will present studies that explored, in the lab, the impact of exposure to a threat on social perception and coordination. Finally, I will introduce future research avenues. With climate change and the aggravated risk of disasters, the idea that societies (including animal societies) would collapse when confronted with disasters is prevalent. However, while much is known about how people socially respond to the actual presence of danger in disasters, how disasters affect our social dispositions in the long run is unclear. Future research, I believe, should work towards evaluating the idea that exposure to danger and the risk of resource scarcity brings the worst in us.