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# Identity, Significance, Sensation or Justice? Different Motives which Attract to Radical Ideas

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# Identity, Significance, Sensation or Justice? Different Motives which Attract to Radical Ideas

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People can be attracted to radical ideas for different reasons. In the present study, we propose four types of people attracted to such ideas due to different motives: the identity seeker, the significance seeker, the sensation seeker, and the justice seeker. To investigate this model, we conducted five narrative interviews with individuals who had disengaged during the early stages of radicalization (Study 1) and seven semi-structured expert interviews with staff of German deradicalization programmes (Study 2). Data were analyzed using a coding reliability approach to thematic analyses. The proposed typology was not supported in full, but the individual motivations making up the types were all reflected in the data, the most important being the need to belong, personal uncertainty, and need for status. This study's key finding is that rather than generalizing types of radicalization or types of ideology, it is productive to analyze individuals on the basis of their personal combination of psychological needs and the saliency thereof. We relate this to past research and discuss practical implications.

**Keywords:** radical ideas, radicalization, motivations for radicalization, qualitative data, interviews

**Acknowledgement:** A large set of variables was measured in this study. While the present article focuses on personal motives, risk factors and trigger factors of radicalization and deradicalization are described in detail in Reiter, Doosje and Feddes (2021). Consequently, parts of the methods section are very similar. We extend our deepest gratitude to Nadine Jukschat and her colleagues at the Criminological Research Institute of Lower Saxony (KfN e.V.) for conducting the interviews analyzed in Study 1 and providing us with the transcripts.

All models of the radicalization process currently in use recognize some set of factors – such as risk factors and trigger factors – that advance and shape the course of radicalization. Individual susceptibility to these factors varies; we argue that this susceptibility is modulated by personal motivational tendencies. Individual motives in the radicalization process have been discussed by various authors, but a comprehensive motivational typology had not been put forth until Macdougall et al. presented theirs in 2018. We included this motivational typology, which the authors derived from a review of the current literature, in our own comprehensive model, which combines motives and risk and trigger factors. This permitted us to conduct the first empirical exploration of such a comprehensive motivational typology, using a set of qualitative data from two small-scale interview studies. In

Study 1, we analyze interviews conducted with subjects who had displayed a certain vulnerability to and exploration of radical ideologies. In Study 2, we examine data gathered in semi-structured interviews with seven experts on the (de-)radicalization process. Thus, the present article extends the current state of research in several ways: Firstly, our model is the first to systematically unify motivational types, risk factors and trigger factors into one comprehensive model, allowing us to make some cautious observations about how they may exert combined effects. Secondly, we applied the same theoretical model to datasets from different groups in Study 1 and Study 2, which enables us to add to the state of research by comparing primary- and secondary-source perspectives on the radicalization process. This information is valuable for interpreting the results of previous research using sec-

secondary-source data, such as expert interviews. Finally, we conduct the first field exploration of the four motivational types developed experimentally by Macdougall et al. (2018).

### 1 Radicalization: Term and Process

Our analyses of the psychological needs and motives associated with radicalization are part of a larger study (Reiter 2018; Reiter, Doosje and Feddes 2021) in which we examined a four-plus-one stage model of (de-)radicalization, which conceptualizes radicalization as the process of accepting violence as a justified means of achieving certain political goals (Doosje et al. 2016). The phases of radicalization, derived from current literature (mainly drawing on Doosje et al. 2016 and Feddes, Nickolson, and Doosje 2017) and analyses of our own data, are: vulnerability, exploration, membership, and action. Deradicalization or disengagement (the former referring to beliefs and attitudes, while the latter refers to behaviour; Altier, Thoroughgood, and Horgan 2014; Dechesne 2011; Della Porta and LaFree 2012; Demant et al. 2008; Veldhuis 2012) can occur during any of these phases, implying that the process is not necessarily linear. The development of a radical belief system has been linked to the occurrence of violence: in two large-scale surveys, Doosje and colleagues (Doosje et al. 2012; Doosje, Loseman, and van den Bos 2013) successfully used the components of a radical belief system to predict both attitudes towards violence by other in-group members and a person's own violent intentions.

### 2 Motivational Typology

Different motivational structures – that is, different psychological needs – can modulate responses to radicalizing stimuli, such that even people with the same vulnerability factors respond to them differently (Cottee and Hayward 2011; Demant et al. 2008; Macdougall et al. 2018). These needs are relatively fixed predispositions to certain behaviours, perceptions, reactions, and motivational responses to stimuli. Existing typologies frequently highlight one aspect at the expense of others, resulting in overly simplistic or one-sided models. By contrast, Macdougall et al. (2018) present a comprehensive model unifying different strands of the existing literature, which encom-

passes four types: identity seeker, significance seeker, sensation seeker, and justice seeker. Each of these types consists of discrete psychological constructs, which Macdougall et al. measured using questionnaires and which we adapt to be applicable to qualitative data. Since Macdougall et al. were able to demonstrate with experimental data that the types they synthesized based on previous literature on the subject are all, to varying degrees, relevant to the radicalization process, we base our studies on their model.

The *identity seeker type* encompasses motivations concerning the person and their role in society: the need to know who they are, where and with whom they belong. It is described by Bjørge (2011), Choudhury (2007), Hogg (2014), King and Taylor (2011) – who also relate identity-related issues to experiences of discrimination – and Venhaus (2010), amongst others. A strong motivation of this kind causes heightened susceptibility to peer pressure and, as such, is the mark of a typical follower. Identity motives are not only the most prevalent in the theoretical literature (though perhaps on par with the significance seeker type); there is also evidence that such persons make up the largest group empirically: Venhaus (2010) defines four seeker types – identity, revenge, status, and thrill – and, in an analysis of N = 2,032 legal case files and interviews with former Al Qaeda recruits and other Islamized religious extremists (an alternative we suggest to the term “Islamist” which is problematic, as it seems to suggest that the religious extremism is something inherent to Islam), concludes that identity seekers are the largest group (40 percent). We operationalize the identity seeking type as high levels of need to belong and personal uncertainty (entailing the need for uncertainty avoidance). A person with a strong need to belong is highly motivated to belong to a social group, leading to behaviours aimed at integrating into a group and avoiding isolation. People with a strong need to belong are highly sensitive to social exclusion and emotionally dependent on being accepted by others. Personal uncertainty (dubbed emotional uncertainty by Macdougall et al. 2018, who used an emotional measure not applied in our interviews) describes feelings of uncertainty and insecurity concerning aspects of one's life and worldview, leading the person to seek out clear rules, strong

structures and black-and-white ideologies because they reduce uncertainty and increase security. People with high personal uncertainty tend to be rigid, anxious when confronted with sudden changes, and cope poorly with uncertain situations.

The *significance seeker type* describes anyone with a strong desire for significance, be it personal significance – a desire for high personal status – or existential significance – a desire for definitive answers to life’s existential questions. This type appears in most typologies, albeit under different names. Cottee and Hayward (2011) identify three “existential motivations”: the desire for excitement, the desire for ultimate meaning and the desire for glory, the latter two of which are identical to the components of significance seeking. Dugas and Kruglanski (2014) propose the “Quest for Significance Model”, in which a desire for personal significance and glory is the central driving force behind radicalization. This desire to enhance status and self-image (Doosje et al. 2016; Dugas and Kruglanski 2014; Venhaus 2010; Webber and Kruglanski 2018) differs from the need for transcendent existential meaning (Kruglanski et al. 2009). The significance seeking type is thus a compound of the constructs need for existential meaning and need for status, which motivate an attraction to ideological systems and figures that offer a clear worldview and a set of rules and behaviours aimed at enhancing social status, public image and self-worth stemming from the opinions of others.

A type which is less common in the literature is the *sensation seeker*. It is marked by a need for excitement (Bakker and De Leede 2015; Bjørge 2011; Cottee and Hayward 2011; Venhaus 2010) and a need for romance (Bakker and De Leede 2015; Gellin 2015; Hoyle, Bradford, and Frenett 2015). Need for excitement describes classic sensation seeking, that is, seeking out risky behaviours that produce a characteristic adrenaline rush, sometimes including dangerous and illegal activities, while need for romance describes a desire for short-term romantic entanglement, characterized not by serious emotional connection but by the excitement of newness and potential promiscuity. This is distinct from the desire for serious long-term emotional connection to a romantic partner, which is a possible iteration of the need to belong.

Finally, the *justice seeker type* is based on the concept of justice seeking as a general factor of radicalization, as described by Borum (2003) and van den Bos (2018), for example. Inter-individual differences in sensitivity to violations of fairness have been found in various studies (Gollwitzer et al. 2009). Need for justice describes a heightened sensitivity to injustice as well as a strong tendency to be motivated by the pursuit of justice, to react strongly and emotionally to unfair treatment, and to engage in behaviours aimed at meting out justice (according to the individual’s own definition).

We examined whether and to what extent the psychological needs underlying this typology were represented in our qualitative data. Aside from substituting personal for emotional uncertainty, as described above, we applied the motivational model of Macdougall et al. as described by its authors. We hypothesized, on the basis of our literature analysis, that the identity and significance seeker types would occur more frequently than the other two types.

### 3 Method

We conducted two qualitative studies: In Study 1, we analyzed data collected from interviewees in the initial phases of our process model (vulnerability and exploration). In Study 2, we analyzed data collected from expert interviews with staff employed in various German exit programmes (programmes which support members of radical groups who are willing to disengage). Approval was granted by the ethics committee of the University of Göttingen.

#### 3.1 Study 1

##### 3.1.1 Sample

Five anonymized interview transcripts were provided for secondary analysis by the Criminological Research Institute of Lower Saxony. These were narrative interviews conducted with young adults who self-identified as Muslim and had, over the course of their interviews, described some form of exploration of or contact with radical groups. None of the interviewees described serious involvement with such groups or criminal acts related to ideology. Participants were recruited via Facebook and Instagram based on self-identification as a devout Muslim. Profiles were set up

on both sites to advertise the study; persons wishing to participate simply contacted these profiles. Narrative interviews are a method (Schütze 1976) in which interviewees are presented with a general narrative prompt and then allowed to unfold their own narrative, choosing themselves which topics to focus on, uninterrupted by the interviewer except for clarifications. Our data set was selected by the interviewer from the total data corpus of twelve interviews, on the basis that interviewees should have had some contact with radical groups. This resulted in four female interviewees and one male interviewee (see Table 1), which is notable as males are often overrepresented in studies of and discourse around radicalization.

### 3.1.2 Interview

At the beginning of the interview, participants were asked to talk about their religious development, what had led to their self-identification as a devout Muslim, and which influences they considered important for this trajectory. The interviewees talked freely, without interruption except for clarification or elaboration on certain aspects, so as not to cut the narrative short or divert the focus of the interview from that chosen by the interviewee.

### 3.1.3 Analysis

Data were analyzed using a mixture of basic quantitative and theoretically guided qualitative methods. The qualitative analysis was guided by a coding-reliability approach to thematic analyses (Braun and Clarke 2016).

Two interviews were chosen at random for an initial reading and an initial coding system was developed based on previously researched literature. These codes were then applied to one of the initial interviews as well as a newly selected third one. During this step, the coding system was expanded inductively: Further recurring topics identified as relevant to the research questions were added as codes. The resulting final coding scheme was then applied to the entire data set. After all data had been coded, the codes were collated into meaningful themes. These themes were then reviewed, defined and named (see Reiter, Doosje and Feddes 2021 for details).

*Coding system.* The coding system included the seven psychological constructs underlying our proposed motivational typology (as described above) and various other codes which are not pertinent to the present article (but see Reiter 2018; Reiter, Doosje and Feddes 2021). The overall coding system (see Appendix 1) was adapted in an iterative process; however, the codes related to the proposed motivational typology in the present article were unaffected by these adaptations.

The smallest coding unit was a single sentence. However, if the same topic was expressed in more than one sentence without interruption by another topic, the entire segment was marked with the corresponding code once, rather than every sentence individually.

*Reliability/inter-rater agreement.* After all interviews had been coded by Coder A (the first author), Coder B received coding training from Coder A and then coded one interview. The training involved a compre-

**Table 1: Overview of participants in Study 1**

Code	Duration of Interview	Age	Sex	Nationality/Ethnicity	Educational Background	Relation to Islam
S1P1	120 min	21	f	German citizen with Turkish background	B.A. in Islamic Theology	Muslim from birth
S1P2	111 min	21	f	German without migration background	B.A. in Psychology	Convert
S1P3	136 min	33	f	German without migration background	Unemployed, no education beyond high school	Convert
S1P4	146 min	21	m	German citizen with Algerian background	B.A. Social Work	Muslim from birth
S1P5	141 min	24	f	German without migration background	B.A. Sociology	Convert

hensive instructional document and an additional question-and-answer session. Basic coding rules included the possibility and sometimes necessity to apply multiple codes to the same coding unit, the expansive application of codes (including the context if necessary), and application of most codes in both the positive and negative sense (to mark the presence or explicit absence or opposite of the code). The total number of codes used by Coder A was revealed to Coder B as a guideline.

As there were five interviews (10 hours 54 minutes total), the interview chosen for double-coding using a random number generator made up 22 percent of the data set (S1P4, in which S stands for “study” and P for “participant”; 2 hours 26 minutes). After Coder B had finished coding this interview, the initial degree of inter-rater agreement was established. Agreement was defined as each instance of the same code being applied by both coders to a coherent segment. However, the structure of the data and the way they were coded hindered the calculation of standard reliability indices; consequently, no statements can be made about true inter-rater reliability. Calculation of a reliability index requires the data to be pre-divided into a fixed number of units, resulting in a concrete number of data units on which raters agreed and disagreed, respectively. However, in our study, raters created the data units while coding. In other words, the data to which no codes were applied remained undivided into units – thus, we can count the units on which raters

agreed, but not those on which they disagreed. Consequently, our evaluation of inter-rater agreement is limited to the percentage of overlap.

Coders A and B then discussed all instances of disagreement in order to determine the cause of the disagreement and whether it could be resolved. For each instance of disagreement, the possible outcomes were resolution in favour of Coder A, resolution in favour of Coder B, or non-resolution. The level of inter-rater agreement was then re-assessed. Table 2 presents the resulting overlap before and after discussion. As demonstrated by the considerable improvement in inter-coder overlap post discussion, it was possible to resolve most conflicts; they were found to be mostly due to simple lapses of concentration attributable to the large number of codes or to uncertainty resulting from the occasional vagueness of the interview material. In several instances, the coders were able to agree on what would fall under the code’s definition but not on whether this was clearly enough implied in the data.

## 3.2 Study 2

### 3.2.1 Sample

For the second part of the study, semi-structured interviews were conducted with seven experts on the (de-)radicalization process. The target group were staff at German state- or privately-run exit programmes ( $n = 6$  and  $n = 1$ , respectively) – in other words, professionals who work directly with radical-

**Table 2: Inter-coder agreement per code, calculated before and after discussion**

Code	Overlap % 1*	Pre	Post
		Overlap % 2**	Overlap %
Need to belong	28.57	35.71	92.86
Emotional uncertainty	41.67	41.67	91.67
Need for justice	na	na	na
Need for sensation	na	na	na
Need for romance	50	50	100
Need for existential meaning	0	66.67	100
Need for status	80	80	100

*Note:* \* Basis of calculation: number of agreements (each agreement is coded as 1, each disagreement as 0) divided by total number of codes (sum total of codes used by both coders). \*\* After the first round of coding, Coder B received additional explanations of “Need for existential meaning”, which they had not understood completely or correctly. Coder B then had the opportunity to re-evaluate their coding before discussion of the interview with Coder A. The first two columns represent these two coding rounds. “na” stands for “not applicable” – this code did not appear anywhere and was correctly not coded by either of the coders.

ized individuals seeking help to leave their radical group (see Table 3). All these programmes pursue the same basic intervention approach (targeting disengagement before deradicalization by first helping the client to change their circumstances – for example, move, find a new job, build a new social circle – and then starting to work on their mindset). The state-run programmes have some advantages in terms of giving practical support to their clients in their everyday lives: They have funds to assist a client moving to a new city if this is necessary, and state employees are widely regarded as reliable and trustworthy which they can utilize to vouch for their clients when a landlord is hesitant to let an apartment to them or an employer is hesitant to hire them.

Participants were recruited via e-mail: First, we compiled a list of suitable programmes in Germany, which was complete to the best of our knowledge. The directors of these programmes were all subsequently contacted to ask for their cooperation. Interviews were conducted with everyone who responded to these messages. The interviews were conducted face-to-face at the interviewee's workplace in June 2018, recorded and later transcribed.

Our expert sample consisted of employees from programmes working on various types of ideologies: some worked on right- and left-wing radicalization, while others specialized in Islamicized religious extremism. Similarities between religious and political radicalization have been found in terms of risk factors (Doosje et al. 2012; Doosje, Loseman, and van den Bos 2013; Schils and Verhage 2017), individual motivations (Webber and Kruglanski 2018) and factors leading to disengagement and deradicalization (Barrelle 2014; Harris, Gringart, and Drake 2017; Webber and Kruglanski 2018). The minor differences that did occur between ideologies are discussed below.

### 3.2.2 Interview

Guiding questions (Appendix 2) for the semi-structured interviews were developed on the basis of the theoretical background and the findings from the data analysis in Study 1. The interview consisted of an introductory section (professional background, daily routines at work), a section on radicalization, another on deradicalization (both of which addressed recogni-

tion of different types of (de)radicalization as well as examples), and a concluding section in which the interviewees had the opportunity to provide concluding remarks, add information or ask questions.

### 3.2.3 Analysis

The interviews were transcribed using the software f4-transkript according to standard transcription rules (Fuß and Karbach 2014) and checked against the original audio recordings for accuracy. The methods of analysis and coding procedure were analogous to those used in Study 1. The order in which the interviews were coded was determined by a random number generator. As there were seven interviews (9 hours 36 minutes in total), the interview chosen for double-coding by a random number generator (S2P4, 1 hour 33 minutes) made up 16 percent of the data set. Table 4 presents the overlap between the two coders in percent before and after discussion. The strong increase in agreement after discussion paralleled that in Study 1.

Finally, the interviewees from Study 2 were provided with their own interview transcripts as well as a draft of the analyses. They were invited to respond and request corrections, but none of them did. The transcripts from Study 2 are available on motivated request to the first author; concerning Study 1, contact to the Research Center which provided us with the data will gladly be established upon request. For further details on the methodology see Reiter, Doosje and Feddes (2021).

## 4 Results

We hypothesized that the psychological needs making up the four seeker types introduced above would all be reflected in the data. Additionally, we hypothesized that evidence of identity and significance seeking would appear more frequently than the other two types. Figure 1 illustrates the quantitative portion of our analyses: a side-by-side comparison of the quantitative result patterns in both studies. Participants are labelled by study number and participant number; in other words, S1P2 refers to participant number 2 from study 1 (a disengaged person), S2P4 to an expert from study 2, and so on.



**Table 3: Overview of participants in study 2, including information on them, their programmes and clients**

Code	Information on participant and programme				Information on clients			
	Professional background	Ideology	Time at current job	Time in professional field <sup>2</sup>	Interview duration	Number of clients simultaneously	% voluntarily <sup>3</sup>	Average duration of treatment
S2P1	Social worker	I	2 y	10 y	01:09:03	14	50	2 – 5 y
S2P2	Police / security services	R/L	3 y	20 y	01:01:09	9	100	3 – 5 y
S2P3	Social worker	R <sup>4</sup>	2 y	28 y	01:14:14	13	“more than half”	5 y
S2P4	Police / security services	I	2.5 y	unknown	01:33:40	12	unknown	unknown
S2P5 <sup>5</sup>	Social psychologist	R	10 m	10 m	01:02:51	unknown	“more involuntary”	unknown
S2P6	Security services	R/L	14.5 y	unknown	01:32:22	14	“slightly more involuntary at the moment”	unknown
S2P7	Police / security services	R	17.5 y	unknown	02:02:56	5 (“a handful”)	100	3 – 5 y

Note. <sup>1</sup> I = Islamized religious extremism, R = Right-wing extremism, L = Left-wing extremism

<sup>2</sup> Work in roughly the same sector. For example, interviewee 2.2 has been with his current deradicalization programme for three years but has been a member of the police force for 20 years.

<sup>3</sup> All interviewees agreed that to some extent, all participants in the programmes have to be there “voluntarily” since their approaches do not include the option of working with people against their will. Percentage voluntary participants here refers to how many of the participants get in touch with the programme themselves, as opposed to being sent there by a judge, a parole officer etc.

<sup>4</sup> Responsible not only for right-wing extremism, but also for motorcycle gangs, allowing for comparisons between radical and non-radical group-based crime.

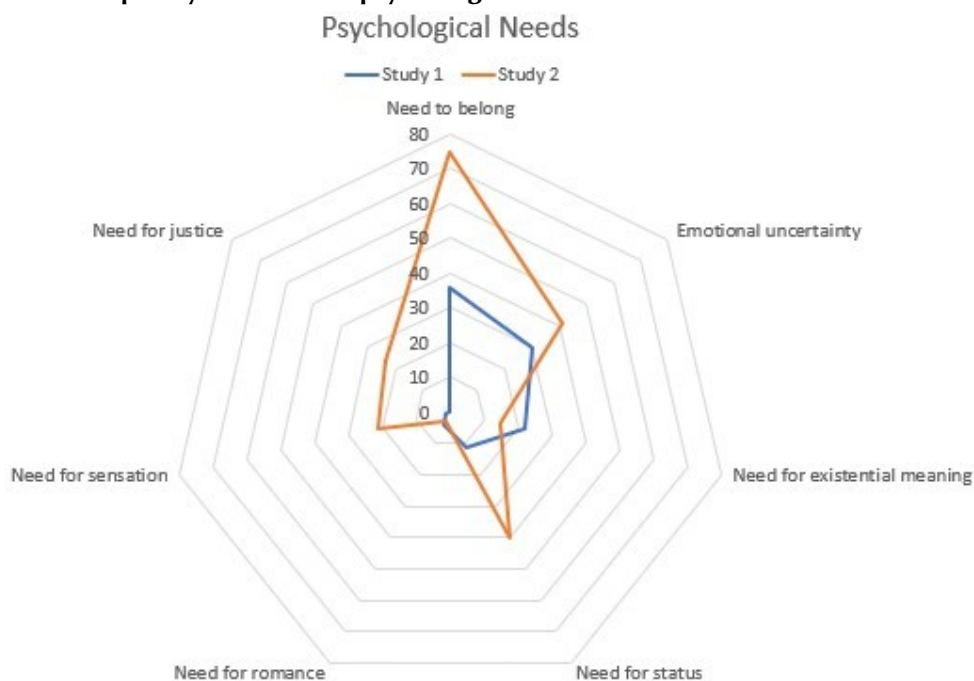
<sup>5</sup> Only non-state-run programme in the study.

**Table 4: Inter-coder agreement per code, calculated before and after discussion**

Code	Pre	Post
	Overlap %*	Overlap %
Need to belong	35.71	86.67
Emotional uncertainty	50	100
Need for justice	60	100
Need for sensation	100	100
Need for romance	100	100
Need for existential meaning	60	100
Need for status	40	80

Note: \* Basis of calculation: number of agreements (each agreement is coded as 1, each disagreement as 0) divided by total number of codes (sum total of codes used by both coders).

**Figure 1: Frequency of the seven psychological needs in the two studies**



Note: The numbers displayed represent the absolute number of times each need was coded across all interviews.

**4.1 Need to Belong and Emotional Uncertainty – Identity Seeker Type**

*Need to belong* was reported most frequently in both studies. The need for social belonging was considered a key factor by all experts, particularly for right-wing extremists. For example, S2P2:

“Conditions [at home] are often precarious, (...) and the children who are socialized like this don’t develop high

self-esteem, and then they search for people they can latch on to, for group membership – they are well-accepted in those groups, they are treated well, and in the end that is what causes this strong connection to the right-wing scene.”

Similarly, one expert named need to belong as one of the most important factors in deradicalization, at least for right-wing extremists: “What brings us rather a lot of people wanting to de-radicalize is the begin-

ning of a new relationship (...) with someone outside the scene” (S2P7).

*Personal uncertainty* was the second most commonly cited motivation in both studies. One frequently mentioned aspect thereof was uncertainty avoidance motivation, a longing for clear and strict rules, for example S1P3: “(...) [in Islam] there’s an answer to everything. Christianity doesn’t have that, no other religion has that.” This motivation also includes seeking out structure in general – for example S2P2: “(...) with a pure follower type, it’s very important to give him stability, and to replace the group with that – that works very well”. Another aspect concerned defining one’s identity and thus gaining personal security; for example, interviewee S2P3 described a strong need for gender identity affirmation as a way to combat feelings of uncertainty in life:

“There’s something very martial about the right-wing extremist scene, especially for the men, there’s a huge obsession with masculinity, everyone needs to have big [muscular] arms and so on. And for women, too, there are clear roles. And that offers a lot of security.”

Notably, the construct of gender identity is highly complex and could thus touch upon several psychological needs described in our typology. However, in the context of this interviewee’s quote, we argue that it is most strongly linked to identity-related personal uncertainty; seeking to consolidate one’s identity by investing in one’s association with a social group is in keeping with the principles of social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner [1979] 2004a, Tajfel and Turner [1986] 2004b). Putting effort into performing gender has elements of this, as this performance ensures that members of both the ingroup and outgroup recognize and accept the performer as part of the group.

There is some evidence in the data to support a coherent *identity seeker type*. Specifically, while the interviewees in study 2 produced various typologies, identity seeking appeared to be a constant: S2P2 described “classic followers” (which is in line with a distinction suggested by Bjørgo, 2011), insecure people willing to follow any group and ideology if it can give them structure and identity. S2P3 and S2P6 both distinguished radicalization due to ideological conviction from ideology used as a mere justifying re-interpretation of a pre-existing criminal career (labelling the latter “secondary radicalization”); this justification be-

comes part of the personal biographical narrative and thus serves to shape and define identity. S2P7 described the intersection of need to belong and need for personal security as the key element in his work:

“This has really been, throughout these seventeen and a half years, the central, recurrent theme in all de-radicalized clients’ biographies. It is very noticeable that, in most cases, the father figure was absent, and therefore they sought this father figure among older comrades, older like-minded people, just anyone who would take their hand and give them a feeling of security and [say] ‘I’ll give your life direction’. That is the mark of all de-radicalized biographies.”

And S2P1 explicitly stated:

“The identity type is certainly the largest portion. I think that’s – psychologically – also part of adolescence, [asking yourself] who am I, where am I from. For example, [let’s say] I have a Turkish background, I’m perceived as a Turkish person, but maybe I don’t even speak the Turkish language and I try to define myself via religion, to find my identity.”

#### 4.2 Need for Existential Meaning and Need for Status – Significance Seeker Type

*Need for existential meaning* overlapped to some extent with personal uncertainty, in that providing clear and simple answers to complex questions appeals to both of these needs. The need for existential meaning, purpose and answers to fundamental questions was more prevalent in Study 1 than in Study 2; for example, S1P3:

“Why am I alive, what is the meaning of my life? Christianity doesn’t provide an answer to that. Why did God create man? Yes, he wanted an image of himself, but why, Christianity doesn’t provide an answer to that.”

This difference might be related to the different data sources. Need for existential meaning is a profoundly personal, fundamental and potentially spiritual need, which interviewees talking about radicalization from a first-person perspective might be more likely to identify and describe than experts working with radicalized people, whose work tends to focus on hands-on support in rebuilding a life after radicalization. However, our sample is too small to make conclusive claims about the source of these differences in frequencies. Some interviewees in Study 2, leaning on the concept of primary and secondary radicalization explained above, theorized that people mainly motivated by a quest for existential meaning might also exist within non-religious radical groups, such as right-wing groups, but be less likely to seek out a de-

radicalization programme or even less likely to disengage in general. In any case, the experts reported that they rarely worked with people motivated by a need for existential meaning – for example, in the words of S2P3: “We do get those, the ideologues (...) but the majority are different.” The experts also indicated that the question of purpose needs to be considered when providing support to a client’s deradicalization process.

*Need for status* was an important motive in both studies and included instances of wanting to feel important, perhaps powerful, and thus seeking out behaviours that increase one’s social prestige – for example, S1P4 described a Salafist group he became affiliated with for a while thus:

“For me they were, whenever I saw them on the internet, they were stars, like celebrities. Then I really [personally] saw them in [city] and told them ‘I want to join you.’”

This can include a quest for dominance. For example, expert S2P1 elaborated:

“What I notice over and over again, and that’s not necessarily independent from a quest for identity, is a quest for power. (...) This quest for power in the sense of ‘I want to be looked up to and to be the one in charge’, that is, I think, a very important motivator – not for all of our clients, but for some. Especially those with narcissistic personality structures”.

Need for status is also closely linked to self-image. For example S2P3:

“(...) many say that in the beginning they were just tagging along, and then when the first crimes are committed, you just get carried away, and you feel very powerful, you think ‘wow, awesome, I’m a total hero now’”.

Consequently, self-esteem and self-efficacy beliefs are key elements of the resource-oriented approach to deradicalization work.

In summary, need for existential meaning and need for status are sometimes linked, but need for status also seems to be a key motive in the absence of need for existential meaning, as demonstrated by the fact that the former was far more frequent in study 2 than the latter. Need for status was overall described as the more prevalent motive. There could be a social desirability bias at play here; people might be less likely to admit to being motivated by a need for status themselves than to identify this motivation in someone else. The interviewees also described linkages between need for existential meaning and need for status with

other motivational needs. Overall, the two needs are not connected strongly and exclusively enough to speak of a coherent *significance seeker type*.

#### 4.3 Need for Romance, Need for Sensation and Need for Justice – Sensation Seeker and Justice Seeker Types

The *need for romance* and the *need for sensation* each played a minor role in Study 1. One interviewee (S1P4) mentioned that in learning more about Islam, he was hoping to become more appealing to Muslim girls. Another interviewee explained that young women are sometimes tricked into joining radical groups by promises of a romantic, better life in a new country (S1P1). She also explained that she briefly wore a niqab because it was a thrill to see how people would react to her on the streets. Overall, the results of Study 1 are not in line with a coherent *sensation seeker type*.

The results of Study 2 differed in that *need for sensation* was mentioned more frequently, although frequency alone is not an accurate depiction of the factor’s importance here. When asked about the importance of need for sensation in the right-wing extremist scene, interviewee S2P7 elaborated that it is merely secondary to, and therefore usually coupled with, a need to belong or need for status:

“If I want to go on an adventure alone, if I do something crazy alone, I haven’t gained any status with others with that. Okay, in the age of social media, I can post on Instagram about putting up some crazy posters on a church tower by myself or something, like the Identitarian movement [a right-wing group], but even they do it as a group activity, because (...) in a community, you’re stronger, that is true for both extremists and democratically minded people.”

This is in line with other interviewees’ descriptions: Need for sensation plays a role in prolonging membership in the right-wing scene, which can serve as a source of entertainment (involving alcohol, concerts, and occasionally violent confrontations with the police – all of which creates positive emotional ties to the group). Likewise, it has been described as pushing members of the Islamicized religious extremist scene to emigrate and become foreign fighters (in Syria, for example). It does not, however, generally seem to be a factor that can stand on its own as a motivation. The same seems to be the case for need for romance,

which interestingly was only mentioned by the two interviewees working with Islamist religious extremists (three times overall). Again, the results are not in line with the idea of a coherent *sensation seeker* type.

While *need for justice* was not mentioned at all in Study 1, it was mentioned twenty-four times in Study 2 – but again, frequency does not tell the whole story. Some classified a strong need for justice as common among the “primary radicalization” type, together with need for existential meaning, as described above; for example, S2P1, when asked about clients who had left for Syria: “The ideological conviction ‘I have to help them and I have to mete out justice’ was simply stronger”. Other experts had different thoughts about the need for justice: They stated that some of their clients were not genuinely feeling a need to mete out justice but rather using this claim as an excuse for their behaviour, a strategy for justifying their involvement in the radical group; expert S2P5 added that this strategy is also commonly used by radical groups themselves:

“I’d be careful about need for justice, because sure, that’s often what it looks like from the outside, all that ‘us against the others’ and ‘they’re so well off and we’re doing so poorly’, but I think sometimes that’s just a strategy, an argumentative strategy being used”.

Expert S2P2 theorized that where the need for justice is genuine and strong, deradicalization is unlikely. The concept of the *justice seeker* as an independent type does not appear justified from these results.

#### 4.4 Relations with Phases of Radicalization

We explored possible correlations between phases of our process model and psychological needs. It must be noted that our capacity to observe such relations was limited by the fact that our studies covered different parts of the process: The sample in Study 1 consisted of people who had deradicalized independently early in the process, while the experts in Study 2 talked about their experiences with people who had undergone the entire process of radicalization up to and including violent extremism. Bearing this in mind, we observed a pattern: Among those who were originally attracted to the radical group by their need to belong, emotional uncertainty and/or need for status, need for justice became relevant around the transition from the membership to action phase. The longer someone

is a member of a radical group, the more strongly they are indoctrinated by the group in terms of ideology and perceived injustices against the in-group; eventually, the individual begins to justify their behaviour in the name of justice.

#### 5 Discussion

In the present article, we examined seven psychological needs motivating (de-)radicalization and how these needs are related to one another. To this end, we conducted a two-part interview study utilizing different data sources. We hypothesized that our qualitative data would mention the seven psychological needs, nested in four seeker types, described in Macdougall et al.’s model: need to belong and personal uncertainty (making up the identity seeker type), need for existential meaning and need for status (making up the significance seeker type), need for sensation and need for romance (making up the sensation seeker type), and need for justice (the justice seeker type). Furthermore, we expected that identity seeker and significance seeker would be the types described most frequently and regarded as most important.

As expected, all seven needs were represented in the data, and those related to identity issues and social belonging were most frequently reported and most heavily emphasized. However, contrary to our expectations, there was too much overlap for a clearly demarcated typology to hold up; not only did most interviewees discuss several needs rather than one prominent need, but common combinations of needs transcended the typology. Personal uncertainty often interacted with need to belong when the quest for identity definition was a strong motive, while also interacting with need for existential meaning when people reported a strong desire for definitive answers and guidance. Additionally, if one were to create a typology based on the results of Study 2, there would be two broad main types instead of four: One main type would be people chiefly motivated by need to belong and personal uncertainty, while the other would be people motivated by personal uncertainty and need for status and the other needs (for sensation, for romance and for justice) would take a subordinated role at different stages of the (de-)radicalization process rather than consistently belonging to one type. Ulti-

mately, it is more useful to acknowledge the importance of each of these motives for what they are than to try and force them into coherent types.

Overall, the importance of these motives in our data is in line with previous radicalization literature, which has highlighted the central role of uncertainty and the quest for significance and definition as a motivator (van den Bos 2018, Dugas and Kruglanski 2014), as well as the role of the need to belong as a central motive in human behaviour in a broader sense (Baumeister et al. 2007, Baumeister and Leary 1995). The frequent coincidence of need to belong and personal uncertainty, indicative of attempts to gain security and define one's identity through association with a social group, is also in keeping with social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner [1979] 2004a, Tajfel and Turner [1986] 2004b). Associating oneself strongly with a social group can reduce uncertainty in numerous ways. For example, uncertainty about everyday life, what to think about certain things, what to do and how to act can be reduced by aligning oneself with a social group that prescribes a coherent set of attitudinal and behavioural rules. Similarly, uncertainty about one's identity and values can be reduced by making membership in a social group a central part of one's personal identity, as the group will typically provide a set of norms and values to guide attitudes and behaviour; for example, right wing groups typically have clear rules about whom their members should and should not associate with, which entertainment they should consume, how they should perform gender, which people are inferior to the ingroup and how these people should be treated. These rules may largely be communicated implicitly, but they are enforced through social sanctioning of non-compliance and rewarding compliance. However, social belonging is a basic human need that goes beyond uncertainty reduction and identity construction; in other words, while in some people need to belong and personal uncertainty overlap, and they seek out group membership as a way to define themselves and give themselves structure and rules, other people who report need to belong as a motive simply join radical groups because they are lonely. This is why it is important to consider these psychological motives individually.

Regarding personal uncertainty and need for status, it is important to highlight the multiple facets making up need for status. In both studies, the word "power" was frequently used, and the concept of power-seeking was highlighted as a central motive. Of course, power and status are not identical; power is the ability to achieve and control certain things, to successfully pursue one's interests and exert social dominance. Status and power are closely linked: Having real power in some area of life will boost an individual's status in their peer group, but at the same time, having a certain status in a peer group will give an individual a spot in that group's hierarchy and give them power over those beneath them. Our interviews indicated that while the actual power achieved in a radical group is often limited, it is the subjective feeling of power that people with a strong need for status motive seek. These are often people whose social status is low, for example because they are unsuccessful in their education or career and aware or convinced that they are unable to change this; these circumstances can negatively impact self-efficacy beliefs and self-esteem more generally. However, these deficits can be compensated by achieving power, status and agency in some other area of life. In short: When a person believes that they have a low social status due to frequent experiences of failure and believes they are unable to change this, they may reorient toward the more limited social hierarchy of a new ingroup, such as a radical group, within which they are able to improve their social status through their actions.

A possible third main type derived from the expert interviews can be described as "the ideologue" or "the primarily radicalized" – a type unifying need for existential meaning and need for justice, and marked by a strong and primary commitment to the radical ideology, as opposed to adopting the ideology as a means to other ends. This motivation was described more often in Study 1 than in Study 2, perhaps due to selection bias. As one of the interviewees explained, people who radicalized due to this motivation tend to be more deeply and genuinely committed to the ideology and are therefore less likely to seek the help of a deradicalization programme; this could explain why almost all experts mentioned this type of radical, yet al-

most none of them reported having come across such a case in their programme.

Additionally, source bias might be at work: On the one hand, because need for existential meaning is conceivably a more socially desirable motivation than need to belong or need for status (social isolation, loneliness, and low self-esteem are all perceived as undesirable qualities, whereas a need for existential meaning can be stylized into something profound and heroic), people might be more likely to claim this motivation for themselves in their self-reports than experts talking about people they worked with. On the other hand, this motive might also have been present in the people the experts worked with, but not quite within the focus of the experts, who tend to focus on more hands-on factors they can utilize in their work (such as job prospects, changing the social environment, etc.).

In contrast to these most common needs, the needs for justice, sensation and romance seem to play a merely supporting role; it is common for people to join radical groups because of other motives, but once they are a member, they are offered adventure, romance and/or the conviction that they are acting in the name of justice, and these factors add to the group's attractiveness. The different roles these motivational needs seemed to play in the process according to our interviewees suggest that the proposed typology did not describe the data well, and any attempt to frame them within an alternative typology would likely prove equally restrictive; hence these needs are best examined individually, as this allows the model to be more flexible.

Finally, it is notable that the meaningful differences lie between motivations, rather than ideologies (political or religious). The attractiveness of a particular group or ideology varies according to the psychological needs currently salient to a person. We found that often, when people are motivated by a need for identity and a need to belong, ideology is basically interchangeable – the group selected is simply the first group to come along and offer something that meets the person's needs. Other groups focus on specific motivations – one example from Study 2 was the PKK, a radical pro-Kurdish group which appeals exclusively to people of Kurdish ethnicity who are moti-

vated by a need for justice and existential meaning. One notable difference between ideologies concerned the reintegration process after disengagement: a difference in stigmatization. An expert reported that former left-wing extremists face the fewest obstacles and least social stigma when trying to return to mainstream society, while right-wing extremists and former Islamicized religious extremists frequently face grave problems (in Germany – this order is likely to vary interculturally). The expert reported this observation, but had no conclusive explanation for it; one factor might be that left-wing extremism is simply much less prominent in the German public debate than the other two types and when it does come into focus, it is typically related to property damage rather than personal violence or terrorist attacks. Another factor might be that the ideology behind left-wing radical movements is perceived as more utopian rather than purely hateful. However, this is speculation and any such perceptions depend on the cultural context.

### 5.1 Limitations and Strengths

While a larger sample size is always desirable, this factor is not as problematic in qualitative studies like the present one, because generalisation is not the goal. However, the small sample is worth noting, as is the particular composition of the sample in Study 1: The sample was almost exclusively female, with only one male out of five interviewees. This is atypical, considering that radicalization and ideologically motivated crime are a predominantly male issue (see, for example, Statistisches Bundesamt 2018, 28).<sup>1</sup> The issue of gender differences in radicalization is an important one, and systematic research on this topic is needed; however, our own capacities to discuss these are limited due to the asymmetry in our data sets. While our data from Study 1 exclusively concern the early stages of radicalization among subjects who were largely female (four out of five), the experts in Study 2 work with clients who went through the final stages of radicalization and, in many cases, committed crimes in

<sup>1</sup> Articles 129a to 130 Par. 4 of the German Penal Code concern various ideologically motivated crimes; note that in the criminal prosecution statistics referenced here, the rows marked with *i* stand for the total number of crimes and the rows marked with *m* for the number of crimes committed by males. The statistics show that the perpetrators of all these ideologically motivated crimes were mostly men.

relation to this. Hence, their knowledge is based on a more representative – mostly male – sample. Insofar as the patterns in our results overlapped between the two studies despite this asymmetry, this can be considered an argument for their robustness.

Secondly, neither the sampling nor the interviews were conducted with a focus on radicalization: we received a sub-sample from a study on Muslims' religious development conducted among a sample of self-identified devout Muslims with a very open methodology, and the selection criterion for the sub-sample was contact with radical groups. Both this sampling and the open, non-specific interview method likely resulted in us missing out on information that might have otherwise been gained from more targeted interviews. There was a second, related sampling issue in Study 1: Since all participants had disengaged during the early stages of radicalization, the information gained from these participants is very particular. Arguably, people who disengage very early could be expected to be systematically different from those who disengage very late in the process. However, our results from Study 2, in which we collected secondary-source data by interviewing experts about people who had gone through the final stages of radicalization before disengaging, largely replicated the patterns found in Study 1 (except for some differences regarding need for status and need for existential meaning). Thus, we conclude that our different data sources actually speak to the robustness of the patterns found.

At the same time, the methodology of Study 1 has some advantages, particularly in combination with the data from Study 2. The very open narrative interview format gave participants room to set their own focus and highlight the factors that seemed most important to them in their own development. The combination of primary-source and secondary-source data from the two studies, respectively, allowed us to offset potential biases in each data source (social desirability in the first and lack of insight into certain aspects in the second study, as explained above concerning the examples of need for existential meaning and need for status) and examine motives for radicalization from different points of view. The fact that the distributions of psychological needs were largely the same in both studies speaks to the validity of the motivational

model we explored. The central motives discussed by researchers and combined in the model by Macdougall et al. seem to accurately reflect what is central to people who have experienced radicalization first-hand and what experts experience in their work.

Finally, potential reliability issues limit our data's interpretability. As explained above, the structure of our data and the way they were coded did not allow for the calculation of any of the conventional indices. As a result, the only index of interrater agreement that could be established is the percentage overlap, which is a limited indicator of reliability.

That said, although interrater agreement on most codes was mediocre during the first round of coding in both studies (Study 1:  $M = 55$  percent; Study 2:  $M = 64$  percent), the coders reached 100 percent agreement on the majority of codes after discussion. Agreement for the first round of coding also improved overall between Study 1 and Study 2, which is indicative of a learning curve. This demonstrates that the coding system was complex and extensive, which placed a burden on the coders' concentration, but was reasonably clear and applicable overall. In particular, inter-coder overlap for the psychological needs was higher in comparison to the other factors included in the complete coding scheme.

## 5.2 Implications

The key findings from our study for practitioners are firstly, that underlying psychological motives affect individuals' sensitivity to different (de-)radicalizing factors – as demonstrated by the finding that different psychological needs make different radical groups and ideologies appealing to the individual – and, secondly, that rather than try to find an ideal typology, it is useful to observe the psychological needs salient for a person and how they might change over time, as often multiple needs are present and their saliency may change depending on the extent to which they are being met. For example, if a person's need for status is very strong, a practitioner may help them to disengage from their radical group by employing measures that increase their self-esteem and perceived social value, such as career development measures, education, volunteer activities, etc.



Notably, we do not have the data to conduct an in-depth comparison of radicalization and deradicalization in this study, but we can observe that in general, the motives behind deradicalization will likely be connected to those behind radicalization. It is important to realize that when people enter the deradicalization phase, they may also enter a new phase of life, in which their original motivations may be fulfilled in another manner. For example, people who were motivated to join a radical group by sensation seeking may want to find alternative ways to fulfil this need for sensation, such as an exciting and physically challenging sport.

Our findings should also encourage researchers to think of political and religious radicalization not as two entirely separate and fundamentally different phenomena, and instead focus on each person's individual underlying psychological motives. Finally, given the crucial role of need to belong in the pre-existing literature and our study, policy measures which foster social inclusion of groups vulnerable to radicalization – such as initiatives facilitating employment and education or policy communication which lessens the perceived intergroup gap – should be seen as forms of preventive measures. In general, initiatives to support at-risk youth by promoting social inclusion, self-esteem and self-efficacy are the most basic forms of radicalization prevention a state can undertake and can be expected to affect a large portion of those at risk for radicalization.

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## Appendix 1

### All Codes Used in Study 1, Sorted Within Categories by Frequency of Usage and Including Definitions and Examples

Theme	Code	Definition	Number of instances	Example <sup>2</sup>
Phases	1V	Vulnerability phase: a period during which a number of risk factors are present making the individual susceptible to radical ideologies (as well as other harmful influences).	0	-
	2E	Exploration phase: a period during which the individual is actively seeking to engage with and acquire knowledge about a potentially radical ideology.	23	1.1: "For example, when I started to become religious, I followed some Muslim websites, so to speak, then I followed some other websites and eventually a lot of Muslim sites which were posting about Islamic topics and so on. And I don't remember how I got into the WhatsApp groups, but I suppose I somehow met some girls, the stuff I posted was the sort of thing through which one would meet other girls, for example in the comment section (...)"
	3M	Membership phase: a period that starts with the individual joining a radical group (physically or perhaps virtually) and lasting for the entire period during which the person remains in the group	9	1.4: "(...) to me, when I kept seeing them on the internet, they were like stars to me, like celebrities. So I really met them in [city] and I said 'I want to join you, please,' immediately, the first time I saw them. They said 'Yes, please come by tomorrow,' we talked about everything, how everything would go and so on and then I joined them."
	4A	Action phase: a period during which the individual partakes in violent group activities or engages in criminal or generally violent activities because of their ideology and/or group membership.	0	-
	5D	Disengagement/ deradicalization phase: a period during which the individual physically or mentally distances him- or herself from violent actions, a radical group or the radical ideology itself.	9	1.4: "(...) until it got very extreme due to this hatred for the Shiites and I got blocked [on a social media website] and then I told myself 'No, if you do this kind of thing again, you might be reported to the police or something,' and since I've

<sup>2</sup> All interviews analysed here were conducted in German. Examples selected here were translated for publication by the author. (...) stands for parts omitted from the citation for brevity's sake, content in [ ] indicates author's remarks or additional contextual information.

Micro-level	T_dom	Domestic problems: any grave problems within the domestic sphere, examples include financial problems in the family, intense intrafamilial conflict, or problematic behaviour by family members, such as crime, drug abuse etc.	46	never caught the police's attention and hopefully never will, I told myself 'You better just stop this,' and well." 1.2: "(...) my parents separated very early. They'd gotten married in secret because of my dad's parents, they are very narrow-minded. (...) So I basically grew up within the custody battle between them (...)"
	T_disc	Discrimination, racism and general exclusion: any experiences of racially or non-racially motivated exclusion, such as bullying, verbal attacks aimed at perceived group membership, etc.	42	1.1: "Once when I was 14, during gym class, my teacher said to me 'I heard you were getting married off against your will. Is that true?' And I told him 'No, that's not true,' and in that moment, when I said that, I thought 'How will I know if he believes me? Maybe he doesn't believe me.' And I felt so... disgusted, because I felt like my word had no value, like oh these oppressed women, we feel so sorry for them and when they speak, they only say whatever they say because they're being forced to say it, that's how I felt."
	T_persp	Lack of perspective in the academic or professional sphere: experiences of academic failure or lack of perspectives on the job market.	23	1.4: "(...) in 2014, I had to repeat my final year of high school, because I was always... at the prison, visiting both of them [his parents], and I didn't yet know what was going on at the time."
	T_aut	Negative experiences with authorities: encounters any official representatives or employees of the state (police, administrative bodies, etc.) that were perceived negatively.	17	1.4: "And then, on January 4, the police came with seven policemen, they kicked in the door and chased me out of bed, they asked where my father was, etc., [so I said] 'At the gym I guess,' then I called there and he came home and promised me he would come back home tomorrow, and they took him with them. (...) And then I asked the policemen 'Can I please call my mother, this is all too much for me right now?' and they said 'No, you don't need to, and please speak German when you talk to your father' (...) and then I found out that my mother had been arrested in [city] while she was transporting [my father's drugs]. And that was why she was not home yet."
	T_death	Encounters with death: deaths of family members, friends or any other people of significance to the individual; confrontations with	9	1.3: "My mother suffered from Lyme disease and cancer and died when I was 14, so I didn't grow up completely normally, that doesn't happen to everyone."

		one's own mortality.		
	T_det	Detention: Any amount of time spent in police custody or prison.	0	-
Meso-level	T_socb	Cutting social bonds: any instances in which the individual initiates the termination of a social relationship, usually in the course of and due to their increased commitment to an ideology.	18	1.4: “[My social circle] became smaller. That was the change. I made very few new friends, but I cut ties with many, many more of them. Like I said, it was never because of who they were as a person, but more because they had different hobbies or interests from which I was seeking to distance myself, because they weren't relevant to me. And for example, I used to love hookah, smoking hookah, and we used to have these evenings where we smoked hookah and played on the Playstation, FIFA, guys' evenings, and I turned my back on that, because I turned my back on the hookah, because I didn't want to do that anymore, and I knew that they were always drinking alcohol, and I didn't want to take part in that anymore.”
	T_mrg	Marriage (to a radical person as a radicalizing factor or to a non-radical person as a protective/deradicalizing factor).	11	1.1: “(...) and now we've been married for one and a half years and I'm very happy and very satisfied, and I am glad that our marriage is going well. I'd rather be tested by God in all other areas and have difficulties anywhere else but in my marriage. So I am really very happy and super satisfied.”
	T_prpg	Encounters with propaganda: encounters with materials intended to propagate a radical ideology, such as public sermons, pamphlets, books, websites, propaganda videos on YouTube, etc.	9	1.1: “And the standard run of the mill Muslim can't differentiate there, because they all sound like they're right, they all have good arguments, and you think, okay, who's right here, and everyone just picks someone, I know many people who got into this via the internet. On the internet, there's just... there's everything, from A to Z, and you never know, okay which one is the classic, normal [version] and there are many sects there and many people can't differentiate between them, they just think, yes this must be right, this sounds logical. And then I also got into Salafism somewhat (...).”
	T_grp	Joining a radical group: becoming a member of a physical or virtual radical group (including on social media).	7	1.1: “And... mostly through the WhatsApp groups and Instagram, so social media, definitely, mostly social media, because these people are mostly active on social media, they don't go outside or anything, well

	T_meet	Meeting a radical person	4	they do go outside, but they don't go to the mosque. There are hardly any Salafists at the mosque." 1.1: "There are some Salafi mosques where the Salafists meet. And that's how I got into this. But it only went on for two, three months. There are people who were there for two, three years."
	T_cmp	Participation in a training camp/ course: participation in one or more events organized by a radical group and specifically designed to impart their ideology or prepare participants for radical actions.	1	1.4: "We always had these seminars... where I thought all the people, or most of the people who were there... weren't quite right in the head, but that's a different matter."
Macro-level	T_igatk	Perceived attacks on the in-group: 11 the individual perceives that an action by an individual, a group or even a government is an attack on not just one or several people, but on the individual's in-group as a whole. The individual therefore feels victimized even though the action in question may not affect him or her directly.	11	1.3: "What's the problem if a student goes to pray for five minutes during lunch break? The others stand in the corner and smoke. What's the problem? There's no need for a separate prayer room, no one's asking for that. But why can't they just go stand in a corner and pray? There's a big fuss around this, you talk about religious freedom, but we can't pray in school anymore, what do you want? That only leads to hatred."
	T_plcy	Governmental policy aimed at radicalization or at the in-group: the individual reacts adversely to governmental policies aimed at the prevention of radicalization or the facilitation of deradicalization (for example state-run exit programmes) or at the in-group (for example laws affecting a particular religious group).	6	1.3: [Talking about a new law prohibiting women from driving a car while wearing a burqa or niqab]: "It's nonsense, it does not serve the purpose of the law. Because it's not like there are reports in the media, millions of women wearing face veils are not paying their fines because they're not recognizable [in the pictures taken by traffic cameras]. That's not the case. There's a 60 euro fine for that now. And I don't know that there are any media reports during Carnival [Mardi Gras], all the people in Carnival masks are not identifiable, so they go unpunished for driving over the speed limit. This law was only put in place because banning burqas completely in Germany would not be legally possible, so they ban them at the wheel instead."
	T_cfact	Calls for action: a radical group calling its members to action and others to join them, for example, IS announcing its founding in 2014.	1	1.1: "(...) that was also in 2014, that was also the year the IS was declared (...)"
Risk factors	R_igid	Ingroup identification: the degree	17	1.1: "(...) if there's a Muslim in a class and

	of in-group identification determines to what extent an individual feels that belonging to his or her in-group is central to his or her identity.		then a topic comes up [connected to Islam], that person is always the spokesperson, always the expert on Islam, even though sometimes that's really... my sister is 12 and she is being treated just like that in her class, even though she doesn't have a clue."
R_soc	Harmful social environment: the harmful absence or presence of social relationships; the former might be a non-existent or poor relationship to attachment figures or other significant people in the individual's social environment, the latter might be the presence of social relationships with people who engage in and encourage criminal activities, drug abuse and other similar harmful behaviour.	10	1.4: "I had many Russians in my school, Albanians too, and I was hanging out only with them, but they weren't good people, or good children at that time, they were the kind to screw things up, to throw stones through windows and so on. They were all in contact with Child Protective Services, and so they drew me in with them, and let me put it this way, if they already were this bad back then, and I'm speaking from experience based on cases I'm in charge of now [the interviewee has since become a social worker], and nothing was done about it, it must get worse, and eventually, they'll be criminals. And had I grown up there and had no one helped us, then we would have become criminals as well."
R_iganx	Intergroup anxiety: Feelings of anxiety related to perceived intergroup conflicts and the consequences these conflicts might have for the individual.	8	1.1: "And in the very beginning, I was scared, even though I have many Christian friends as well, who are also very religious, and I get along with them very well, and even though I liked to meet with them, I was still afraid to do something with non-Muslims. I was just scared of being exposed to these prejudices again."
R_men	Mental health issues: reported diagnoses or symptoms strongly suggestive of diagnoses.	8	1.3: "(...) I went to a boarding school in Denmark in 2001, I was feeling heartbroken and somehow I couldn't cope with school, and so, stupidly, I attempted suicide, and then I came back to Germany, to a psychiatric... a special depression ward... I learned a whole lot about depression, which didn't really help. I don't think all these psychiatric wards are really any help."
R_pinj	Perceived injustice: the perception that a group, most likely the individual's in-group, is being treated unfairly.	5	1.4: "I didn't use to think like this, I used to say 'Terrorism is caused by the West, everything is always the West's fault.'"
R_depr	Perceived relative deprivation (individual or collective): the percep-	4	1.4: "Muslims here in Germany are given many opportunities, but not this one, not

		<p>tion that the individual or the individual's in-group is somehow at a disadvantage compared to an out-group.</p>	<p>when it comes to having a really honest dialogue, and that is the problem."</p>
	R_pt	<p>Perceived threat (symbolic or realistic): the perception that there is a threat to symbols representative of the in-group or to the in-group in economic or physical terms.</p>	<p>1.1: [talking about her mother]: "She also didn't want me to wear the khimar [a head covering/veil covering the head, neck, and shoulders; more extensive than the hijab], because she was scared something would happen to me. She said 'I'm scared that someone will attack you' or something like that, because we know a woman who wears a normal headscarf, she comes from [city], and for example, when she was at the train station, someone hit her on the head and so on, even though she wears trousers and is dressed normally, she doesn't even look very shocking in the way she dresses, and my mother was very scared (...)"</p>
Psychological needs / motivational factors	nbel	<p>Need to belong: a desire for social belonging, for group membership.</p>	<p>1.1: "I also had real identity issues, am I Turkish, am I German, am I Muslim, is that an identity and so on, so the standard problems."</p>
	emunc	<p>Emotional uncertainty: feelings of uncertainty about one's own identity, circumstances, life in general, etc. – resulting in a desire for uncertainty avoidance.</p>	<p>1.2: "And I quite liked it at the group home [children's home], because I had rules, my mother never used to get up with me in the morning, because she just couldn't do it, she was up all night, and that means I always did all my stuff alone, I prepared breakfast alone and dressed myself, I washed myself, always, very, very early on. And [at the children's home] it was like this, you had to get up, then there was food, then there was time to wash oneself, and I liked that."</p>
	nexmean	<p>Need for existential meaning: a desire for definitive answers to life's existential questions.</p>	<p>1.3: "I think it had to do with the eternal search for the meaning of life, at some point you think about that. In school we once had an assignment, 'What is the meaning of life?' My answer was 'to find the meaning of life and live accordingly', which I then went on to do."</p>
	nstat	<p>Need for status: a desire for high personal status, in the sense of a desire to be acknowledged and appreciated as valuable, important; a desire to be looked up to.</p>	<p>1.1: "(...) maybe as a Muslim one has a certain inferiority complex, one's always being oppressed. There are wars in all Muslim countries and, I don't know, one is being discriminated against and that leads to an inferiority complex and one tries to latch</p>



	nrom	Need for romance: a desire for short-term romantic entanglement, focused more on the aspects of adventure and excitement than that of long-term connection and social belonging.	3	onto something, and then one slides into this and everything falls into place.” 1.4: “I think this will sound rather paradoxical, but I believe that was part of the appeal for me, because I knew that if I learn more about the religion, I might also be more attractive to Muslim girls (...)”
	nsens	Need for sensation: a desire for adventure, for risk-taking and excitement.	1	1.1: [On young women wanting to wear a niqab]: “And that’s how that seems to me, like someone who is very excited about something and wants to try it, and many said to me ‘I want to know how people will look at me,’ and I even did that too, in the very beginning, I wore a niqab outside, just to see what it’s like, just to see how people look at me. And I know from my own personal experience that this just happens for attention, just to test whether it’s true that people look at you a certain way.”
	njus	Need for justice: a sensitivity to any type of perceived injustice – including towards the entire in-group, or other groups – paired with an urge to right this wrong	0	-
Protective factors	soc_pos	Positive social influences: existing positive relationships with attachment figures (for example parents), partners, other people in the individual’s social environment, or changes in the direction of positive development (for example, terminating harmful relationships, developing positive new relationships).	56	1.1: “I could always talk to my mother on an emotional level, my dad is kind of quiet, so we didn’t talk to him like that very often. But, for example, I could always ask him any question. And then I thought, I was really lucky to have been brought up like this and to have had parents like this (...)”
	critdiff	Critical / differentiating thinking: questioning information, consulting multiple sources, thinking for oneself and reaching one’s own conclusions as opposed to simply believing what one is told, recognizing differences between situations, circumstances, people, etc.	48	1.1: “And there were some really terrifying videos as well... and I thought, something’s wrong here, this can’t be right, because the way they argue makes you think okay, that sounds logical, but I thought to myself, something can’t be right, because... if this really were Islam, and my parents are so religious, why would they not be doing this, they’d be the first ones to go there [to Syria to join ISIS], something’s wrong here, why hasn’t it always been like this, why aren’t all Muslims like this, that’s what I don’t understand. That didn’t make sense to me. (...)”

	acc	Experiences of acceptance: opposite of experiences of discrimination and exclusion, positive experiences of being accepted for who one is.	28	1.3: [On wearing a headscarf in public for the first time] “Strangely enough, neither at the nursery school, nor at the grocery store, nor anywhere else did anyone say anything... no one looked at me funny, as if I was looking completely normal, and I got very annoyed with myself, why didn’t you go out like this sooner.”
	perst	Perspective taking: viewing a situation or concept from alternative points of view, comprehending another individual’s behaviour and thoughts.	25	1.3: “No Muslim has ever demanded ‘Your Christmas Market should be called the Winter Market now,’ we don’t care about that. (...) And I understand the Germans, I understand them 100 percent when they say ‘Why does everything’s name have to be changed now because of you? Why do we now have Day of Lights [instead of St. Martin’s Day] and Winter Festival [instead of Christmas]?’ and we don’t want that. They can call it whatever they want.”
	dem/leg	Positive attitudes towards democracy and/or the legal order in general: opposite of perceiving the state and its authorities as illegitimate; a general belief that democracy is legitimate and positive, a trust in and reliance upon the legal order.	11	1.1: “Islamically speaking, we have a contract, so to speak, we are bound by the laws and we have to adhere to these laws, this contract. That is, from an Islamic point of view, according to some scholars, even a duty, and according to most it is at least a principle by which we should be guided. And being against them [the laws] is not allowed in any event.”
	T_disil	Disillusionment: a feeling of disappointment and dissatisfaction, based on the realization that something (for example the radical group, its members, leaders and/or ideology) is not what the individual originally imagined it to be.	5	1.3: [about Pierre Vogel, a famous German Muslim convert and preacher]: “What I can criticise are his quote-unquote disciples, they are why, for example, I don’t follow the Facebook page anymore. The things they, I think he could [try to] reprimand them occasionally, because of the way they insult and attack each other, and non-Muslims even more so. That is really beyond contempt, I think.”
Ambivalent factors	comm	Commitment: commitment to a cause, an ideology, a system of values or a group, the latter close to the concept of organizational commitment.	6	1.4: [About a radical group he was temporarily in contact with]: “Like I said, because they helped me. I was always grateful to them and I will always be grateful, no matter what they might do now, I will always be grateful for what they did.”
	resp	Responsibility: responsibility for tasks (volunteering, jobs involving responsibility for meaningful tasks, responsibility for caring for other people, etc.); a sense of re-		1.2 [about her younger sister]: “I only got to know her as a baby [the interviewee refers to the fact that, due to the large age gap, she moved out while her sister was a child and therefore only knew her closely

	sponsibility for choices made.	for a period of her childhood] and for me, she always was like my own child, and I took care of her a lot, I always went outside with her and put her to bed and so on, I was really like a – well, I was ten years older.”
react	Reactance: a motivational, adverse 16 reaction to anything (people, help being offered, ideas etc.) that appears to be limiting the individual’s freedom of choice or range of alternatives.	1.1: “It’s become something of a cult, my husband also says ‘Back in the day, you’d have been a punk, today you’re a Salafist, you want to attract attention, you want to be against the system (...)”
vio	Experiences of violence: instances 6 where the individual is either the victim, witness or perpetrator of violence.	1.2: [About her mother’s new boyfriend at the time]: “He locked me in the cellar and threatened me, he said things like ‘If you don’t shut your mouth, then...’ It was really sick. And my mother never believed me (...)”

## Appendix 2

**Complete List of Guiding Questions** (first in English and then in German; Note: The interview was conducted in German, hence the German version is the original; the English translation is provided for the reader’s information.)

### Intro

- General information about the profession (How long have you been working in this field? What is your background - e.g., social work, psychology, ...? Have you always worked with the same group, i.e., right-wing extremists or Islamists, or have there been changes?).
- Everyday working life (How do clients typically come to you? Voluntarily, on referral, from the penal system...? Typically members of a proper radical group or people with rather loose contacts to the scene? How many clients do you typically manage in parallel? How long do you usually work with one client? To what extent do you involve the client’s social environment? etc.).

### (1) Radicalisation

- Phases of radicalization: We understand “radical” as “ready to accept violence as a legitimate means of achieving political or social goals” and radicalization as the process leading to it. What do your clients report about this process? Have you been able to observe certain phases or stages that appear over and over again?
- General risk factors: This refers to prolonged circumstances, conditions of the person or environment that increase the person’s vulnerability and make him or her susceptible to radical ideologies or groups. What do clients typically report about the beginning of their radicalization process? What risk factors have you frequently observed?
- Trigger factors: This refers to concrete events that trigger or strongly accelerate a change in the radicalization process; for example: death in the family that leads to the person becoming more involved with religion and ending up in an Islamist group. Do you observe such trigger factors in your clients? Can you give examples?
- Typology of different motivations: The scientific literature discusses the idea that people can be divided into types based on different psychological needs. These needs are seen as a constant that

motivates people's actions in the long run. The idea is that people who cannot meet these needs through other means feel attracted to radical ideologies or groups. It is also assumed that different types are attracted to different groups and respond to different triggers.

Do you see your clients trying to meet such needs? What needs have you frequently observed? How do you rate the idea of a typology, as described above, based on your experience? Could you identify types yourself?

(2) Deradicalization

- Phases of deradicalization: How do you perceive the process of deradicalization? Can you describe the typical process, are there certain phases?
- Protective factors: Similar to the general risk factors, can you name protective factors whose development precedes and accompanies deradicalization? How does radicalisation end? Which factors play a role (especially in your work with clients)?
- Trigger factors: Do you observe trigger factors in your clients at the beginning or in the course of the deradicalization process? Can you give examples?
- Typology of different motivations: Analogous to above – do you observe different types of people who have deradicalized themselves? Can you give examples of motivations that drive deradicalization or needs that clients wanted to meet in the course of deradicalization?

(3) Further remarks: Would you like to add anything else? Did we omit anything that you think is important?

**In German (original language – this version was used in the interviews):**

Einstieg

- Allgemeines zum Beruf (Wie lang sind Sie bereits in diesem Bereich tätig? Was ist Ihr Hintergrund – z.B. Sozialarbeit, Psychologie, ...? Haben Sie immer mit der selben Gruppe, d.h. Rechtsextremen bzw. Islamisten, gearbeitet, oder gab es Wechsel?)
- Arbeitsalltag (Wie kommen die Klienten typischerweise zu Ihnen? Freiwillig, auf Verweisung hin, aus dem Strafvollzug,...? Typischerweise Mitglieder einer festen radikalen Gruppe oder eher lose Kontakte zur Szene? Wie viele Klienten betreuen Sie typischerweise parallel? Wie lang arbeiten Sie üblicherweise mit einem Klienten? Inwieweit beziehen Sie das soziale Umfeld des Klienten mit ein? etc.)

(1) Radikalisierung

- Phasen der Radikalisierung: Wir verstehen „radikal“ als „bereit, Gewalt als legitimes Mittel zur Umsetzung politischer oder gesellschaftlicher Ziele zu akzeptieren“ und Radikalisierung als den Prozess, der dazu führt. Wie berichten Ihre Klienten vom Verlauf dieses Prozesses? Konnten Sie bestimmte Phasen oder Stufen beobachten, die sich immer wieder zeigen?
- Generelle Risikofaktoren: Damit gemeint sind länger anhaltende Umstände, Zustände der Person oder des Umfelds, die die Vulnerabilität der Person erhöhen und sie für radikale Ideologien oder Gruppen empfänglich machen. Was berichten die Klienten typischerweise vom Anfang ihres Radikalisierungsprozesses? Welche Risikofaktoren konnten Sie häufig beobachten?
- Trigger-Faktoren: Damit gemeint sind konkrete Ereignisse, die eine Veränderung im Radikalisierungsprozess auslösen oder stark beschleunigen; Beispiel: Todesfall in der Familie, der dazu führt, dass Person sich verstärkt mit Religion beschäftigt und so schließlich in einer islamistischen Gruppe landet. Beobachten Sie solche Trigger-Faktoren bei Ihren Klienten? Können Sie Beispiele nennen?
- Typologie verschiedener Motivationen: In der wissenschaftlichen Literatur wird die Idee diskutiert, dass man Personen auf Grundlage verschiedener psychologischer Bedürfnisse in Typen unterteilen kann. Diese Bedürfnisse werden als Konstante gesehen, die langfristig die Handlungen der Personen motiviert. Die Idee ist, dass Personen, denen die Erfüllung dieser Bedürfnisse auf anderem Wege nicht möglich ist, sich in dieser Situation zu radikalen Ideologien oder Gruppen hingezogen

fühlen. Zudem wird vermutet, dass die verschiedenen Typen sich zu unterschiedlichen Gruppen hingezogen fühlen und auf unterschiedliche Trigger reagieren.

- Beobachten Sie bei Ihren Klienten, dass sie versuchen, solche Bedürfnisse zu erfüllen? Welche Bedürfnisse haben Sie häufig beobachtet? Wie schätzen Sie die Idee einer Typologie, wie oben beschrieben, auf Grundlage Ihrer Erfahrungen ein? Könnten Sie selbst Typen bilden?

(2) Deradikalisierung

- Phasen der Deradikalisierung: Wie nehmen Sie den Prozess der Deradikalisierung wahr? Können Sie den typischen Verlauf beschreiben, gibt es bestimmte Phasen?
- Protektive Faktoren: Können Sie, analog zu den generellen Risikofaktoren, protektive Faktoren nennen, deren Entstehung der Deradikalisierung unmittelbar vorausgeht und sie begleitet? Wie endet Radikalisierung? Welche Faktoren spielen (insb. auch in Ihrer Arbeit mit den Klienten) eine Rolle?
- Trigger-Faktoren: Beobachten Sie Trigger-Faktoren bei Ihren Klienten am Anfang oder im Laufe des Deradikalisierungsprozesses? Können Sie Beispiele nennen?
- Typologie verschiedener Motivationen: Analog zu oben – beobachten Sie verschiedene Typen von Personen, die sich deradikalisiert haben? Können Sie Beispiele für Motivationen nennen, die den Antrieb zur Deradikalisierung darstellen bzw. für Bedürfnisse, die Klienten im Zuge der Deradikalisierung erfüllen wollten?

- (3) Weitere Anmerkungen: Möchten Sie noch etwas hinzufügen? Kam etwas nicht vor, das Sie für wichtig halten?