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Violent radicalization and extremism

A review of risk factors and a theoretical model of radicalization

Early prevention of violent political and religious extremism is central in the fight against terrorism. Such action requires the possibility to identify early risk factors behind the violent radicalization process. The risk factors can be defined as social, cultural or social conditions, motivational predispositions as well as personal and cognitive styles of behavior which do *not necessarily* lead to violent radicalization, but which may increase the risk of stepping onto the path of violent radicalization. The central issue of this article is the development of a theoretical radicalization model which can identify and systematize such risk factors. This model, based on the discipline of Life Psychology, is one of the core theoretical models of the so called *Aarhus model* of anti-radicalization.

A systematic categorization of risk factors

Radicalization is usually defined as the process of gradually coming to accept extremist ideas and actions. Extremism, however, is not easy to define. Schmid (2013) has gathered a comprehensive list of definitions, and the list makes clear that extremism is regarded as a far from mainstream position directed towards comprehensive and fundamental social, cultural and/or social changes in own and common life.

In this article, extremism is seen as an ultimate desire to construct a new form of life. Or to re-construct life, either as it actually used to be, or as it is assumed to have been once according to historical, political and/or religious narratives (Griffin 2012). Most of the definitions focus on alterations of the surroundings. But extremism also includes a personal change

in mindset, i.e. change in perception of the world, in view on life, in self-perception and perception of others. Finally, one of the characteristics of extremism is setting aside the consideration for human co-existence (Anonymized 2013), as well as the consideration for an inclusive community where most citizens thrive.

Based on the above considerations, extremism may be defined as: *An intense desire for and/or pursuit of a universal and comprehensive change in own and common life, socially, culturally, and/or societally, where the consideration for human coexistence is set aside.*

Often extremist activities and ways of life are defined as being in *conflict* with society. One example is Dalgaard-Nielsen's (2010) definition, which is similar to the definition above, but which adds the concept of conflict: " [...] a deep-felt desire for fundamental sociopolitical changes and radicalization is understood as a

growing readiness to pursue and support far-reaching changes in society that conflict with, or pose a direct threat to, the existing order". But far from all forms of extremism are in conflict with the surroundings. For example, peaceful spiritual communities with a far from mainstream daily life may very well find their own non-violent and legal, but segregated, place in an open, democratic society.

Very often extremism is defined as *violent* activism and terrorism, such as in Midlarsky (2011): "Political extremism [is] a certain political program [...] in relation to which individual freedom may be limited in view of the collective objectives, including mass murder of those who actually or potentially disagree with this program." On the other hand, many movements strive for fundamental and extreme changes in life which are, nevertheless, peaceful, legal and non-violent (Sedgwick 2012, Bartlett & Miller 2012, Neumann 2013)

Moskalenko and McCauley (2011) have shown that there is a crucial difference between moving along non-violent radicalization development paths and paths leading to violent extremism. In fact, by far the most radicalized movements never use violence or illegal means to achieve their goals. For that reason, it is necessary to distinguish between non-violent and violent extremism, which brings us to the following definition of *violent* extremism: *An intense desire for and/or pursuit of a universal and comprehensive change in own and common life, socially, culturally, and/or societally, by violent means - where the consideration for human coexistence is set aside.*

In the light of the above considerations, the theoretical model must be able to distinguish between different types of radicalization and their related factors (Sharvit & Kruglanski, 2013). In particular, severe demands are placed on proper identification of the risk factors behind violent radicalization, as it may have fatal consequences if we are not precise in terms of whether the emphasized factors point in the direction of either non-violent or violent radi-

calization. On the one hand, we are in danger of failing to identify, in time, young people who are about to become violently radicalized (false negatives). On the other hand, we risk identifying people with an ultimate political and/or religious concern for decent human life without the intention of ever initiating any illegal or violent actions (false positives) (see also Kühle and Lindekilde 2010, Lindekilde 2015).

This theoretical model is based on the human life basic condition, namely that people are both forced to and have the opportunity to act in ways that change and improve the biological, social, cultural and social life conditions (Anonymized 2005). If people - through action - can solve the life task it is to produce tangible goods and meaningful values, as well as prevent hazards and threats, you can say that they are safe, secure and meaningfully *embedded in life*.

People are constantly facing small as well as large life tasks of which some appear as opportunities for development and well-being and others as threats to life. The ability to be able to mould one's actions in order solve these life tasks presupposes the existence of general *life skills*. In the nature of the case it is impossible to map all the concrete forms one's life tasks may have in the course of a lifetime, and in the different cultures around the world. Alternatively, we can seek to identify the deep structure of the universal human life tasks of all human beings - individually, culturally and societally. Also, we cannot map all the specific skills by use of which people handle their specific life tasks. However, we can try to identify the universal human life skills which (a) correspond to the general life tasks, and (b) are expressed in the specific actions used to handle the specific tasks.

Csikszentmihalyi's (1990) notion of flow is based on a match between challenge level of the task and the skill level at hand. If the challenge level is too high (or too dangerous) in relation to one's skill level one is in a state of *non-flow* (experienced as stress or anxiety). On the

other hand, the state of non-flow can also be characteristic of situations where one's skill level is too high in relation to the level of challenges (experienced as boredom and/or frustration about not being able to fulfill oneself). (See also Elliot & Dweck 2005, Soenens & Vansteenkiste 2011).

Thus, fundamental human life embeddedness can be defined as safe, secure and meaningful when in flow, i.e. when one experiences the autonomy and possibilities to express one's fundamental human life skills in acts that match one's life tasks. Consequently, the ultimate threat of non-flow in fundamental life embeddedness is the *lack* of autonomy and possibilities to handle one's life tasks by use of one's life skills (see also Hogg 2012, Griffin 2012).

People act. Especially when life embeddedness is threatened, in which case one will try to (re-)construct it (see also Maguen et al. 2008), which is not in itself extreme or illegal. This means that we should not search for the fundamental risk factors of extremism in something insane only found in a few abnormal individuals. The basic factors of extremism should be found in the universal human striving for a good enough life embeddedness, and may simply be a natural reaction to threats - regardless of how insane and dangerous the extreme (re-)action might be.

The psychological theory that is based on the concepts of general human life tasks, life skills and the general human life project of establishing, maintaining and developing fundamental life embeddedness is called Life Psychology (Anonymized 2013)

The notion of fundamental life embeddedness

Threats against fundamental life embeddedness constitute a pivotal risk which is why we should take a look at the notion of fundamental life embeddedness.

In Life Psychology, the notion of fundamental life embeddedness is rooted in traditional as well modern psychological and sociological theory. The concept of embeddedness is related to Polanyi's (1957) sociological notion of being imbedded in a large context. Fundamental life embeddedness means that one can be said to be securely, safely and meaningfully embedded in the world, in society, in large social communities and in the very close social networks of family and friends. Furthermore, the notion is related to Bowlby's (1988) notion of a secure base from which the individual explores the world, but also to which he or she returns for consolidation of the association with the close social base. In addition, the concept is related to Erikson's (1995) concept of fundamental trust, which basically describes the world as a good place to be, and close social communities and networks as predictable and reliable. The opposite is fundamental uncertainty and a lack of confidence in one's life conditions, as well as lack of insight into and knowledge of what can and should be done in order to obtain a good enough life. As a result, the concept of fundamental life embeddedness is also related to Laing's (1969) concept of ontological security about being able to live without anxiety and being able to live a meaningful life based on one's own choices, without the feeling of facing obscure or self-contradictory challenges. Gidden's (1991) concept of ontological security builds on Erikson's and Laing's concepts. Here, the main idea concerns confidence in order and coherence in the world, which makes it possible to live a safe life and to be able to act effectively, i.e., being able to reach realistic goals without risk. Finally, the concept of fundamental life embeddedness is also related with Berger's (1967) concept of "sacred canopy". This notion refers to the overall discourse (moral, religious, scientific, economic, political), which makes sense and security in the world around us, makes the world intelligible to us, and enables us to act in our own and common life (see also Griffin 2012).

Similarly, Kruglanski et al. (2012) have pointed to the fact that the fundamental life task is to come to agreement with one's place in the universe. If the possibility of realizing this goal is blocked or violated, people may react by defending and/or (re)constructing their life embeddedness.

From Antonovsky's (2000) three notions regarding a healthy and good life one may deduce that good enough life embeddedness is characterized by meaningfulness, comprehensibility and manageability. In this article, this is called to have a good enough grip on life, i.e., firstly, having a *meaningful* life which offers the basis for expression, understanding and action in accordance with own and common interests, norms and values; secondly, one's life embeddedness is good enough, if it is *comprehensible*, i.e. one understands the world and knows how to interact with it in a meaningful and manageable way; thirdly, good enough life embeddedness requires *manageability* i.e. being able to act on and cope with one's life tasks with reference to one's comprehensions and quest for meaningfulness.

The Basic Five in Life Psychology

The prerequisite for in-flow life embeddedness is being able to make use of one's fundamental life skills in order to handle one's life tasks in a meaningful, comprehensible and manageable way.

From the point of view of the individual (inside-out), actions manifest themselves as actively making use of and expressing one's life skills. By means of taking action one's fundamental life skills are in a personal way directed toward the world and its life tasks. From the point of view of individual life, skills expressed as acts are always directed *at* something (or *by* someone). On the other hand (outside-in), in order to support flow in life, one's life skills have to be adapted to the reality and the conditions of the life tasks one is facing. Thus one's

life skills and acts also must be directed *by* one's life tasks. That means that one's life skills are always directed *at/by* one's life tasks (Anonymized 2005, 2009, 2012, 2013).

From a personality psychological point of view, the way in which one directs one's life skills and acts *at* something is determined by dynamic and cognitive factors. In Life Psychology, dynamic factors are categorized under the headline of "volition". One *wants* to realize one's life skills by directing towards the present tasks with a certain energy, impact and persistence. The cognitive factors are categorized under the headline of "ability": One is able to express one's skills and direct them toward one's life tasks due to thinking, learning and information (i.e. know-that) and due to practical abilities (know-how) (Anonymized 2013).

From a social psychological point of view, the way in which one's life competencies and actions are directed *by* someone or something is determined by structural factors in nature, culture and society as well as social and relational factors. In Life Psychology, the structural factors are categorized as "*external possibilities/conditions*" for the realization of one's life by way of handling one's life tasks: fundamental laws of nature, environmental conditions, social structures, cultural norms, morality and discourses, societal power, politics, civil rights and criminal law, infrastructure, residential areas, institutions etc. The social and relational conditions attached to the life tasks can be categorized under the headline of "*being met*": The way in which one is obliged by others to do things, and the way in which one is supported, helped and acknowledged when trying to establish a good enough life for oneself and each other.

Finally, activity in itself can be categorized under the headline of "*doing*" meaning actually being in the process of working on something with regard to realize one's life skills and handle one's life tasks. Together these five categories are called the "Basic Five" in Life Psychology.

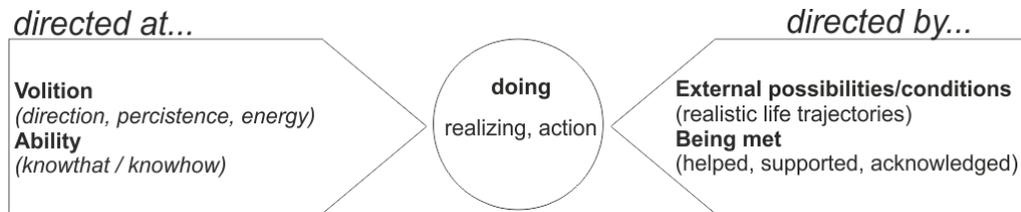
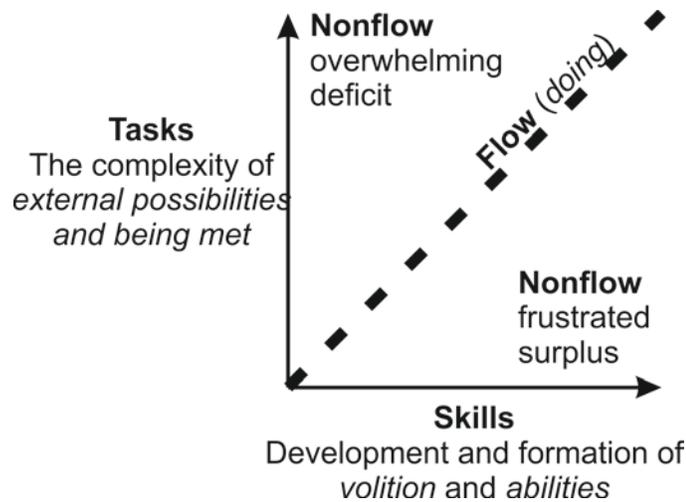


Figure 1: The “Basic Five” of intentional Life Psychology



Figur 2: Life Psychology’s Basic Five in in terms of the flow-concept.

As shown in figure 2, Life Psychology’s ”Basic Five” of intentional agency can be combined with the *flow*-concept. The vertical axis represents the life tasks as well as the challenges/complexity of the surroundings and the way in which one is met. The horizontal axis represents the way in which one wants to and can realize one’s life competencies in order to handle one’s life tasks.

What one is “*doing*” to (re-)construct one’s life embeddedness is in flow if one’s life skills as to “*volition*” and “*ability*” match one’s life tasks as to “*external possibilities/conditions*” and “*being met*”. One’s life and

life embeddedness can be in a state of *non-flow* in two ways. Firstly, in Life Psychological terms one would say that life is in non-flow and the person is in *overwhelming deficit* if the level of difficulty and complexity in one’s life tasks exceed the volitional and cognitive level of one’s life skills. Similarly, one is in non-flow characterized by an *overwhelming “deficit”* if the complexity of demands and claims in the way one is met by others exceeds one’s will and/or ability to handle it. Secondly, one would say that the non-flow of life and life embeddedness is in a state of *frustrated surplus* if volitional and cognitive levels of one’s life skills

exceed the external possibilities/conditions and the social as well as cultural and societal ways in which one is being met by the surrounding world.

One's well-being in life is based on the ability to handle and complete life tasks by means of one's life skills (Diener et al. 1999, Diener, 2000, Kasser & Ryan 2001, Seligman 2002, Kahneman & Krueger 2006, Baily et al. 2007). Thus, the first set of fundamental risk factors of extremism – i.e. the pursuit of fundamental (re-)construction of life without consideration of human co-existence – is connected to the ultimate threat to fundamental life embeddedness, i.e. the threat of non-flow in managing the fundamental life tasks in a meaningful and comprehensible way.

Risk Factor Set 1 based on the flow in the realization of universally human life competencies (basic factors)

We can now systematize the first set of risk factors for extremism on the basis of universal human skills and the way in which they may be either in flow (underpin life embeddedness) or in non-flow (not underpin life embeddedness)

According to Life Psychology, these universally human life competencies, and accordingly the basic risk factors, can be divided into three main groups of life tasks: (1) to *participate* in constructing, maintaining and developing own and common life, (2) to *reality attune* the way in which one's life competencies are actualised, and (3) to be able to navigate according to one's own perspective in relation to other people's life perspectives in a *perspectivating* way (being able to acquaint oneself with one's own and others' perspectives) (Anonymized 2009 and 2013).

Participation 1. Close social network: Being part of a good and close network (e.g. a good family relationship, good friends, or close colleagues).

The life embeddedness is in flow if the qualities of the external possibilities/conditions and the relational qualities of being met by others are aligned with one's strivings and abilities as to attunement in relation to the surrounding world and thus allow for realizing one's life skills regarding a sense of belonging. A state of non-flow may arise when young people are de facto excluded from the opportunity of this life skill of belonging – and from handling this aspect of life embeddedness – either in the form of a *frustrating non-flow*: The life skills of a young person exceed the acknowledgement and complaisance of the surrounding world (e.g. interaction is too superficial for the young person to thrive); or in the form of *overwhelming non-flow*: The external possibilities/conditions and the relational qualities by far exceed the strivings and abilities of the young person (e.g. when the young person has problems handling the close social, maybe dysfunctional, interaction in the family).

Participation 2. Framework for own interests: To ensure the framework for oneself and one's interests (e.g. planning, time, tasks, duties, things that need to be used or procured, something that must be fixed - based on own interests and what is important to be in control of in daily life, but also in a generally desirable life).

The process of one's life embeddedness is in flow if, among other things, the qualities of the external possibilities/conditions and the relational qualities of being met by others are aligned with one's strivings and abilities regarding being attuned to the surrounding world – and thus allow for realizing one's life skills regarding handling daily life tasks and the framework of life in general. A state of non-flow may arise when young people are de facto excluded from the opportunity to act out this life skill aspect of life embeddedness, either in

the form of a *frustrating non-flow*: The life skills of the young person exceeds the acknowledgement and complaisance of the surrounding world (e.g. the surroundings do not offer a basis for, or maybe even oppose, the young person's possibilities of unfolding healthy interests (or a chaotic family or local environment situation works against the possibility of building a good daily life framework); or, in the form of *overwhelming non-flow*: The external possibilities/conditions and the relational qualities by far exceed the strivings and abilities of the young person (e.g. the young person faces life tasks and planning that he/she is not able to cope with; perhaps because the requirements are not clearly formulated and badly organized).

Participation 3. Personal participation in communities: To participate in the community in one's own personal way (e.g. engagement in various recreational activities such as sports, club(s), interest groups, religion, etc.; doing something for the surrounding environment to influence the surrounding world and societal life in one's own personal way).

The process of one's life embeddedness is in flow if, among other things, the qualities of the external possibilities/conditions and the relational qualities of being met by others are aligned with one's strivings and abilities regarding being attuned to the surrounding world – and thus allow for realizing one's life skills regarding participation in communities. A state of non-flow may arise when young people are de facto excluded from the opportunity to act out this life skill aspect of one's life embeddedness, either in the form of a *frustrating non-flow*: The life skills of the young person exceed the acknowledgement and complaisance of the surrounding world (e.g. the young person's potentially good and constructive but also critical contributions to community and society are neither understood, ignored or even counteracted); or, in the form of *overwhelming non-flow*: The external possibilities/conditions and the

relational qualities by far exceed the strivings and abilities of the young person (e.g. too difficult procedures or obscure agendas).

Reality attunement 4. Focused and engaged: To be engaged in something; focused action (e.g. to concentrate on what you are doing; not letting oneself be disturbed by something or by what other people think).

The process of one's life embeddedness is in flow if, among other things, the qualities of the external possibilities/conditions and the relational qualities of being met by others are aligned with one's strivings and abilities regarding being attuned to the surrounding world – and thus allow for realizing one's life skills regarding being able to be totally absorbed in something. A state of non-flow may arise when young people are de facto excluded from the opportunity to act out this life skill and handling this aspect of one's life embeddedness, either in the form of a *frustrating non-flow*: The life skills of the young person exceeds the acknowledgement and complaisance of the surrounding world (e.g. the surroundings may be too chaotic and disturbing; or maybe the need for focus is neglected or even disparaged by significant others); or in the form of *overwhelming non-flow*: The external possibilities/conditions and the relational qualities by far exceed the strivings and abilities of the young person (e.g. the activities which the young person is expected to participate in are not organized in a way that makes it possible for him/her to feel engaged.)

Reality attunement 5. Practical and pragmatic: To find the most efficient approach (e.g. to find and stick to the best approaches in order to improve the chance of reaching one's goals).

The process of one's life embeddedness is in flow if, among other things, the qualities of the external possibilities/conditions and the relational qualities of being met by others are aligned with one's strivings and abilities regarding being attuned to the surrounding world

– and thus allow for realizing one’s life skills regarding the ability to find practical and efficient ways of reaching a goal or getting one’s wish for something. A state of non-flow may arise when young people are de facto excluded from the opportunity to act out this life skill aspect of one’s life embeddedness, either in the form of a *frustrating non-flow*: The life skills of a young person exceed the acknowledgement and complaisance of the surrounding world (e.g. the young person’s own choices and active approaches are not supported, not taken seriously, or not given a helping, optimizing and/or corrective hand); or, in the form of *overwhelming non-flow*: The external possibilities/conditions and the relational qualities by far exceed the strivings and abilities of the young person (e.g. the path to a given objective is covered with too many non-transparent intermediate goals and/or obstacles).

Reality attunement 6. Moral and normative: To consider the norms and values of own objectives and approaches (e.g. taking action and living in a way that one value as good and right).

The process of one’s life embeddedness is in flow if, among other things, the qualities of the external possibilities/conditions and the relational qualities of being met by others are aligned with one’s strivings and abilities regarding being attuned to the surrounding world – and thus allow for realizing one’s life skills regarding being able to relate to norms and values in one’s surroundings. A state of non-flow may arise when young people are de facto excluded from the opportunity to act out this life skill aspect of one’s life embeddedness, either in the form of a *frustrating non-flow*: The life skills of a young person exceed the acknowledgement and complaisance of the surrounding world (e.g. explicit ignoring or tabooization this type of critical testing or quest for meaningful norms and values); or, in the form of *overwhelming non-flow*: The external possibilities/conditions and the relational qualities by far

exceed the strivings and abilities of the young person (e.g. when the normative expectations as to the behavior of the young person are implicit, or maybe confusing or conflicting in non-transparent ways).

Taking into perspective 7. Awareness and cues: Being aware of the surrounding world, nonverbal cues of others’ mindset and felt sense, and of feelings and affects in one’s own body (e.g. curious awareness of – what you are seeing and hearing – how you perceive signals from others – how you notice feelings and affect in your own body).

The process of one’s life embeddedness is in flow if, among other things, the qualities of the external possibilities/conditions and the relational qualities of being met by others are aligned with one’s strivings and abilities regarding being attuned to the surrounding world – and thus allow for realizing one’s life skills regarding the here-and-now awareness of the surrounding world and own affective sensations and felt sense. A state of non-flow may arise when young people are de facto excluded from the opportunity to act out this life skill aspect of one’s life embeddedness, either in the form of a *frustrating non-flow*: The life skills of a young person exceed the acknowledgement and complaisance of the surrounding world (e.g. lack of space and silence as a prerequisite for awareness of being in the world, or the lacking abilities of others to help the young person to verbalize nonverbal relational cues); or, in the form of *overwhelming non-flow*: The external possibilities/conditions and the relational qualities by far exceed the strivings and abilities of the young person (e.g. having problems reading other people’s nonverbal cues or one’s own affects and feeling of anger appearing just before physical and violent acting out).

Taking into perspective 8. Reflection and self-understanding: Being aware of what one thinks about/feels about/wants to do with one’s own life (e.g. how you reflect on things, which feel-

ings you get – and what you want to do in relation to daily targets and life in general.

The process of one's life embeddedness is in flow if, among other things, the qualities of the external possibilities/conditions and the relational qualities of being met by others are aligned with one's strivings and abilities regarding being attuned to the surrounding world – and thus allow for realizing one's life skills regarding reflecting on own thoughts and feelings as to a given situation, relationship or one's approach to life. A state of non-flow may arise when young people are de facto excluded from the opportunity to act out this life skill and handling this aspect of one's life embeddedness, either in the form of a *frustrating non-flow*: The life skills of a young person exceed the acknowledgement and complaisance of the surrounding world (e.g.: lack of time and space for undisturbed reflection) – or acknowledgement (e.g. significant other people do not understand the young person, or do not want to/are not able to help or support the process of self-reflection); or in the form of *overwhelming non-flow*: The external possibilities/conditions and the relational qualities by far exceed the strivings and abilities of the young person (e.g. not being used to reflect on and/or talk about one's own views, feelings and wishes or disturbed inwardly directed mentalization skill).

Taking into perspective 9. Empathy and perspective-taking: Life seen from the perspective of other people (e.g. how do other people think about things, what do they feel, and what do they want in everyday life and in life as such?).

The process of one's life embeddedness is in flow if, among other things, the qualities of the external possibilities/conditions and the relational qualities of being met by others are aligned with one's strivings and abilities regarding being attuned to the surrounding world – and thus allow for realizing one's life skills regarding what other people think, feel and want to do. Life embeddedness is characterized by being able to navigate in relation to other

people's perspectives. A state of non-flow may arise when young people are de facto excluded from the opportunity to act out this life skill aspect of one's life embeddedness, either in the form of a *frustrating non-flow*: The life skills of a young person exceed the acknowledgement and complaisance of the surrounding world (e.g. no sufficient contact with other/different perspectives on life, or exposure to private or public rhetoric distorting other people's perspectives, or one's efforts to understand other peoples' perspectives on life are tabooed or projected as unwanted); or in the form of *overwhelming non-flow*: The external possibilities/conditions and the relational qualities by far exceed the strivings and abilities of the young person (e.g. because other people's perspectives are either nontransparent and/or dysfunctional, or they may be lost on the young person due to his/her less developed life skills or impaired or disturbed outward mentalization skills).

Taking into perspective 10. Navigation and the surrounding world: Understanding the surrounding world and important systems, rules and regulations (e.g. the prevailing rules, procedures to follow, explanations of things, prevailing debates, or existing religious faith and moral discourses).

The process of one's life embeddedness is in flow if, among other things, the qualities of the external possibilities/conditions and the relational qualities of being met by others are aligned with one's strivings and abilities regarding attunement to the surrounding world – and thus allow for realizing one's life skills regarding acquainting oneself with the big questions in life, i.e., not necessarily in a way where one totally accepts all the existing explanations, discourses etc. This life skill indeed includes the ability to criticize, however, a prerequisite for qualified navigation in life, including critical constructive navigation, is the life skill itself. Life is characterized by overall comprehension as regards cultural, institutional and societal regulations/systems, as well as sci

	A frustrating surplus of skills Insufficient life conditions as for skills to come into play in a meaningful, comprehensible and manageable way	An overwhelming shortage of skills Insufficient skills as for comprehending and handling the tasks in a meaningful way
1. Close social network	Close social network relations lack a dimension of meaningfulness, comprehensibility and manageability.	The challenges in the close social network are too complex to be meaningful, comprehensible, and/or manageable.
2. Framework for own interests	The conditions for getting the opportunity to live a meaningful, comprehensive and manageable life are too limited or poor.	The conditions for getting the opportunity to engage in activities of personal interest are too complex to be meaningful, comprehensible, and/or manageable.
3. Participation in communities in a personal way	The existing communities lack meaningfulness, comprehensibility and manageability.	The surrounding large communities are too complex to be meaningful, comprehensive, and/or manageable.
4. Focused and absorbed	The situation and/or activity lack a dimension of meaningfulness, comprehensibility and manageability in order for people to focus and be absorbed.	The situation and/or activity are too complex in order for focus and absorption to be meaningful, comprehensive, and/or manageable.
5. Practical and pragmatic	The pragmatic, tactical, and strategic challenges lack a dimension of meaningfulness, comprehension and tangibility.	The pragmatic challenges are too complex to be meaningful, comprehensive, and/or to be handled.
6. Moral and normative	The moral and normative challenges lack a dimension of meaningfulness, comprehensibility and manageability.	The moral and normative challenges are too complex to make sense, to be understood and/or to be handled.
7. Awareness and cues	Fundamental inner and outer cues lack a dimension of meaningfulness, comprehensibility and manageability.	The demands as to reading inner or outer cues are too complex to make sense, to be understood and/or to be managed.
8. Reflection and self-understanding	Too few/shallow opportunities for one to identify and verbalize one's thoughts, feelings, and objectives in a meaningful, comprehensive, and/or manageable way.	The challenges of identifying and verbalizing one's thoughts, feelings, and objectives are too complex to make sense, to be understood and/or to be managed.
9. Empathy and perspective-taking	Too few/shallow opportunities for one to relate to and verbalize one's thoughts, feelings, and objectives in a meaningful, comprehensive, and/or manageable way.	The challenges of identifying and verbalizing other people's thoughts, feelings, and objectives are too complex to make sense, to be understood and/or to be managed.
10. Navigation and comprehension of the surrounding world	The conditions for getting the opportunity to learn and to be educated regarding institutions, systems, rules, laws, and discourses are too limited/poor.	Institutions, systems, rules, laws and discourses are too complex to make sense, to be understood and/or to be handled.

Table 1 shows Risk factor set I(basic factors) for extremism based on fundamental general human life skills.

entific explanations and discursive perspectives (politics, religion). For example, a young person acquaints himself with school requirements and the school's code of good behavior. Or, the young person may start asking questions about religion or politics. A state of non-flow may arise when young people are de facto excluded from the opportunity to act out this life skill aspect of one's life embeddedness, either in the form of a *frustrating non-flow*: The life skills of a young person exceed the acknowledgement and complaisance of the surrounding world (lack of access to sufficient in-depth information, explanation/enlightenment, learning/education); or, in the form of *overwhelming non-flow*: The external possibilities/conditions and the relational qualities by far exceed the strivings and abilities of the young person (e.g. because rules, systems and discourses are too difficult or too non-transparent in relation to the young person's ability to scrutinize and understand them).

Risk Factor Set 2: realization style as to the universally human life skills (moderating factors)

Universal human life skills in a state of flow make it possible to live a life based on meaningfulness, comprehensibility and manageability. In fact, universal life skills in flow function as *protective factors* (they create strong resilience against any kind of threats to good enough life embeddedness). Only when in a state of non-flow life skills may transform into a risk factor. But even in a state of non-flow life skills do not necessary lead to *violent* extremism, which is why we must also take specific personal and external risk factors for violent extremism into consideration.

Risk factor set 2 designates the above-mentioned specific personal and external risk

factors, which have been identified and described in contemporary literature. The below analysis shows that risk factors can be divided into three categories: 1) *cognitive structures*, i.e. the cognitive level of development and the particular cognitive style that may lead the life skills and their realization onto the path of radicalization, 2) *dynamic level of energy* (arousal, force and persistence) when it comes to the realization of life skills, and 3) general human personality style termed the *mirroring/idealizing style* regarding self-consolidation and the quest for belongingness (Kohut 1996, Anonymized 2013).

Cognitive style

In connection with radicalization, several authors write about the need for cognitive closure, i.e. a strong wish for clarification as to what to think and how to understand and explain important matters in life. The notion goes back to Frenkel-Brunswick (1949) who devised the concept of ambiguity intolerance. Bochner (1965) elaborated some key definitions of the concept: The cognitive need for certainty and unambiguity, i.e. preferring to take a black and white perspective on life.

Some (far from all) people have a cognitive style reflecting a strong wish for a stable and safe life that shows in the way one strives for security as to what to expect from life and other people (know-that), and in the way one acts in relation to this (know-how) (Hogg 2012). Kruglanski & Orehek (2012) have pointed out that the need for cognitive closure is a key factor in the radicalization process. The stronger the need for cognitive clarification one has, the stronger the desire to find the answers in extreme ideologies and religious systems offering clear answers to the important questions in life. Likewise, Victorof (2009) highlights a tendency to respond to ambiguous and open life situations with distinct inflexibility.

Closely related to the issue of the cognitive of life skills and ambiguity intolerance is also: How well-developed is the cognitive

style? More precisely, the degree to which one is able to think abstractly, i.e. being able to deal with multiple variables, connect them systematically and critically grasp consequences of different possibilities for action, etc. Bridges and Harnish (2015) have shown that young people with a low score in abstract cognitive style have a tendency to search for secure answers in right-wing authoritative political ideologies and religious fundamentalism.

The basic cognitive style is expressed in the following ways that have been assessed as risk factors by current research on radicalization and violent extremism:

1. Ambiguity intolerance in the form of a deep discomfort and/or inconvenience caused by having to find the flow in life as well as meaningfulness in conflicting views.

The desire to avoid conflicting views was designated cognitive dissonance by Festinger (1957). Avoidance of cognitive dissonance may indeed have moral implications. This may be, for example, the moral dissonance between "the use of violence is required" and "do not hurt fellow human beings". Dissonance problems can be avoided by denying or playing down one part of the contradiction. For example, by means of dehumanization: "The enemy is not humans, but traitors or filthy animals with no moral right to be treated as fellow human beings, hence the use of violence is all right". In this way, cognitive dissonance can be regarded as a mechanism caused by the need for cognitive clarity in ambiguous situations (Maikowitch 2005): Moral obligations are downplayed or denied (Bandura 2005), e.g. moral detachment by means of dehumanization, or **by disclaiming or displacement** of responsibility regarding one's actions (e.g. obeyed order from superior persons or religious leaders).

Likewise, Griffens (2012) has pointed to moral disengagement in the form of "The Bliss of Completion", i.e. a mindset where one sees oneself as a warrior defending ultimate affairs (historical, political or divine). One finds it nec-

essary to act violently against a corrupt and anomic society (disregard of guilt) and even does it with pride (disregard of shame). Kruglanski et al. (2014) describe moral disengagement as follows: "This is war and no one can claim to be innocent victims, either you are with us or against us".

2. Jump to conclusion. This means to assess a situation without sufficient information and reflection. People who have a need for, or who enjoy, cognitive insight can easily spend a lot of time considering and doubting about things. Such people tolerate a high degree of cognitive ambiguity and lack of cognitive closure (Cacioppo et al. 1986, Petty et al. 2009). However, people who do not need elaborated and nuanced cognitive insight – but who are, on the other hand, in great need of cognitive closure go for quick judgments and quick decisions based on as few as possible cognitive efforts, for example only a small piece of the Bible, the Koran, or various Hadiths. Another example is right-wing extremist persons who without critical reflection pick up a few distorted geopolitical catchphrases such as the "war between civilizations" based on which they look upon the world (in an extremist way) and justify the use of violence.

3. Monomania – in the meaning of taking a more or less obsessive interest in one single political and/or religious idea. The concept of monomani corresponds to Kruglanski et al.'s (2014) assumption that radicalization is based on (a) strong motivation to achieve a specific ultimate aim and also completely overrule other aims in life, and (b) rigid retention of certain methods defined by this particular aim, even if the methods are destructive in relation to other aims in life.

The same radicalization phenomenon has been pointed out by Herriot (2007) containing the concept of selectivism (having an eye for only one target), and by Victorof (2000) with the concept of reacting to threats to one's quali-

ty of life and a lifestyle with a strongly affective ideological goal.

4. *Fundamentalism*. Last, but not least, there is fundamentalism, i.e. a mindset based on mandatory truths and strongly associated with the need for cognitive closure. Herriott (2007) characterizes fundamentalism as selection of political or religious texts, belief systems and practices. Fundamentalism often entails strong intolerance in relation to others ('them/the others' as opposed to 'us'). Either as passive intolerance in the form of avoidance of any kind of contact with 'the others' if possible, or as an active or even militant intolerance accompanied by missionizing attempts to defeat or reform 'the others'.

Dynamic style (energy)

Life skills and their use are influenced by one's dynamic style, i.e. the degree to which one seeks stimulation, challenges and excitement in life, and how much energy one spends on achieving it.

1. *A high energy level*. Individual people have different optimal levels of stimulation (Høgh-Olesen 2014). Some people prefer a quiet, calm and simple life and get stressed out by too many inputs and changes; others prefer a life full of speed and excitement and easily get bored. If one has reached one's optimal stimulation level (neither too much nor too little stimulation), one's actions are goal-oriented and well organized – and one's problem-solving skills and well-being are optimal (in this connection it is tempting to add optimal in-flow life embeddedness as to meaningfulness, comprehensibility and manageability). If stimulation is below the optimal level, one will get bored and start searching for challenges, and if stimulation is above the optimal level, one may get stressed out or become insecure.

In situations where it is difficult to find legal activities and participation forms in the surroundings (e.g. in one's residential area), the efforts to alleviate boredom and the search for

optimal stimulation may lead to a risky criminal career such as youth crime or extremism. Not because e.g. extremism is chosen for political or religious reasons, but because of a need for optimal stimulation.

2. *Excitement-seeking* can be defined as a tendency to seek challenging and exciting activities, preferably in a risky way (Larson & Buss 2005). Zuckerman et al. (1964, see also Høgh-Olesen 2014) have divided stimulation-seeking behavior into four categories: (a) quest for excitement and adventure expressed as risky transgressive actions, (b) Adventure/experience-seeking expressed in the form of change in life style and new kinds of experiences including art, travels, culture etc. (c) Losing one's inhibitions expressed in the form of a liberated life style, e.g. as regards drugs, parties, sexuality etc. (d) Intolerance of boredom expressed as avoidance of boredom in the form of a life characterized by monotony and/or lack of relevant (and here might be added meaningful, comprehensive, manageable) opportunities for expression.

In this case too, the path of extremism is not chosen because of its contents but rather because it offers compensation for missing legal opportunities for expression. Young people in particular often (or constantly) seek excitement in life (Zuckerman 2007). Furthermore, Victorof (2009) underlines that some radicalized people are attracted by the excitement of extreme actions, which is why extremist groups offering action and adventure may appeal to some excitement-seeking young people.

3. *Jump to action*. As mentioned, most people will take action if their basic life embeddedness is threatened. Usually, prior to taking action, a cognitive-emotional process in the form of thoughts, choices, planning and verification takes place (Anonymized 2005). However as described above, some people do not thrive with considering everything, which may lead to here-and-now action based on very few pieces

of information and little consideration. This kind of behavior may be called "jump to action".

The basic personality style (the structure of intention)

The Basic Five model in Life Psychology is based on the notion of activities directed *at* something and *by* something. This is not only a structure in the action of humans, but on a deeper level it is an important structure in the human personality and in the personal style of one's life skills (Anonymized 1996, 2001, 2013).

As mentioned, one's life skills are directed at the world in the form of one's actions as a way of expressing oneself. Consequently, in one way or another, the action(s) influence(s) the world (nature, other people, society, culture) and, consequently, the world reacts. Via the world's reaction one experiences the results of one's actions, who one is and one's personal style. The fact that *the world reacts* to one's actions makes everyday life take shape, and the way in which the world reacts gives one an idea of its structure and how it can be managed. In this way, one gets an identity and feels like *being someone* who makes a difference to something or somebody; one mirrors oneself in the world's reactions. A particularly important fact is that one can mirror oneself in the reactions of other people, and the way in which one mirrors oneself in others (and in the world as a whole) defines one's basic personal mirroring style.

As mentioned above, one's skills are also directed *by* the world (basically in accordance with the laws of nature as well as the social and cultural norms, values and systems). The world provides directions or *ideals*, i.e. ideals for life embeddedness and life skills. Here too it is particularly important to be attached to significant others, because they are loved ones, because one experiences oneself as being part of their life, and because they are role models. Such

significant others provide contents and direction to life, and this kind of attachment to others (and the world as a whole) defines the basic *idealizing style* in one's personality.

Thus the human personality is characterized by both a mirroring and an idealizing style. Normally the mirroring side may be more dominant in certain situations, while in other situations the idealizing side is the most dominant.

The mirroring skills, i.e. mirroring participation, mirroring reality attunement and mirroring perspective-taking are in flow if one experiences that the external conditions/possibilities make it possible for one to make a difference, and if one is met (acknowledged, helped and supported) as to the way in which one expresses oneself. However, life is full of challenges consisting of complex, dysfunctional or nonexistent external conditions/possibilities and/or complaisance, which makes mirroring less optimal: One cannot fulfil oneself in this particular part of life. Normally most people will search for new external conditions/possibilities and other people to be met by, and/or one may rise to the challenge and by means of one's skills try to change the external conditions/possibilities – and enter into dialogue with the people in question in order to redress flow in life embeddedness. The endeavor to redress flow in life embeddedness may – within normality – entail categorical demands of change and/or indignation in relation to the way in which the world and other people react.

Likewise, because of complex, dysfunctional or absent external conditions/possibilities and/or complaisance, not all parts of one's life can be idealized. Again one may – within normality – seek other possibilities in life that offer a sense of belonging and direction. Furthermore, it is normal to react by being a little more self-denying and conforming in order to be allowed to belong among significant others, and/or one experiences a mild degree of emptiness (due to lack of meaning and direction) if sometimes it is not possible to form attachments with ideals.

When dealing with an actually disordered personal style as to mirroring, we find people in extreme need of mirroring, which manifests itself in extreme fluctuation between megalomaniac omnipotent self-assertive personality styles where others are expected to approve in an unreserved way. If such persons face resistance because other people do not accept just being supernumeraries, and if the world is not outright performing the role of a mirror – or even excludes the person – ‘other people’ will experience an immense destructive reaction in the form of uncontrolled demeaning contempt and aggressive rage. In cases of disordered personal idealization style, we find people with an extreme need to belong and a very unrealistic idealization of others (or of a cause) in order to belong to something extraordinary and ultimately ‘example-setter-like’ in life. If people with such a tendency to unrealistic idealization feel excluded from and cannot belong to such idealized others, groups or causes, they will experience a diffuse lack of direction and structure as well as emptiness (see also Kohut 1977, Anonymized 1996, Carsten René Jørgensen 2009).

The mirroring style

The mirroring style leads to the following risky kinds of behavior:

1. *Self-assertiveness* – i.e. an unrealistic megalomania which in the final analysis reduces other people to supernumeraries in one’s life, just like other people’s personalities, approaches and life projects are ignored, and every kind of community is reduced to being an echo-room or a mirror with the only purpose of showing one’s own superiority. This is actually the epitome of extremism, because we are dealing with extremely reckless disregard of co-existence and community in order to be able to fulfil oneself and pursue one’s own goals in life.

2. *Rumination and grievance*. In connection with a mirroring personality disorder we find a

mindset and social cognition based on a frustrated reaction to grievance (e.g. McCauley 2012, Kruglanski et al. 2014). This is consistent with an anthropological study made in a Danish primary school (Gilliam 2009). Overall, Danish schoolchildren are equal. Nevertheless, many children of immigrants (preferably from the Middle East and North Africa) do experience a small degree of daily exclusion and daily racism. In everyday life (at school, in the public space, in the media, from some politicians), they are met with negative rhetoric that refers to them as "bilingual", "non-ethnic", "potential troublemakers", "without interest for learning" and as children "who will probably not do well in school and later in life". Such children may gradually develop a double identity: On the one hand they are well integrated into life i.e. fully able to navigate socio-economically in society. But if we look behind this superficial understanding of integration, many of these young people actually live in a substantive pressure arising from the de facto (if not de jure) exclusion. This may result in a counter-identity and a mindset characterized by "not really being Danish anyway" and a skillset characterized by lack of interest in being integrated in "such an exclusionary society" (see also McDonald 2003). This may lead to a radicalized view of oneself and the surroundings which is centered on an autobiographical self-perception about “non-belonging”, which can make it very difficult or even impossible to fit into society (Graham & Hudley 2005).

3. *Aggression and violence as the preferred response*. Another decisive radicalization factor is, of course, the performing of actions in an aggressive and violent fashion. One might think that the development of aggression and violent behavior must involve family environments or urban areas plagued by domestic dispute, violence, crime, socio-economic problems etc. However, Bradshaw et al. (2013) have found a correlation between aggression and even completely mild forms of such factors which can be

found in high status districts as well (mild forms of rejection; being witness to mild forms of violence, such as police officers performing the detention of a criminal). The correlation is amplified by socio-cognitive – and we may add: mirroring – factors, such as: (a) a tendency to interpret ambiguous behavior (friendly as well as aggressive) as hostile, (b) hypersensitivity to and early detection of signs of threats, and (c) aggression and violence as the preferred immediate response ("shoot first, ask afterwards").

Idealizing style

The idealizing style is characterized by the following risk factors:

1. *“Dying to belong”*. People have a fundamental need to belong to social communities (Baumeister & Leary 1995). This includes support, help, recognition or at least tolerance from others in order to maintain or (re)construct the flow of life embeddedness. Inclusion is a social, cultural and societal practice about incorporating the diversity of different forms of life in a joint effort to form a community. Inclusion optimizes participation in all aspects of life (Miller & Katz 2002). Exclusion, however, may be highly destructive to one’s effort to execute one’s fundamental life skills in accordance with existing life tasks, and thus strongly detrimental to flow in life embeddedness (Castaneda 2010, McDonald & Shildrick 2012, Ecclestone 2015).

Young people who have experienced (lifelong) exclusion (not being one of ‘us’) are particularly vulnerable. Being invited into a radicalized group is perhaps the first actual experience of inclusion, belonging, friendship and recognition - even though the reason for inclusion may be cynical and maybe an attempt to recruit naive cannon fodder (Taylor & Louis 2004, Borum 2011). The mere experience of belonging normally makes one identify with the group, its values, norms, goals and projects. By developing this kind of social identity one gains recognition as "one of us" (Tajfel & Turner

1986). Recognition in itself can be a strong motivation to remain in and identify with a group and even follow its projects to the extreme. This corresponds to Kruglanski (2014) assumption that frustration as to the human key motive with regard to importance in relation to others can lead to radicalization.

The experience of belonging to a group provides coherence, consistency, order and predictability in life (Kruglanski & Orehek 2012). It provides a sense of safety and security if the group describes and prescribes what one must think about the world, life, other people and oneself (know-that). Furthermore, it prescribes what one must do in a given situation (know-how), as well as what one can expect from other people (Hogg 2012). Being met by a well-defined and prescribed *knowthat* and *know-how* thus satisfies the need of cognitive closure (see above).

In times of insecure and uncertain, threatened or destroyed life embeddedness people are particularly motivated to reduce uncertainty by identifying with strong and stable groups. According to Hogg (2012), such groups are characterized by closed borders, uniform attitudes/values, rigid routines – and rigid hierarchical internal structures with a clear line of authority. Furthermore, the groups are characterized by self-perpetuating group thinking, i.e. a process by which the group members agree on an increasingly radicalized mindset that does not allow any form of deviation or criticism (Janis 1972, Hart et al. 1997). Such groups distinguish in a still more pronounced way between ‘us’ and ‘them’, and this polarization often becomes more critical if a group is forced to go into hiding (Moghaddam 2004) as it reinforces the suspicion on people outside the group. Moreover, the groups often engage in rather antisocial and self-affirmative activities/actions.

2. *Easy to mobilize*. Defending or (re)constructing fundamental life embeddedness requires the proper external condi-

tions/possibilities as regards society, culture, the community and one's close social network. If legal as well as socially and normatively legitimized possibilities of action are non-existing or not perceived as available, it can push people in the direction of using alternative – maybe ultimately violent and/or illegal – methods (Moghaddam 2004, Borum 2011). Therefore, it is a serious problem if energetic and dedicated young people cannot find and/or create meaningful and non-violent opportunities for action including participation in the social and cultural community (Della Porta 1995, Kundnani 2014).

The Social Movement Theory is about understanding actions, activism and radicalization in the light of external conditions/possibilities (Stekelenburg & Klandermans 2009). The theory distinguishes between activating and actualizing factors. The *activating factors* (in terms of Life Psychology) relate to the fact that one engages in social movements: (a) if one's expectations of fundamental life embeddedness exceed its actual quality, and if one can imagine better life embeddedness, (b) if one is excluded from common opportunities, values, positions and rights, and (c) if many people are already mobilized. Funds for the realization must also be in order (Edwards 2004): for example ways of communication, organizations, people with know-how etc.

3. *Guilt and shame*. Another side of idealization concerns the obligation to action (Stern 2003, Blom 2005, Moghaddam 2005). For example, Jihad is the obligation to work for God's plan with human life and the human society. Jihad may take three forms: Jihad Of The Sword (military action), Jihad Of The Book (learning, education and enlightenment), and Jihad Of The Heart (humanitarian and altruistic societal activities, as well as personal development) (Cook 2005). It should be needless to emphasize that most versions of Jihad are equal to insane/violent extremism (destructive to human basic conditions in the form of co-existence and

community), but in principle Jihad can also be about forced self-defense, socio-cultural reflection and self-development. In any case, Jihad driven by guilt and shame may be a risk factor, for example when young people come to see their previously lived life as being on the fringes of decency (e.g. in the form of juvenile delinquency, drugs, disregard of norms and values etc.). In such cases young persons may easily be affected and seduced by cynical groups who make them believe that one must suffer (to handle guilt) or demonstrate virtue and decent behavior (to handle shame) in extraordinary/extreme ways, for example by means of distorted monomane – and fatal – versions of Jihad (Kruglanski et al. 2005). With guilt and shame as risk factors we also find the urge to (re-)discover what is personally significant and valuable in order to live up to cultural standards (Kruglanski et al. 2009).

4. *Selective recognition and identity simplification*. The form of selective recognition (only in cases of identification with a group and its agenda) presented here may have fatal implications for one's identity formation. Most people belong to a wide range of different groups and have multifaceted social identities, corresponding to belonging to various groups. In other words, most people have a high level of identity complexity (Roccas & Brewer 2002). So, even though one's identity, self-esteem and sense of belonging are somehow threatened, one is still supported and strengthened in the non-excluding contexts of one's life, which makes one less vulnerable in relation to specific kinds of exclusion (Verkuyten & Martinovic 2012). But if one's identity complexity is very low (here called identity simplification) because one's social identity is linked to just one group/cause, one is in a position of vulnerability since threats to the group/cause affects one's *entire* identity – and here may be added – one's entire life embeddedness. This may very well result in radicalization in order to defend the particular group, and in a high degree of coun-

teracting outgroup intolerance due to a wish for total (re-)construction of life (Brewer & Pierce 2005, Hewstone et al. 2009).

5. *Aggression and violence as accepted cost for belongingness.* A group based on a pronounced activist and action demanding program is not working if its members simply endorse the stance of the program. The members also have to take *action*. According to the above-mentioned Social Movement Theory, people can be mobilized to take action in two different ways (Borum 2011), in terms of Life Psychology: (1) by strengthening people's expectations of the results of action, including strengthened satisfaction by making a difference for the (re-)construction of fundamental life embeddedness, and (2) by minimizing people's expectations of the disadvantages and losses by means of dampening natural and immediate reservations in relation to the action (for example, regarding the use of violence), and dampening sensitivity in relation to what other peo-

ple may think about the action (i.e. subdue guilt and shame).

In the chapter with the descriptive title "dying to be popular", Siegel et al. (2012) demonstrate that personal uncertainty can make some young people take dangerous action as a means to achieve recognition. They are willing to sacrifice everything (even pay the ultimate price) for the sake of their group, even though they are not beforehand suicidal or *in search for* self-destruction in the form of violent activism, terrorism and suicide bombing as such. Nonetheless, in order to obtain inclusion/a sense of belonging and to get an impact on something (i.e. life embeddedness) they accept almost any cost.

'Risk factor set 2' can be seen in Table 2. These risk factors reinforce the function of life skills in a negative direction resulting in non-flow in one's fundamental life embeddedness, which again reinforces radicalization and the attempt to (re-)construct human life.

<p>Mirroring style One becomes <i>somebody</i> in the act of expressing oneself</p>	<p>cognitive and dynamic style</p>	<p>Idealising style One becomes <i>somebody</i> via attachment and being directed by others / the world</p>
<p>Mirroring style Self-assertiveness Thoughts revolving violation Aggression and violence as the preferred response</p>	<p>Cognitive style Ambiguity intolerance Jump to conclusion Fundamentalism Monomania Dynamic style (energy) A high energy level Excitement-seeking Jump to action</p>	<p>Idealizing style Overridealizing Guilt and shame Identity simplification Aggression and violence as accepted cost for group identity</p>

Table 2 shows 'Risk factor set 2

A theoretical model of radicalization processes, risk factors and protective factors

As discussed above, humans have a natural tendency to act in order to construct or reconstruct life embeddedness. The basic factors of Risk factor set 1 trigger actions as from non-radicalizing activities that most people approach (i.e. situation specific actions) over to activism (a more comprehensive political and/or religious approach to life), and also to more or less radicalized activism leading to extremism (extensive changes in own and common life without regard to the community). The reinforcing factors in Risk factor set 2 determine whether extremism will occur, and whether the kind of extremism will become legal nonviolent or illegal violent.

The model in Figure 3 shows the two main sets of risk factors and the different paths directed at/by the (re-)construction of fundamental life embeddedness. Some people with a strong desire to (re)construct fundamental life embeddedness move along more or less radicalized action-oriented paths, while others who are also exposed to endangered or more or less destroyed life embeddedness give up or lack the necessary basic life skills for being able to handle their life tasks. They easily enter paths characterized by *psychosocial breakdown*. Others insist on an individualistic (re-)construction in the form of criminal personal gain or idiosyncratic criminal activity-based hatred towards something or somebody who might have caused the experienced non-flow. They move along the paths of *delinquency*. Some young people have great difficulty gaining any acceptance at all. They cannot even find a footing in criminal gangs or radicalized groups (Zierhoffer 2014) and are so to speak multi-excluded, which is why they desperately attempt to obtain some or another form of street credit, regardless of requirements or types of inspiration (copycats), and are highly propelled by what can be called

"dying to belong" – by other authors termed: Dying to be popular (Seyranian et al. 2012, see Risk factor set 2) – or by a strong desire to gain significance (Kruglanski et al. 2014).

The suggested Life Psychological model of radicalization and extremism together with the two sets of risk factors also show how to react in relation to radicalization taking a worrying direction (see the above warnings against false-positives). Basically, a life embedding factor may be characterized *either* as a risk factor *or* as a protective factor, which means that we are not working with one set risk factors and a completely different set of protective factors. So, one specific factor may promote extremism but may possibly also protect against radicalization.

The general human skills for life embeddedness can thus be in a relative mode (in relation to the external structural life conditions/possibilities and 'complaisance') where they contribute to flow, or they may contribute to non-flow. Therefore, anti-radicalization intervention concerns empowerment in the form of strengthening, developing, informing and forming life skills – through upbringing, civic formation in school, (age adequate) existential conversations and deliberative community building, as well as coaching and mentoring. E.g. in such a way that the young person retains his/her critical sense and indignation of the deficits and injustices as regards structural outer conditions as well as cultural and societal complaisance - *but* also so that life skills in relation to critical (re-)construction of life embeddedness unfold within a legal and non-violent framework with a far-reaching degree of consideration to human co-existence, as well as mutually including communities, i.e. by definition non-extremist (but eventually activist).

Likewise, the factors in set 2 may provide useful guidance for developing life skills in a more or less radicalizing way – or for protection against radicalization and illegal/violent extremism. Interventions directed at resilience and deradicalization may be in the form of

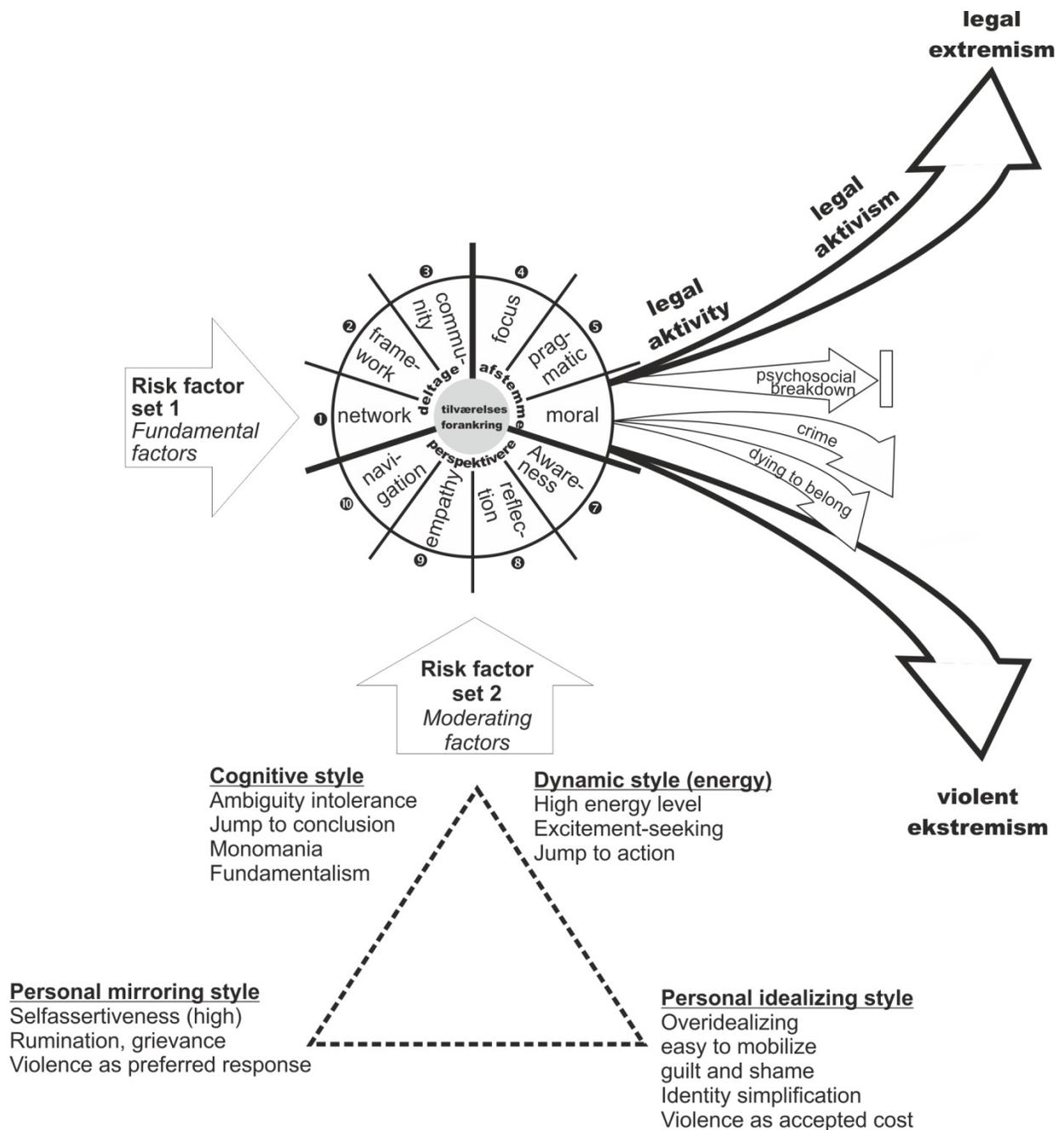


Figure 3 shows the radicalization model and the risk factors leading to either legal or violent extremism (including crossover combinations of psychosocial failure, crime, and "dying to belong")

working with metacognitive adjustment of one's (disordered) cognitive, dynamic and personal style in order to limit extremism despite of immediate (disturbed) incentives. Intervention may also be in the form of in-depth thera-

peutic work with one's basic style as to cognition, dynamics and personality (if possible). Finally, the work may be linked together with the above-mentioned reframing of skills, so that one's cognitive, dynamic and personal style

might be equally extreme, but now legal and non-violent. For example, a former religious extremist now with the same cognitive, dynamic and idealizing persistence as before intervention with regard to counteracting extremism and promoting human co-existence. Or a young person who plunges into martial arts or some other legal activity in the same absorbed, arousal-seeking and mirroring self-assertive way as before the intervention.

Young people who are left to themselves with an overwhelming or a frustrated non-flow in life may be dangerous to both themselves and society. Omar El-Hussein's attack in Copenhagen (2015) may be an expression of the kind of hostile and desperate violence where all of the above three paths regarding social failure, crime and multi-exclusion merge together (a so-called crossover) due to relatively weak life skills reinforced by a disturbed cognitive, dynamic and personal mirroring/idealizing style. Some young people legitimize crossovers with some kind of pseudo-jihadism or some other form of pseudo-religious or pseudo-political narrative, but, in fact, the crossovers are results of a desperate striving for a good enough life embeddedness based on street credit, however, without any form of actual political or religious agenda.

The model as shown in figure 3 forms the basis for distinguishing between different paths of violent radicalization and thus, ultimately, also different types of terrorists (compare to Bjørge 2005). The following three paths seem to be at hand: (1) The life embeddedness (re-)constructing path/type who in a more or less extremist way is dedicated to political/religious reconstruction of life irrespective of the means to do this. (2) The belonging-seeking path/type who is first and foremost looking for social ties and recognition, and who as something secondary (perhaps based on moral detachment) accept violence as a cost to obtain a sense of belonging. (3) The belonging-seeking and/or direction-disordered path/type without mature life skills or a clear direction in life: One day one

smokes cannabis and act in an unlawful way, the next day one goes to church or mosque.

Conclusion

When dealing with young people threatened by radicalization and with violent extremists, we must go beneath the surface in order to find out what they are actually looking for, i.e. what we are all searching for, namely a good enough, meaningful, comprehensive and manageable life embeddedness in flow. Hence, the *quest* in itself is not disordered or dangerous, but the extremist *responses* to it are indeed – responses that he or she finds without the help of others, or that he or she is indoctrinated into accepting by radicalizing powers and internet propaganda. Also, it would be wrong to say that the risk factors are completely different from those which apply to all of us. Regardless of how disordered or dangerous the extremist effort to (re-)construct life may be, it will always be based on life embedding human life skills and cognitive, dynamic and personal structures of directedness common to us all. What is important is whether the life skills are in some state of flow, or in some state of overwhelming or frustrating non-flow. Accordingly this model distinguishes between violent radicalization and criticism from political and/or religious groupings, which might develop into an extreme, but still legal and non-violent perception of the good life. Consequently, de-radicalization-programs must be based on the development of resilience through the development and the formation of fundamental human life skills and a cognitive, dynamic and mirroring/idealizing mindset – always directed at a good enough flow in life embeddedness.

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