Abstract

According to significance quest theory, radicalism arises from a deficit in life meaningfulness. However, radicalism springs from life meaningfulness, according to meaning maintenance and other principles in existentialist How life meaningfulness predicts radicalism is thus a research question. This study addresses the question with a survey of 4,385 youths in Hong Kong, China. Results indicate that life meaningfulness positively predicted radicalism, slightly more positively when radicalism in the previous year had been higher. Meanwhile, education, employment, and native status positively predicted radicalism and life meaningfulness, showing their homology in meaning sources. These results imply that radicalism prevention needs to reform the meaning basis for life meaningfulness to be socially desirable.

Keywords radicalism · life meaningfulness · existentialist theory · significance quest theory · meaning maintenance

Radicalism, an orientation toward social change with antisocial, destructive, or violent means, is a concern for prediction and, thus, mitigation (Elshimi, 2017; Kruglanski et al., 2017). A prediction has suggested that meaningfulness in life prevents radicalism (Koehler & Fiebig, 2019). This suggestion stems from the quest for meaning or significance (Kruglanski & Bertelsen, 2020). Accordingly, significance quest theory posits that meaninglessness in conventional life prompts the quest for meaning in radicalism, which is alternatively meaningful (Jasko et al. 2019). This theory reflects the existentialist theory, a broader theory emphasizing the maintenance of meaning as the impetus of radicalism and other actions (Proulx, 2013; Seidler, 2013). Both theories thus hold that maintaining meaning to achieve meaningfulness

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positively predicts radicalism. Nevertheless, the positive and negative predictions between meaningfulness and radicalism are confusing and obscure, thus requiring empirical clarification to substantiate and enrich the theories. Such clarification is the objective of this study of Hong Kong Chinese youth, considering the concern about radicalism, life meaningfulness, and their relationship. This objective rests on the rationale for showing that existentialist theory explains the relationship better than significance quest theory. The rationale rests on the fuller view of meaning actualization and maintenance beyond the meaning quest in existentialist theory (Lyng, 2012; Proulx, 2013).

Radicalism is a concern because of its risks imposed on society (Elshimi, 2017). The risks include the fomentation of separatism, racism, and terrorism, which is severely and widely perilous and deadly (McGlynn & McDaid, 2019; Rousseau et al., 2021). Such risks stem from conflict, crisis, deviant, hostile, intransigent, intolerant, misadjusted, outrageous, threatening, and willful tendencies inherent in radicalism (J. Berger, 2018; Elshimi, 2017; Kruglanski et al., 2017). Radicalism thus counts as a social disease or plague, which is awful because it is socially transmittable (J. Berger, 2018). Hence, radicalism is rampant due to mediatization, rapidly expanding with technological advancement and networking (McGlynn & McDaid, 2019). These features sustain the prevalence of radicalism among youth (Botticher, 2017; Ghosh et al., 2017). Meanwhile, countering radicalism or deradicalization is a policy priority, as in the rise of profiling, surveillance, risk management, and securitization (Clubb & O’connor, 2019; Frounfelker et al., 2021). Notably, life meaningfulness is a developmental focus for deradicalization (Sukabdi, 2019).

Life meaningfulness, which represents the understanding of relations in life, is a quality of life underlying other life qualities, including happiness, health, pleasantness, satisfaction, and non-depression (Proulx, 2013; Steger et al., 2009). In the youth, life meaningfulness has consolidated hope, identity, self-efficacy, self-esteem, and development generally and has alleviated anxiety and loneliness (Aviad-Wilchek et al., 2017; To et al., 2014). Life meaningfulness has also been socially beneficial by boosting civic engagement and volunteering in the youth (Duffy & Raque-Bogdan, 2010; Summers & Falco, 2020). The contributions of life meaningfulness rest on its personal coherence and social belongingness, covering purposefulness and significance (Scott & Cohen, 2020; Womick et al., 2022). For instance, life meaningfulness relates life to beauty, goodness, love, and quality (Cooney, 2000; Leontiev, 2013). Life meaningfulness is also the core value in existentialism as the cornerstone for existence (Moynihan et al., 2017). Existentialist meaningfulness treasures action, authenticity, experiencing, freedom, individuality, and responsibility to demonstrate existence (Cooney, 2000).

**Relating Radicalism and Life Meaningfulness**

According to significance quest theory and related research, life meaningfulness reduces the quest for meaning through radicalism (Koehler & Fiebig, 2019; Kruglanski & Bertelsen, 2020). The theory maintains the need and value of meaning to necessitate its quest (Kruglanski & Bertelsen, 2020; Renstrom et al., 2020). This
quest arises from the deficit or loss of meaningfulness in life through dishonoring, humiliation, injustice, rejection, or shame (Jasko et al., 2019; Webber et al., 2018). Meanwhile, according to the theory, radicalism is a way to gain or restore life meaningfulness, such as by becoming a hero (Jasko et al., 2019; Lobato et al., 2018). The loss of meaning or significance has provoked radicalism in the adult (Koehler & Fiebig, 2019). Thus, the theory endorses the following hypotheses about the youth.

**Hypothesis 1** Life meaningfulness negatively predicts radicalism.

**Hypothesis 2** Radicalism positively predicts life meaningfulness.

However, life meaningfulness is also likely to champion radicalism, premised on meaning maintenance in existentialist theory, which encompasses significance quest theory (Proulx, 2013; Seidler, 2013). Existentialist theory presumes the availability and value of authenticity, freedom, meaning, responsibility, and their actualization and maintenance of consistency (Koole et al., 2010; Proulx, 2013). Such valued factors, characterizing or demonstrating existence or living, are necessary for adjustment and behaving generally (Temple & Gall, 2018; van Deurzen, 2021). Like significance quest theory, existentialist theory emphasizes life meaningfulness as the impetus. Such emphasis concerns meaning maintenance, expression or manifestation, acting out or actualization, and the quest for meaning (G. Duncan, 2014; Eliason et al., 2010). Hence, existentialist theory posits that meaning maintenance or actualization operates to affirm, enable, or justify action, thus realizing authenticity (Proulx, 2013; van Tilburg & Igou, 2011). Authenticity or actualization to follow or realize the meaning of activity in life has activated youth behavior, including delinquency and violence (Gottschalk, 2020; Ribeaud & Eisner, 2015; Shen et al., 2012; Walters, 2021). According to existentialist theory, such realization is a cause of crime, as associated with radicalism (B. Hunter, 2009; Koehler, 2017). Moreover, radicalism has involved or stemmed from criminal or violent behavior or orientation (Amjad, 2009; J. Berger, 2018; Frounfelker et al., 2021; Koehler & Fiebig, 2019). Crime, radicalism, and violence can thus be the sources of meaning, which is not antisocial according to those exhibiting crime, radicalism, or violence (Barr and Simons, 2015; Sinko et al., 2021; Stern, 2016). Hence, the theory expects that radicalism results from actualizing meanings compatible with or underlying radicalism (Delts, 2017; Seidler, 2013). Similarly, the theory regards meaningfulness as a cause of violence, which features radicalism (Bogg, 1999; Rousseau et al., 2021). In the youth, such meanings cover activism, agency, idealism, localism, protest, rebelliousness, romanticism, self-determination, and voicing (Cote 2014; Malín et al., 2014; Mukhitov et al., 2022). More generally, radicalism is meaningful to life as it is holy, just, moral, and righteous to address grievances or injustice, according to radicals (Jakubowska et al., 2021; Johnston & Bose, 2020). These meanings underlie radicalism (Elshimi, 2017; G. Tang et al., 2020). Overall, existentialist theory maintains that the existential vacuum of life meaning prompts the quest for meaning from various sources to con-
struct meaning and its actualization and maintenance of authenticity or faith through radicalism (Proulx, 2013; Strenger, 2011). Existentialist theory thus regards radicalism as the acting out of life meaningfulness in the youth.

**Hypothesis 1**: Life meaningfulness positively predicts radicalism.

Existentialist theory also expects that some background characteristics, including education, employment and its achievement, and native status, are the sources of life meaning to facilitate radicalism. Education has cultivated meanings in aspiration, autonomy, disobedience, freedom, incompliance, independence, and ingratitude because of personal performance and merit (Giambra, 2018; Gibson, 2013). These meanings constitute radicalism (Botticher, 2017). Employment has brought meaning to politics and protest to influence and achieve fairness in reward (Brynner, 2000; Kerrissey & Schofer, 2013). These meanings have championed radicalism (G. Tang et al., 2020). Employment achievement, as indicated by earnings or income over education, has instilled meanings into aspiration and self-expression (Hallerod, 2006; Welzel & Inglehart, 2010). These meanings generate radicalism (Jasko et al., 2019; Rousseau et al., 2020). Locally born or native status consolidates meanings in localism and nativism, which privilege the local or natives and reject the alien (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). Such meanings are the causes of radicalism (M. Chan, 2020; F. Lee 2018). Life meaningfulness has furthermore derived from education, employment, and native status (Kulik et al., 2015; Vogel & Human-Vogel, 2018).

In predicting radicalism and life meaningfulness, other background and response characteristics are necessary control factors to minimize confounding. These characteristics include age, gender, marital status, family income per capita, and social desirability, which underlies socially desirable responses. Notably, radicalism has diminished with age, female gender, marriage, and family income (Jakubowska et al., 2021; Wong, Khiatani, & Chui, 2019).

**Hong Kong Chinese Context**

The Hong Kong Chinese context is apt for examining radicalism and life meaningfulness according to existentialist theory because of the context’s comparability with the West, where the theory and research originated, and its distinctiveness for scrutinizing the generalizability of the theory and research. Such comparability builds on Westernization and globalization expedited by the context’s entrepôt location and former British rule (K. Cheung, 2015; T. Hui et al., 2018). Hence, Hong Kong is comparable to the Western developed world in economic and sociopolitical systems. Meanwhile, Hong Kong is distinctive in its compact urbanization and cultural mix, combining Chinese and Western cultures (K. Cheung, 2015; T. Hui et al., 2018; Kuang & Kennedy, 2018). Compact urbanization, including transportation and dense housing, can facilitate social mobilization and thus radicalism and their social contagion (Ebers & Stephan, 2022). Meanwhile, the cultural mix can evolve into a clash between Chinese and Western cultures, particularly in sociopolitical arenas, to foment radicalism (Kuang & Kennedy, 2018).
Radicalism in Hong Kong, particularly its Westernized youth, typically springs from the clash between Mainland Chinese culture upholding order and Westernized Hong Kong culture prioritizing freedom (K. Cheung, 2015; Zamecki, 2018). The clash consolidates with education, inculcating freedom, localism, or separation from Mainland China’s atheistic dominance (Wong & Au-Yeung, 2018; Zamecki, 2018). Such consolidation heightened radicalism in 2019 concerning the motion to surrender fugitives from Hong Kong to Mainland China when Hong Kong radicals asserted that the surrender was unfree and unjust (G. Tang et al., 2020). Accordingly, they enjoyed the freedom to demonize and offend Mainland China and thus rallied to disrupt support, agencies, and establishments for Mainland China, including the government of Hong Kong. Such radicalism went further to initiate Hong Kong’s separation from China. In response, China’s government inaugurated a national security law for Hong Kong in mid-2020 to restore order and prevent riotous radicalism afterward. Although Hong Kong’s prominent radicalism sprang from the cultural mix, such separatist radicalism is ubiquitous worldwide (Bukit, 2022; Zubok & Chuprov, 2010). Examining radicalism in Hong Kong is thus informative internationally, considering the international position for sharing knowledge (Kuah-Pearce & Fong, 2010).

**Method**

The study collected data from a survey of 4,385 Hong Kong Chinese youths aged 18 to 29 from April to August 2020. The survey applied a random sampling procedure to randomly select residential telephone numbers to contact households and select their youth members. This survey, conducted by trained interviewers, ran on weekday evenings and weekend daytime and evenings, achieved a response rate of 66.3%, based on the youth members approached. The sample was adequate for testing a tiny effect size of 0.0575 with 99.999% statistical confidence (i.e., \( p < .001 \)) and 70% statistical power. Such statistical confidence was appropriate for a rigorous significance test with a large sample (Roberts & Robertson, 1992).

**Participants**

The youths had an average of 23.0 years in age and 14.9 years in education (i.e., tertiary level, starting from 13 years) (see Table 1). Among them, 51.9% were female, 80.1% were locally born or natives, 30.1% were students or not working, and 4.8% were married.

**Measurement**

The survey measured radicalism, life meaningfulness, and social desirability in 2020 and 2019, given the usefulness of retrospective measurement (Lobato et al., 2018; Tang et al., 2020). These measures, adapted from validated ones, employed multiple rating items to score intensity on a 0-100 scale. Some items employed negative phrasing and required reverse scoring to help reduce the acquiescent bias, which meant rating everything indiscriminately highly (Tourangeau et al., 2000).
Radicalism at the time of the survey in 2020 and in 2019 combined seven items, such as “supporting the use of resistance to fight for rights” and “supporting shocking during the demonstration” (Moskalenko & McCauley, 2009). The measure exhibited validity in relationships with protesting, violence, and distrust of the establishment (Koehler & Fiebig, 2019; F. Lee, 2018). A concrete and impressive practice such as radicalism in 2019 should be recallable (Lawson et al., 2020). Social turmoil in 2019 and COVID-19 in 2020 would also be distinguishing temporal landmarks (Drasch & Matthes, 2011; Gaskell et al., 2000). The composite reliability was 0.965 and 0.957 for radicalism in 2020 and 2019, respectively.

Life meaningfulness in the month before the survey in 2020 combined four items such as “living a full life” and “living meaningfully” (Schnell, 2009). The measure had demonstrated validity through its relationships with life perception, action, goal setting, meaning sourcing, satisfaction, and positive mood as opposed to anxiety and depression. The composite reliability was 0.824.

Social desirability in 2019 combined four items such as “being ready to help others” and “willing to admit mistakes” (Paulhus, 1991). Its reliability, as usual, was relatively low (0.560) but adequate for a control variable (Mundia, 2011).

### Analysis

The analysis started with confirmatory factor analysis to validate and create trait factors for subsequent structural relation analysis for hypothesis testing. The confirmatory factor analysis confirmed four trait factors, radicalism in 2020 and 2019, life meaningfulness, and social desirability, given the method factor representing acquiescent rating (Podsakoff et al., 2003). The analysis could generate robust estimates with the robust maximum likelihood estimation via Mplus (Muthen & Muthen, 2006).

The analysis could demonstrate factorial or structural validity with the substantial convergence of items to their respective trait factors, which were discriminable from the method factor. As such, the analysis generated the trait factors free of the bias of the method factor for structural relation analysis. The latter analysis predicted radicalism in 2020, life meaningfulness, radicalism in 2019, social desirability, and background characteristics. In predicting radicalism in 2020, life meaningfulness and life meaningfulness in the month before the survey in 2020 combined four items such as “living a full life” and “living meaningfully” (Schnell, 2009). The measure had demonstrated validity through its relationships with life perception, action, goal setting, meaning sourcing, satisfaction, and positive mood as opposed to anxiety and depression. The composite reliability was 0.824.

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its interactions with radicalism, social desirability, and background characteristics were additional predictors. The inclusion of the interactions revealed conditioning or variation in the effects of life meaningfulness on radicalism in 2020. All interactions were products based on the standard scores of interacting variables to lessen unstable estimation due to multicollinearity (Dunlap & Kemery, 1987).

Results

On average, radicalism, life meaningfulness, and social desirability were at a moderate level (M=57.9–61.7, see Table 1, based on raw scores rather than factor scores). Hence, radicalism was substantial enough for concern.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Confirmatory factor analysis verified the trait factors of radicalism in 2020 and 2019, life meaningfulness, and social desirability, given the method factor. Specifically, the trait factors exhibited convergent validity with high loadings (λ=0.478-0.872 on radicalism in 2020, 0.481-0.824 on radicalism in 2019, 0.649-0.807 on life meaningfulness, and 0.372-0.585 on social desirability, see Table 2). The trait factors indicated discriminant validity from the method factor, particularly with lower and mostly negligible loadings on the method factor. Overall, the traits manifested factorial validity, combining convergent and discriminant validity, from the good fit of the analysis (L^2(235)=1338, SRMR=0.039, RMSEA=0.033, CFI=0.955). The analysis was thus adequate to create trait factor scores that were free of the acquiescent bias for structural equation analysis.

Structural Relation Analysis

Life meaningfulness in the month before the survey did not significantly predict radicalism in 2020 after controlling for radicalism in 2019 and background and response characteristics (β=.019, see Table 3). By contrast, life meaningfulness significantly predicted radicalism in 2020, without controlling for radicalism in 2019 (β=.199, p<.001). This prediction suggested that life meaningfulness maintained but not raised radicalism. Furthermore, the square of life meaningfulness significantly predicted radicalism in 2020, even after controlling for radicalism in 2019 (β=.051, see Table 4). The significant effects supported Hypothesis 1' based on existentialist theory. Particularly, the quadratic effect of the square life meaningfulness indicated that radicalism was high when life meaningfulness was extremely high. That is, extreme life meaningfulness positively predicted radicalism. Hypothesis 1' rather than Hypothesis 1 thus attained support.

Radicalism in 2019 significantly predicted life meaningfulness in 2020 after controlling for background and response characteristics (β=0.216, see Table 3). The positive effect supported Hypothesis 2.

The interaction or conjunction of radicalism in 2019 and life meaningfulness additionally showed a significant but slight positive effect on radicalism in 2020.
This effect suggested that life meaningfulness associated with or based on prior radicalism perpetuated radicalism. The effect thus implied the positive reinforcement of radicalism. Meanwhile, interactions between life meaningfulness and other background or response characteristics did not reveal significant effects on radicalism in 2020 additionally.

Some background characteristics significantly predicted radicalism and life meaningfulness. Accordingly, radicalism and life meaningfulness were lower when mar-
ried or not working and were higher when more highly educated (see Table 3). These effects indicated that radicalism and life meaningfulness were homologous, based on the same meaning sources. By contrast, native status (β = 0.089 & 0.103, see Table 3) and personal income over education, representing employment achievement (β = 0.116 & 0.117), displayed significant positive effects on radicalism in 2019 and 2020, but not on life meaningfulness. Meanwhile, age and family income per capita exhibited significant negative effects on radicalism in 2019 (β = −0.239 & −0.062). Notably, age displayed the same negative effect on radicalism in 2019 and 2020.
Overall, the positive effects of education, employment, employment achievement, and native status on radicalism registered the contribution of meanings.

Discussion

Existentialist theory demonstrates its value from the analysis of radicalism and life meaningfulness. The analysis supports hypotheses 1 and 2 that radicalism in 2019 contributed to life meaningfulness, which predicted radicalism in 2020. Notably, life meaningfulness was more predictive when squared or extreme or derived from radicalism in 2019. In addition, education, employment and its achievement, and native status predicted radicalism. Education, and employment also predicted life meaningfulness. These predictions testify the central role of life meaningfulness in relating radicalism and meaning sources, which sustained radicalism and life meaningfulness. Hence, radicalism and life meaningfulness are homologous, commonly arising from some meaning sources. According to existentialist theory, the display of meaning and radicalism rests on the youth’s individualistic interpretation and meaning creation and maintenance (Seidler, 2013; Proulx, 2013). The youth thus derives life meanings from education, employment, and even radicalism to perpetuate radicalism. Additionally, the youth finds meanings in native status and employment achievement to actualize the meanings through radicalism. The central role of meanings champions existentialist theory, which explains the contribution of life meaningfulness to radicalism with some refinement.

Besides predicting radicalism, life meaningfulness was more predictive by its squared or extreme form. Such enhanced prediction reflects that extreme life meaningfulness is meaningful and conducive to rationalism, which is similarly extreme (Elshimi, 2017; Ghosh et al., 2017). The reflection testifies consistent meaning maintenance in existentialist theory (Proulx, 2013).

The coupling of life meaningfulness and radicalism in 2019 added a slight positive effect on radicalism in 2020. This coupling, reflecting the contribution of radicalism in 2019 to life meaningfulness, signifies the meaningfulness of radicalism. The latter meaningfulness thus boosts radicalism, according to meaning maintenance or actualization in existentialist theory (B. Hunter, 2009; Lester, 1995; Proulx, 2013). Such meaningfulness also represents a reward to radicalism to reinforce radicalism, as postulated in existentialist theory (Bogg, 1999).

Native status and employment achievement indicated by personal income over education enhanced radicalism but not life meaningfulness, whereas education, and employment championed radicalism and life meaningfulness. Native or locally born status particularly incubates localism and nativism, which are the causes of radicalism against Mainland China (Ng & Kennedy, 2019; Y. Wang, 2019). Herein, localism or nativism regards Mainland China as alien and Mainlandizing or imposing Mainland China’s form on Hong Kong to erode its uniqueness (Adorjan et al., 2021). Similarly, employment achievement or earning power consolidates meaning in capitalism, which is antithetical to the socialist bedrock in Mainland China (Bernstein, 2012). According to existentialist theory, such antagonism in meaning fuels radicalism against the Mainland (Seidler, 2013).
Age, marriage, and family income per capita diminished radicalism, and marriage additionally lessened life meaningfulness. The diminishment stems from the reduced meaning of crime with age, considering the criminal feature of radicalism (Frounfelker et al., 2021; Lyons, 2008). Similarly, marriage tends to dampen meanings in collective action, crime, and violence (Bjerk, 2009; Wright et al., 2015). The features characterize radicalism (Frounfelker et al., 2021; Rousseau et al., 2020). By contrast, youth or teen marriage reflects and incurs life problems because of inadequate preparation (Cotterell, 2007; Kuhl et al., 2012). Such problems and inadequate preparation have eroded life meaningfulness (Baumeister et al., 2013; Shin et al., 2018). Meanwhile, family income tends to dilute meanings in antisocial behavior, delinquency, and violence (Chen & Raine, 2018; Vander Ven et al., 2001). Such meanings transpire in radicalism (Frounfelker et al., 2021; Koirikivi et al., 2021). The effects of age, marriage, and family income are hence explicable with existentialist theory.

Existentialist theory presents an understanding of the impetus of meaningfulness more adequately and thoroughly than significance quest theory. Notably, life meaningfulness positively rather than negatively predicts radicalism, which thus results from meaning actualization or maintenance instead of the meaning quest. This prediction arises because the meaning quest through education, employment, and residency already achieves life meaningfulness to justify radicalism. Accordingly, Westernization through education, native status, and other socialization processes in Hong Kong tends to foster youth’s life meaningfulness to oppose Mainlandization radically. Such socialized meaningfulness further makes radicalism as meaning actualization meaningful to reinforce life meaningfulness. This reinforcement builds on authenticity or meaning consistency (Crewe & Lippens, 2009; Proulx, 2013). Hence, existentialist theory incorporates significance quest theory and specifies the latter’s application in the early phase of life meaningfulness development. According to existentialist theory, such phasing proceeds with the meaning quest, creation, actualization, and maintenance (Proulx, 2013; van Tilburg & Igou, 2011). As such, significance quest theory applies when radicalism reinforces life meaningfulness.

Limitations and Future Research

The study’s findings are inconclusive because of limitations in cross-sectional survey design, self-report retrospective measurement, and the single Chinese society of Hong Kong. The survey design relying on retrospective measurement cannot ascertain the temporal order required for prediction and causality. Moreover, self-report measurement cannot ensure validity interpersonally and objectively. The single society, meanwhile, cannot bolster generalizability over the world. These limitations necessitate future research to corroborate the present findings. Notably, future research needs to enhance its designs to warrant causality and internal validity, measurements to achieve their validity objectively, and sampling to sustain generalizability. Such designs need to employ repeated measurement through a survey and/or experiment to strengthen ecological and internal validity, respectively. Notably, an experiment manipulating life meaningfulness can ascertain the short-term impact of the contrived meaningfulness. Meanwhile, the survey can integrate measurements from multiple sources, including informants additional to the youth, to raise
their validity objectively. Future research also needs to expand its sampling frames to cover diverse societies representatively. Such coverage can enable a contextual analysis to tap conditions for generalizing effects across societies.

Future research can also substantiate existentialist theory with a detailed analysis of its meaning actualization, creation, and maintenance processes (Proulx, 2013; van Tilburg & Igou, 2011). Such analysis can demonstrate mediation between meaning sources, radicalism, and meaningfulness to indicate meaning creation, mediation between meaningfulness and radicalism and its defense or restoration to unfold meaning actualization and maintenance, respectively. Moreover, the analysis needs to elaborate meanings conducive to life meaningfulness and radicalism, including freedom and resistance to unfreedom imposed by Mainland China. At this junction, existentialist factors, including authenticity, freedom, responsibility, and willfulness, will reveal their moderating roles in future research (Bogg 1999; Crewe & Lippen, 2009).

**Implications**

To the youth, radicalism is socially undesirable and thus worthy of prevention (see Table 3). Such prevention needs to disconnect radicalism from life meaningfulness and its meaning sources, including education, employment, and native status. The disconnection can build on prioritizing socially desirable or prosocial meanings and downplaying radical or antisocial meanings. Crucial for the prioritizing are the meanings of guilt, hope, humility, law, open-mindedness, safety, science or rationality and truth, security, shame, social cohesion, harmony, and integration, and trust (Cosic et al., 2018; Elshimi, 2017; Sukabdi, 2019). Simultaneously, the downplaying applies to anger, hatred, and humiliation (Cosic et al., 2018). The prioritizing and downplaying rely on education, abd employment reformed to cultivate and realize meanings about collaboration, inclusiveness, moderation, and respect, as opposed to absolutism (Ghosh et al., 2017; Richter et al., 2020; Susilo & Dalimunthe, 2019). More specifically, meanings about aging or maturation, marriage, and family income, which discouraged rationalism, are worthwhile to advance personal, interpersonal, and family development concerning reasoning, mutuality, and sharing in youth (Cotterell, 2007; M. Wen et al., 2020). Overall, the prevention renders radicalism and its meaning sources meaningless in life. Such prevention particularly needs to target youths with higher education, employment, earnings, native status, younger age, or lower family income, considering the targeting approach to deradicalization (Ebers & Stephan, 2022). Deradicalization education is thus imperative to remove the educational basis for radicalism and its ground for life meaningfulness (Susilo & Dalimunthe, 2019).

**Declarations**

**Conflict of interest** Authors declare no conflict of interest.

**Human research** Authors declare that the study complied with human research ethics.

**Informed consent** Authors declare that respondents showed their informed consent to the survey.
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