YOUTH RADICALIZATION AND APPROACHES TO PREVENTION: EXPERIENCES OF YOUTH WORKERS[1,2]

Oğuzhan BİLGİN
Assoc. Prof. Dr.
Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli
University
Faculty of Letters,
Ankara, Türkiye
bilgino@gmail.com
ORCID ID: 0000-0003-4577-6331

Merve ZORLU
Ph.D. Candidate
Izmir Katip Celebi University
Institute of Social Science,
İzmir, Türkiye
mrve.zrlu@gmail.com
ORCID ID: 0000-0001-5350-4032

Recep YORULMAZ
Assoc. Prof. Dr.
Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt University
Faculty of Political Sciences,
Ankara, Türkiye
ryorulmaz@aybu.edu.tr
ORCID ID: 0000-0001-9769-2100

ABSTRACT   This study aims to understand youth radicalization and develop prevention-oriented recommendations based on the observations and experiences of youth workers. The research was conducted using qualitative methods and is based on semi-structured interviews with 15 youth workers from various provinces in Türkiye in 2024. Data analyzed using MAXQDA software were categorized under the themes of "Understanding Radicalization," "Factors Influencing Radicalization,", "Combating Radicalization," and "Recommendations for Preventing and Combating Radicalization." The findings reveal that youth radicalization is shaped by ideological beliefs, aggressive behaviors, and the influence of digital media. Social media use, economic deprivation, and the search for belonging are identified as key factors that increase youth susceptibility to radicalization. The study highlights the importance of education, awareness efforts, and community collaboration in combating radicalization. Critical thinking education has been found to be effective in fostering youth resilience to radical ideologies, while resource allocation and inter-institutional collaboration are deemed crucial for sustainability. The findings underline the need for comprehensive strategies to prevent radicalization effectively.

Keywords: *Radicalism, youth radicalization, youth worker, Türkiye.*
JEL Code: *F5, F52, H56*

Scope: *Political science and international relations*
Type: *Research*
DOI: 10.36543/kauiibfd.2024.025

---

[1] Compliance with the ethical rules of the relevant study has been declared.
[2] This study's earlier version was presented as an abstract at the at the 4th Hitit International Congress on Security Studies, 12-14 December 2024.

GENÇLİK RADİKALLEŞMESİ VE ÖNLEME YAKLAŞIMLARI: GENÇLİK ÇALIŞANLARININ DENEYİMLERİ

Oğuzhan BİLGİN
Doç.Dr.
Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli
Üniversitesi
Edebiyat Fakültesi,
Ankara, Türkiye
bilgino@gmail.com
ORCID ID: 0000-0003-4577-6331

Merve ZORLU
Doktora Adayı
İzmir Katip Çelebi Üniversitesi
Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü,
İzmir, Türkiye
mrve.zrlu@gmail.com
ORCID ID: 0000-0001-5350-4032

Recep YORULMAZ
Doç.Dr.
Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt
Üniversitesi
Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi,
Ankara, Türkiye
ryorulmaz@aybu.edu.tr
ORCID ID: 0000-0001-9769-2100

ÖZ | Bu çalışma, gençlik çalışanlarının gözlemleri ve deneyimleri temelinde gençlik radikalleşmesini anlamayı ve önlemeye yönelik öneriler geliştirmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Araştırma, nitel yöntemle yürütülmüş ve 2024 yılında Türkiye'nin çeşitli illerinden 15 gençlik çalışanıyla yapılan yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmelere dayanmaktadır. MAXQDA yazılımı kullanılarak analiz edilen veriler, "Radikalleşmeyi Anlamak," "Radikalleşmeyi Etkileyen Faktörler," "Radikalleşmeyle Mücadele," ve "Radikalleşmenin Önlenmesi ve Mücadele için Öneriler" temaları altında kategorize edilmiştir. Bulgular, gençlik radikalleşmesinin ideolojik inançlar, agresif davranışlar ve dijital medyanın etkisiyle şekillendiğini ortaya koymaktadır. Sosyal medya kullanımı, ekonomik yoksunluk ve aidiyet arayışı, gençlerin radikalleşmeye yatkınlığını artıran temel faktörler olarak tanımlanmıştır. Araştırma, radikalleşmeyle mücadelede eğitimin, farkındalık çabalarının ve toplumsal iş birliğinin önemini vurgulamaktadır. Eleştirel düşünme eğitiminin, gençlerin radikal ideolojilere karşı direnç kazanmalarını desteklemede etkili olduğu, kaynak tahsisi ve kurumlar arası iş birliğinin ise sürdürülebilirlik açısından kritik öneme sahip olduğu belirlenmiştir. Bulgular, radikalleşmenin etkili bir şekilde önlenmesi için kapsamlı stratejilere duyulan ihtiyacı vurgulamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Radikalizm, gençlik radikalleşmesi, gençlik çalışanı, Türkiye.*
JEL Kodları: *F5, F52, H56*

Alan: *Siyaset bilimi ve uluslararası ilişkiler*
Türü: *Araştırma*

1. INTRODUCTION

Radicalization can be defined as a process of mental and personal transformation that provides the intellectual groundwork for extremism and fundamentalism. This process encompasses the mental development of individuals who plan, execute, or legitimize actions that are violent or result in violence (Köse & Coşkun, 2019). According to Borum (2011), radicalization is the progression of extreme ideas aimed at legitimizing violence; Moghaddam (2005) describes it as a metaphorical staircase leading toward terrorism. McCauley and Moskalenko (2008) define radicalization as a set of beliefs, emotions, and behaviors that demand sacrifice for a group or cause and, in the process, legitimize violence.

Radicalization is regarded as a significant threat due to its impact on public safety, social cohesion, economic stability, and individual well-being. Horgan (2008) and Neumann (2013) highlight that radicalization can lead individuals or groups to engage in actions that harm society, potentially resulting in violent extremism and terrorist acts directed against the state or society. Furthermore, McCauley and Moskalenko (2008) suggest that radicalization undermines social cohesion by eroding trust and cooperation between groups. Economically, radicalization-driven violence can lead to workforce losses and decreased investment, impeding national development efforts (Brück & Wickström, 2004). Radicalization is also known to negatively affect individuals' physical and psychological health. Veldhuis and Staun (2009) note that radicalization can isolate individuals and drive them toward criminal behavior. Finally, Schmid (2013) argues that radicalized groups challenge democratic institutions by rejecting democratic processes and seeking to reshape society according to their ideologies. Given these factors, preventing radicalization is critical to preserving societal security and cohesion. Notably, the September 11 attacks, followed by the 2004 Madrid and 2005 London bombings, led to a marked increase in literature focused on radicalization (Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2010; Ranstorp, 2010; Neumann, 2008; Nesser, 2006).

In radicalization processes, youth emerge as a particularly vulnerable group, a subject extensively explored in the literature. Horgan (2008) notes that during their identity-seeking phase, young people are more susceptible to radical ideologies if they lose their sense of belonging. McCauley and Moskalenko (2008) emphasize that feelings of exclusion, injustice, or marginalization can accelerate the radicalization process among youth. Similarly, Sageman (2004) asserts that young individuals may be drawn to radical groups in their pursuit of social ties and friendships, while Veldhuis and Staun (2009) highlight that youth facing unemployment and socioeconomic disadvantages become prime targets

for such groups. Schmid (2013) further warns that youth participation in radical groups poses long-term threats to public safety. Consequently, developing preventive strategies that reduce young people's susceptibility to radicalization is crucial for maintaining social security.

Youth workers play a crucial role in observing young individuals, contributing to their developmental processes, and identifying potential risks at an early stage. These professionals, with continuous access to observing the social environments, behaviors, and thought patterns of young people, are positioned to detect tendencies toward radicalization at an early stage (Borum, 2011; Davies, 2008). Youth workers include social service professionals, psychologists, guidance counselors, and even academics; they guide young people's development, supporting them in cultivating positive identities and a sense of belonging (McCauley & Moskalenko, 2008). Academics, too, contribute by providing educational and personal development guidance, helping steer youth toward healthy social connections (Horgan, 2008; Verschelden, Coussée, Van de Walle, & Williamson, 2009). In this context, Schmid (2013) emphasizes the role of youth workers in fostering social inclusion, reducing feelings of exclusion among young individuals, and thereby helping to shield them from radical group influences. Veldhuis and Staun (2009) note that the positive role models offered by youth workers can prevent youth from being drawn to radical ideologies. Ultimately, youth workers serve as a preventative barrier against young individuals gravitating toward radical thoughts; by guiding them toward safe and supportive social environments, they also contribute to the future security of society. Thus, in addressing radicalization, the observations and experiences of youth workers are of particular significance.

This study is motivated by a dual contribution to the literature on radicalization. First, it seeks to generate insights into understanding and preventing youth radicalization based on the observations and experiences of youth workers. Second, it aims to provide a unique case contribution by examining radicalization within Turkey, where youth comprise a significant portion of the population, offering an alternative perspective to radicalization studies that have largely evolved in Western literature, particularly post-9/11. Accordingly, the study's objective is to understand youth radicalization through the experiences of youth workers and to offer preventative recommendations. The research questions framing this study are as follows: How is radicalization perceived? What are the factors influencing radicalization? What are the experiences in combating radicalization? What are the strategies for preventing radicalization?

633

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Radicalization, among people in Türkiye, has become an area of research interest, particularly in response to socio-political developments and the growing participation of youth in various radical factions. In Türkiye, this phenomenon has been examined through perspectives. The theory of socio-deprivation suggests that individuals from backgrounds are more susceptible to radicalization due to feelings of exclusion, by society. Conversely, as Demirden (2021) suggests, the identity crisis theory focuses on people grappling with religious identity conflicts suggesting that these challenges could lead them to embrace extremist ideologies as a form of self-expression or belonging. Social movement theory introduces another element by exploring how radicalization is influenced by the dynamics of movements and the persuasive power of leaders who can guide individuals toward extreme beliefs. In Türkiye, during the Cold War era in the 1960s and 1970s decades, there was a rise in movements mainly linked to left-wing beliefs, especially at universities where there was a surge of activism focused on anti-imperialist and socialist ideals. As it was argued in Bozarslan (2007) and Doğanoğlu (2026), various groups such as the Federation of Thought Clubs (FKF) and Workers' Party of Türkiye (TİP) played a role in engaging young people which eventually gave rise to radical factions, like the Revolutionary Youth (Dev Genç). Groups such as the People's Liberation Army of Türkiye (THKO) and the Revolutionary People's Liberation Party/Front (DHKP C) resorted to violence to further their objectives.

Ethnic radicalization has also played a significant role in Türkiye's political landscape. The Kurdist separatist movement[3], which began in the 1960s with connections to leftist ideologies, gradually evolved into an ethnically driven stance. The establishment of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) in 1978 marked a turning point in the radicalization of the Kurdist separatist movement, with a strategy of armed struggle being adopted. As Çolak (2013) argued, the actions of the PKK have had profound impacts not only on Türkiye's internal security but also on its foreign relations. The unrest in Northern Iraq and Syria provided opportunities for the PKK to strengthen its position, further complicating ethnic radicalization.

Religious radicalization in Türkiye has been influenced by the conflict between religious values and secularism during the modernization process.

---

[3] The reason to use the term "Kurdist Separatist Movement" is to clarify that PKK is not the representative of Kurds and to emphasize the existence of anti-PKK ethnic Kurds and anti-PKK Kurdish movements. Similarly, Lyon and Uçarer (2001) and Köylü (2024) used Kurdish Separatist Movement to refer PKK and ethnic terrorism in Türkiye. Also to oppose the literature on this topic that mostly tends to hold PKK as "Kurdish Movement".

Organizations like Fethullah Terrorist Organization (FETÖ), Hezbollah, and ISIS represent different aspects of religious radicalization in Türkiye (Başdemir, 2013). The failed coup attempt by FETÖ in 2016 exemplifies how religious and political radicalization can intertwine, illustrating the deep impact of religious radicalization on Türkiye's social and political fabric (Avcı, 2011).

Radicalization in Türkiye has also become a key focus for researchers, particularly in response to socio-political developments and the increasing participation of youth in various radical factions. Studies have shown a strong link between youth radicalization and socioeconomic factors. Indeed, numerous research studies have found a link, between socio factors, particularly poverty, and unemployment, and the radicalization of young people in Türkiye. According to Mardin (1978) and Kaya and Koca (2024) economic hardship in Southeast Türkiye significantly contributes to radicalization among youth who are attracted to groups such as the PKK. According to Kubar (2019), gender identity and financial standing play a role in shaping the likelihood of students engaging in violent behavior while parental job loss also contributes significantly to this trend among young individuals. The research underscores the importance of implementing tailored strategies within school protocols and family environments to reduce the likelihood of violence, among adolescents. The education system also plays a role in either reducing or worsening these tendencies. Research by Aslan and Kıyıcı (2017) and Kaplan (2020) indicates that the lack of emphasis on thinking and civic education, in the curriculum creates a void that allows radical ideologies to flourish exacerbating the problem further. Indeed, deficiencies in educational access and the lack of focus on critical thinking have created fertile ground for the spread of radical ideologies (Borum, 2003; Uslu, 2021). Field research by Köse and Coşkun (2019) highlights how poverty and high unemployment rates in economically disadvantaged regions such as Southeast Anatolia are exploited by radical groups to their advantage.

The role of religious influences in the process of radicalization has been examined, particularly in the context of education and religious institutions. In Kaya and Koca (2024), religious influences play a role, in radicalization especially when examining the impact of education and institutions. While mainstream teachings in Türkiye generally discourage violence, unconventional interpretations and informal religious networks in regions can contribute to radicalization. Likewise, Doosje, Loseman and Van den Bos (2013) point out that factors like uncertainty perceived injustice, and perceived group threat are drivers of radicalization among youth.

Furthermore, Kurt (2023) delves into the political reasons, behind the radicalization of people in Türkiye with a particular focus on the impact of the

Syrian conflict and the Kurdist separatist movement. The study introduces the concept of "habitus" to elucidate how disparities in society's perceived injustices and power dynamics between non-governmental entities play a role in fostering radical views. Based on an 18-month ethnographic investigation carried out from 2015 to 2018 in border cities between Türkiye and Syria, Istanbul, and a refugee camp in Greece this research offers an examination of how young individuals' political perspectives are influenced by their surroundings pushing them towards radicalization. It emphasizes that factors do not solely drive radicalization but is deeply rooted in the political backdrop of the area where ongoing political conflicts and power struggles create fertile ground for extremist views to take hold. Additionally, it explores how critical events like the 2014 Kobani protests act as catalysts for actions further solidifying beliefs among youth involved in various movements such, as Salafi jihadi groups and Kurdist separatist factions.

The impact of media on radicalization, particularly through the role of social media platforms in spreading ideologies, has been a focus of analysis. Scholars, like Filibeli and Ertuna (2021) and Yıldız (2020) have extensively analyzed the impact of media on promoting ideologies. Their research points to the growing trend of using platforms to recruit and radicalize individuals often bypassing traditional influencers such as family or religious figures. While exposure to media alone may not lead to radicalization a study by Wolfowitz, Hasisi and Weisburd (2022) suggests that it can play a role when combined with factors, like challenges or political concerns. These findings highlight the nature of youth radicalization shaped by socio-economic, educational, religious, and media-related elements.

Youth workers play a role, in Türkiye's efforts to prevent and combat radicalization. Our understanding of their perspectives and challenges is still developing. According to UNAOC (2016), many youth workers feel ill-equipped to address radicalization because they lack training in recognizing warning signs and engaging effectively with young people. Güneş (2020) further delves into the obstacles they encounter citing tape, limited resources, and concerns about retaliation from extremist groups as major barriers to implementing anti-radicalization initiatives. Further, Özbey (2018) claims by advocating for a more comprehensive and detailed national strategy that involves better inter-agency coordination, increased academic collaboration, and a long-term commitment to addressing the root causes of radicalization. These issues resonate on a scale well; Mattssons (2023) study in Sweden illustrates how well-meaning youth programs can inadvertently bolster criminal organizations when not properly coordinated and anticipated. Underlining the critical importance of a trauma-informed approach, Siegel, Goldberg and Pat-Horenczyk (2019) propose comprehensive

intervention strategies across multiple levels, encompassing family, educational, and community settings, as essential to effectively countering radicalization.

Detecting radicalization poses a challenge due, to its nature as highlighted in a study by Van de Weert and Eijkman (2019) on youth workers in the Netherlands. The absence of guidelines often leads to relying on judgments, which can inadvertently lead to biases and stereotypes. This highlights the importance of having defined criteria and standardized procedures to support youth workers. Moreover, cultural sensitivity plays a role in radicalization endeavors as emphasized by Koklu, Tutuncu, Sulak and Kocak (2019) stressing the need for approaches that honor local traditions while fostering inclusivity. Collaboration among institutions is also crucial with Koklu et. al. (2019) discovering that youth workers advocate for partnerships between educational establishments, law enforcement agencies, and community groups for a comprehensive approach, to combating radicalization.

Additionally, Coppock and McGovern (2014) raise concerns, about the British Prevent policy and Channel program pointing out how these approaches can contribute to racism and Islamophobia by portraying Muslims as both vulnerable and suspicious. They suggest a reevaluation of the underlying principles of these terrorism strategies. While research has made strides in this area there are still gaps in understanding within the context. It is important to conduct studies over the term to track the progression of radicalization compare findings across various regions and nations and adopt interdisciplinary methods that incorporate perspectives from different fields. Moreover, there is a pressing need, for research involving youth workers directly in underserved communities to create effective interventions that support these frontline individuals in their critical role of preventing youth radicalization.

3. METHODOLOGY

This research, framed within the interpretive paradigm, aims to understand the processes of radicalization among youth, the factors influencing these processes, and the strategies that can be developed to counter radicalization, based on the experiences of youth workers. The interpretive paradigm posits that social reality is not characterized by a single objective truth; rather, individuals construct their own meanings through their experiences (Schwandt, 1994). This paradigm focuses on how individuals perceive and interpret the social world they inhabit. It treats social reality as dynamic, relational, and contextual, acknowledging the uniqueness of each individual's experiences and concentrating on understanding these experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Within this framework, the qualitative research method adopted in the study

637

offers a flexible approach for exploring individuals' experiences, perceptions, and the underlying meanings of these experiences in depth (Creswell, 2013). The qualitative approach provides researchers with a broader perspective for comprehending the complexities of human behavior and social phenomena, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of complex, multifaceted social processes like radicalization.

The study is designed using the phenomenological research approach. Phenomenology aims to explore a phenomenon through individuals' experiences and perceptions, seeking to understand the essence of the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). In this approach, researchers strive to understand how participants experience a particular phenomenon and how these experiences reflect on their worldviews. Phenomenological research centers on individuals' lived experiences and examines how these experiences are understood in their minds and social contexts. Within this framework, the study aims to elucidate participants' subjective perceptions and experiences related to radicalization.

During data collection, semi-structured interviews were conducted with participants. Semi-structured interviews allow the researcher to follow a set of predetermined questions while also granting participants the flexibility to express their thoughts and experiences in their own words (Kvale, 2007). This method enabled participants to articulate their perspectives and experiences regarding radicalization, thereby yielding in-depth, rich data.

In qualitative research, the adequacy of sample size is evaluated based on data saturation rather than frequency. Therefore, participants should be selected in a way that best represents the research topic (Reilly & Parker, 2013; Hennink & Kaiser, 2022). In this context, purposive sampling was employed to select participants. Purposive sampling is a strategy aimed at selecting participants who can provide in-depth data relevant to the research question. This strategy involves the intentional selection of individuals who have experienced a specific phenomenon or can contribute to its understanding. In this study, criterion sampling was used within purposive sampling to select participants. Criterion sampling ensures that only individuals meeting specific criteria are included in the research (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 2002). The first criterion for participants in this study was to be youth workers who contribute to the personal, social, and educational development of young people; the second was having at least five years of experience working with youth; and the third was having encountered at least one case they identified as showing a tendency toward radicalization. This selection was made to gain valuable insights from participants' interactions with young people and their observations regarding the phenomenon of radicalization. Data saturation was achieved through 15

638

interviews conducted with youth workers from various cities who met all specified criteria. In this context, data saturation in the study was achieved at the point where no new information, themes, or insights emerged during the interviews with participants, and the collected data began to repeat itself (Creswell, 2013; Guest, Bunce & Johnson, 2006). During the purposive sampling process, data saturation indicators were carefully monitored, and data collection was concluded when new information and themes ceased to emerge (Fusch & Ness, 2015).

The interview questions, designed as 21 items, aimed to explore how youth workers perceive radicalization, what factors influence radicalization, their experiences in combating radicalization, and their recommendations for addressing it. At least one structured question was developed for each theme, while other questions were open-ended and sub-open-ended. Interviews were completed between January and March 2024. The interviews were conducted online or face-to-face according to participant preferences; only participants who consented had their interviews recorded, and transcriptions were performed verbatim using a standardized transcription protocol in Microsoft Word by field staff (McLellan, MacQueen, & Niedig, 2003). Subsequently, data were analyzed through qualitative content analysis. Qualitative content analysis goes beyond merely counting words or extracting objective information from texts; it aims to uncover explicit and implicit meanings, themes, and patterns within the data. This approach enables researchers to understand social reality in a subjective yet scientific manner (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1279; Krippendorff, 2018). In this context, participant responses to open-ended and semi-open-ended questions were subjected to an additional in-depth analysis. This approach aimed to uncover implicit meanings, perceptions, and patterns.

In this study, data were analyzed by creating main themes and sub-themes. The coding process was conducted using the MAXQDA 2024 software (VERBI, 2021), which is designed to organize, code, and analyze qualitative data systematically. Throughout the research, main and sub-codes were developed under the categories "Understanding Radicalization," "Factors Influencing Radicalization," "Combating Radicalization," and "Recommendations for Preventing and Combating Radicalization" resulting in a total of 59 codes. The coding paradigm developed by Corbin and Strauss (1990) was applied during the coding process. This paradigm provides a three-step process to organize data meaningfully: open, axial, and selective coding. In the open coding phase, key concepts in the data were identified; in the axial coding phase, relationships among these concepts were defined. Finally, in the selective coding phase, themes were synthesized in a comprehensive manner. This coding process facilitated the

639

systematic interpretation of the data and contributed to establishing a robust foundation for the research findings. Coding tables were prepared following Creswell's (2015) technique, including headings for main code, sub-code, definition, and example as Table 1.

The trustworthiness of the research was ensured based on the four main criteria established by Lincoln and Guba (1985): credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility and dependability were enhanced through investigator triangulation; three authors collaborated in analyzing the data to ensure the accuracy and consistency of the findings. Additionally, the analysis, supported by direct quotations, contributed to the reliable representation of participants' experiences. The involvement of researchers from the fields of international relations, political economy, and sociology further supported these principles. Transferability was achieved by providing detailed information on purposive sampling, research context, and participant demographics. Lastly, confirmability was established through comparative analysis among researchers. Each of these criteria played a critical role in ensuring the reliability of the research.

Table 1: Example Coding Table

Main Code	Sub code	Description	Example
Indicators	Sympathy for radical tendencies	Interest in and involvement with radical actions, ideas, and groups	Showing interest in or joining radical groups and promoting their propaganda. (K3)
Indicators	Isolation	Individual and social isolation, withdrawal	It can be observed that individuals lose group motivation, show a tendency to act more individually, exhibit shyness in expressing themselves at certain points, prefer to stay outside societal motivations, and make this a habit. These are potential indicators. (K13)
Indicators	Changes	Changes in individuals' beliefs, religious views, ideologies, social environment, and appearance	In my work with young people, I define "radicalization" as an extreme and rapid change in an individual's beliefs, attitudes and behavior influenced by a political, religious, or ideological framework. (K7)
Indicators	Discriminatory tendencies	Exclusionary and marginalizing approaches on any issue (such as religion, race, sect, gender, appearance, etc.)	Radicalized youth may begin to use overly ideological or discriminatory language and fiercely defend a particular ideology. They may harbor intense feelings of hostility and hatred towards certain groups, societies, or countries. Radicalized youth may justify or use violence to defend a particular ideology. (K9)
Indicators	Aggressive tendencies	Aggression, anger, tendency toward violence, intolerance, manifestation of aggression in discourse and actions, peer bullying, general state of dissent, and becoming closed off to communication	Indicators to watch for include tendencies towards various forms of violence (verbal, physical, psychological, etc.) and instances of peer bullying. (K1)

3.1. Ethical Permission for the Research

All rules specified within the "Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Directive for Higher Education Institutions" were adhered to in this study. None of the actions specified under the "Actions Contrary to Scientific Research and Publication Ethics" section of the directive was carried out. For ethical evaluation regarding the study's content, methodology, and measurement instruments, an application was submitted to the Ankara Yıldırım Beyazıt University Social and

Human Sciences Ethics Committee. Ethical approval was granted during the committee's meeting held on April 24, 2024, under decision number 04-387.

4. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

In this study, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 15 youth workers from different cities and various professional backgrounds. The interviews were carried out either online or face-to-face, based on the participants' preferences. To ensure participant confidentiality, each individual was assigned a code name. Table 2 provides the profiles of the participants. The data were analyzed using MAXQDA 2024 software and categorized into main and sub-codes (N=59) under the themes of "Understanding Radicalization," "Factors Influencing Radicalization," "Combating Radicalization," and "Recommendations for Preventing and Combating Radicalization."

Table 2: Participant Profile

Participant	Occupation	Professional Experience (years)	City
K1	Teacher	25	Bursa
K2	Public Sector Employee	8	Sivas
K3	High School Teacher	10	Afyon
K4	Psychologist	5	Hatay
K5	Think tank researcher	8	İstanbul
K6	Project Coordinator	6	Mardin
K7	Project Director	12	Konya
K8	NGO Worker	7	Diyarbakır
K9	Academic	13	Çorum
K10	NGO Worker	6	Antalya
K11	Academic	14	Ankara
K12	NGO Volunteer Worker	7	İzmir
K13	Academic	12	Sakarya
K14	Music Teacher	15	Trabzon
K15	Sports Instructor	15	Kocaeli

4.1. Understanding Radicalization

Under this theme, efforts are made to understand how radicalization is perceived by youth workers and how their awareness is interpreted. Additionally, the study investigates how youth workers assess the approach of society and government toward radicalism. Eight main codes were created under this theme. The distribution percentages of the main codes related to this theme are shown in

641

Figure 1. Accordingly, it is observed that participants have more insights into the effects, indicators, and understanding of radicalization. While these codes focus on how radicalization is perceived, other codes reveal the stance of the country and the approach of youth workers.
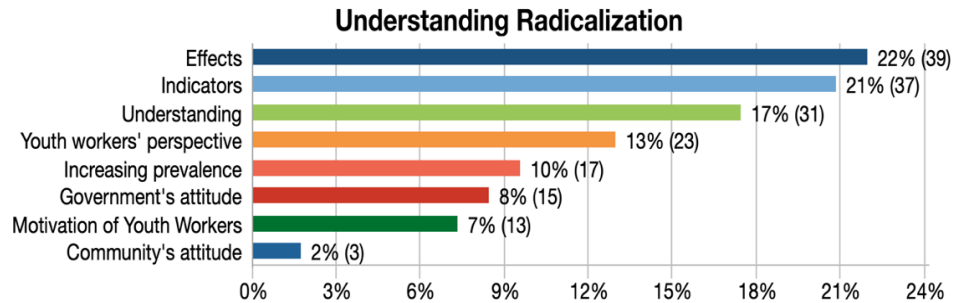
Understanding Radicalization

Effects	22% (39)
Indicators	21% (37)
Understanding	17% (31)
Youth workers' perspective	13% (23)
Increasing prevalence	10% (17)
Government's attitude	8% (15)
Motivation of Youth Workers	7% (13)
Community's attitude	2% (3)

Figure 1: Distribution of Main Codes Within the Theme

In Figure 2, the frequencies of all sub-codes are provided, expanding the analysis. According to these results, the "increasing prevalence" code (f=17) indicates the presence of radicalization tendencies in Türkiye. Indeed, the government is aware of this and thus does not remain indifferent, implementing "combative" (f=10) measures. However, whether these measures are sufficient could be debated with the "inadequate" (f=5) code. While youth workers agree that society does not have a positive approach toward radicalization, they lack sufficient observations regarding society's approach. Youth workers have experienced perceptual "changes" (f=10) and increased awareness (f=13) during their work processes and generally approach their work on radicalization from a youth-focused perspective (f=7).
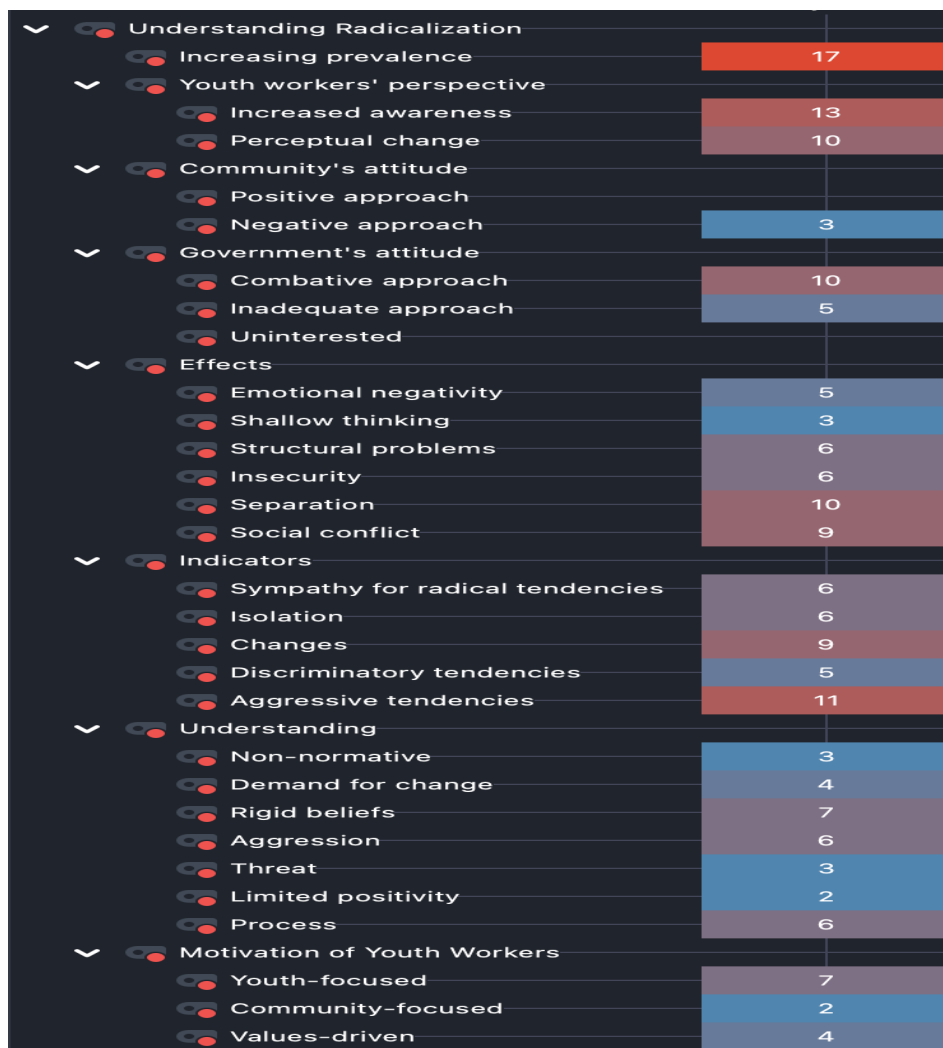
642

Understanding Radicalization	
Increasing prevalence	17
Youth workers' perspective	
Increased awareness	13
Perceptual change	10
Community's attitude	
Positive approach	
Negative approach	3
Government's attitude	
Combative approach	10
Inadequate approach	5
Uninterested	
Effects	
Emotional negativity	5
Shallow thinking	3
Structural problems	6
Insecurity	6
Separation	10
Social conflict	9
Indicators	
Sympathy for radical tendencies	6
Isolation	6
Changes	9
Discriminatory tendencies	5
Aggressive tendencies	11
Understanding	
Non-normative	3
Demand for change	4
Rigid beliefs	7
Aggression	6
Threat	3
Limited positivity	2
Process	6
Motivation of Youth Workers	
Youth-focused	7
Community-focused	2
Values-driven	4

Figure 2: Frequencies of Sub-Codes

For example:

 "In recent years, there has been significant radicalization, especially concerning political events. Youth often display blind loyalty to specific political groups. Additionally, some young people become radicalized by the ideas they encounter on certain websites, especially if these ideas are

presented by well-known individuals, even if the information is incomplete or incorrect." (K3)

"In my country, measures are taken to correct the errors that trigger radicalization, but these are not sufficient." (K2)

The participants' statements align with the definitions of radicalization in the literature. McCauley and Moskalenko's (2008) conceptualization of radicalization as beliefs requiring sacrifice corresponds with K3's observation of "blind loyalty" among youth. Borum's (2011) emphasis on the progression of extremist ideas, along with Yıldız (2020) and Filibeli & Ertuna's (2021) findings on the influence of social media, supports the participants' references to digital platforms. K2's critique of the insufficiency of government measures resonates with Güneş's (2020) findings on resource inadequacies, while the participants' recognition of government awareness reflects Özbey's (2018) call for a comprehensive national strategy. K3's emphasis on the impact of political events is consistent with Kurt's (2023) analysis of Kobani protests as catalysts for radicalization. Additionally, Köse and Coşkun's (2019) research on economic disadvantages corroborates observations of increasing tendencies toward radicalization. While the findings are broadly aligned with the literature, they highlight a need for further exploration of societal roles and the adequacy of governmental responses.

Table 3: Prominent Terms in the Sub-Codes of Understanding

Sub-Code	Frequencies of the Top Two Words in Coded Segments
Non-normative	-Associations, Illegal, Legal, Process (f=2)
Demand for change	-Often, Political, Structures (f=3)
Rigid beliefs	-Political (f=5) -Ideology (f=4)
Aggression	-Students (f=5) -Violent (f=4)
Threat	-Individuals (f=3) -Coup, Ideology, Poses, Tools, Witnessed (f=2)
Limited positivity	-Form (f=4) -Norms (f=3)
Process	-Extreme, Political, Social (f=4) -Defined (f=3)

Youth workers have primarily defined radicalization as "rigid beliefs", "aggression", and as a "process." Table 3 shows the frequency of the top two terms in the sub-coded texts of "Understanding". The association of the "rigid beliefs" code with terms like "political" and "ideology" indicates that radicalization develops on a political and ideological basis. Similarly, the prominence of terms such as "students" and "violent" with the "aggression" code suggests that radical tendencies, especially among students, may be closely linked with violence. These findings highlight the extent to which political, ideological, and violent tendencies are influential in the radicalization process. The "process" sub-code draws attention to radicalization being defined as an extreme, political, and social process.

The "non-normative" code points to the connections that youths establish with legal processes and illegal structures in their involvement in radical processes. This suggests that youths become more inclined toward non-normative behaviors when they experience discord with existing social and political structures. Similarly, the demand for political changes under the "demand for change" code emerges as a factor reinforcing youths' relationship with radical thoughts. These findings are critical for understanding how the motivational factors behind radicalization are shaped by the desire for changes in social and political structures. For example:

"The most dominant feature of radicalism is the unwavering belief in the absolute correctness of one's ideology. There is a passionate effort to see other criticisms, ideologies, and lifestyles as definitely wrong and faulty, and to eliminate them in some way. (K15)

"In the context of my work, I define "radicalization" as the process where young people significantly deviate from mainstream social, political, or religious beliefs and resort to extreme or violent methods to challenge these beliefs." (K11)

Youth workers' definitions of radicalization align closely with the theoretical frameworks found in the literature. McCauley and Moskalenko (2008) describe radicalization as a combination of beliefs, emotions, and behaviors demanding sacrifice for a cause, which resonates with the participants' emphasis on "rigid beliefs" and "aggression." The association of "political" and "ideology" with rigid beliefs mirrors the findings of Borum (2011), who highlights the progression of extreme ideas legitimizing violence. Furthermore, Köse and Coşkun (2019) emphasize how ideological and political motivations often underpin radical behaviors, supporting the participants' observations regarding students' violent tendencies. The participants' description of radicalization as a "process" aligns with Moghaddam's (2005) staircase metaphor, where

radicalization unfolds as a gradual progression influenced by social, political, and personal factors. The connection between "non-normative" behaviors and discord with existing structures also finds support in Sageman's (2004) research, which discusses how feelings of exclusion and marginalization can drive individuals toward radical groups. Similarly, the role of dissatisfaction with political structures, reflected in the "demand for change" code, aligns with Kurt's (2023) findings on the impact of political events like the Kobani protests in catalyzing youth radicalization. These findings collectively underline the importance of addressing the socio-political and ideological dimensions of radicalization. The motivational factors identified—such as discord with existing systems and demands for political change—highlight the need for strategies that promote inclusion and address structural inequalities, as emphasized by Veldhuis and Staun (2009).

Table 4: Prominent Terms in the Sub-Codes of Indicators

Sub-Code	Frequencies of the Top Two Words in Coded Segments
Sympathy for radical tendencies	-Social (f=5) -Groups, Media (f=4)
İsolation	-Family, Friend, Groups, Withdrawal (f=2)
Changes	-İdeological (f=5) -Radicalized (f=4)
Discriminatory tendencies	-Rights, Day (f=6) -Labor, students, theme (f=4)
Aggressive tendencies	-Day, Language, Use (f=5) -Labor, Violence (f=4)

In the "indicators" sub-codes, the signs of radicalization are associated with various social and ideological transformations, as shown in Table 4. The high frequency of the "Sympathy for radical tendencies" code with terms such as "social", "groups", and "media" underscores the importance of social media and group dynamics in the dissemination and manifestation of radical thoughts. Additionally, the "isolation" and "discriminatory tendencies" codes indicate that individuals become more susceptible to the radicalization process through social disconnection and the adoption of discriminatory thoughts. These findings provide significant insights into how radicalization is shaped through social isolation, discrimination, and media influence. For example,

"Labels of radicalization are often seen in young people's behavior and discourse. These include showing interest in radical ideologies, justifying violence, isolation and loneliness, using radical language, associating with radical groups, emotional and psychological changes and excessive use of computers and the Internet." (K6)

The findings highlight key indicators of radicalization, offering insights distinct from its influencing factors. The frequent co-occurrence of the "Sympathy for radical tendencies" code with terms such as "social," "groups," and "media" emphasizes the role of social media and group dynamics in the manifestation of radical ideologies, aligning with Yıldız (2020) and Filibeli and Ertuna (2021). Similarly, the "isolation" and "discriminatory tendencies" codes underscore how social disconnection and discriminatory behaviors serve as observable signs of individuals' susceptibility to radicalization. K6's observations, such as the use of radical language, justification of violence, isolation, emotional changes, and excessive internet use, reflect behaviors that correspond with Borum's (2011) discussion on the psychological and social changes associated with radicalization. These indicators provide a framework for identifying the early stages of radicalization and suggest the need for targeted strategies to address these specific manifestations.

Table 5: Prominent Terms in the Sub-Codes of Effects

Sub-Code	Frequencies of the Top Two Words in Coded Segments
Emotional negativity	-Different, Groups, Ideologies, Social (f=3) -Anger (f=2)
Shallow thinking	-Ability, develop, individual (f=2), -Multi-dimensionally, Achieve (f=1)
Structural problems	-Democracy, Social (f=5), -Society (f=4)
Insecurity	-Social (f=8) -Democratic (f=4)
Separation	-Social (f=9) -Polarization (f=8)
Social conflict	-Social (f=12) -Society (f=7)

According to youth workers' observations, the effects of radicalization (Table 5) predominantly manifest as "separation" and "social conflict". In areas coded as "separation", the prominent terms "social" and "polarization" indicate that radicalization leads to social fragmentation. Similarly, in areas coded with "social conflict", there is an emphasis on society. In areas coded as "emotional negativity", the high frequency of terms such as "different", "groups", "ideologies", "social", and "anger" highlights the emotional impacts of radicalization on youth and underscores the importance of managing these effects. Additionally, an examination of other coded areas suggests that radicalization could pose a threat to democratic and social norms. For example,

"Radicalization increases polarization among youth and closes communication channels, leading to communication problems. Consequently, tolerance levels decrease. More broadly, radicalization can cause societal divisions and conflicts, create a general atmosphere of insecurity and fear, lead to violent or dangerous actions, weaken democratic values, and negatively impact the future of the youth involved." (K3)

According to youth workers' observations, the effects of radicalization primarily manifest as "separation" and "social conflict," as reflected in Table 5. The prominence of terms such as "social" and "polarization" under the "separation" code highlights how radicalization fosters social fragmentation. Similarly, the "social conflict" code underscores the societal implications of radicalization, emphasizing its role in exacerbating discord. In areas coded as "emotional negativity," frequent terms like "different," "groups," "ideologies," "social," and "anger" illustrate the emotional toll radicalization takes on youth, pointing to the need for interventions to manage these effects. K3's observations align with these findings, noting that radicalization not only increases polarization and communication barriers but also erodes tolerance, undermines democratic values, and poses long-term risks to societal cohesion and youth well-being. These observations echo the literature, including McCauley and Moskalenko's (2008) emphasis on the societal and emotional disruptions caused by radicalization, as well as Schmid's (2013) warnings about its impact on democratic and social norms.

4.2. Factors Influencing Radicalization

The data from this theme reveal how various factors influencing the radicalization process are perceived by youth workers.
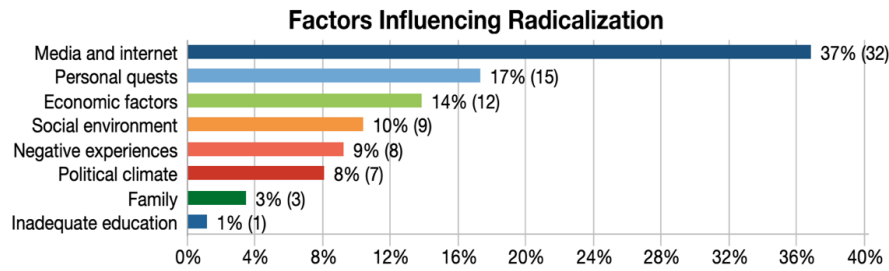
648

Factors Influencing Radicalization

Media and internet — 37% (32)
Personal quests — 17% (15)
Economic factors — 14% (12)
Social environment — 10% (9)
Negative experiences — 9% (8)
Political climate — 8% (7)
Family — 3% (3)
Inadequate education — 1% (1)

0% 4% 8% 12% 16% 20% 24% 28% 32% 36% 40%

Figure 3: Distribution of Main Codes Within the Theme

The observations of youth workers align with the literature on factors influencing radicalization, as shown in Figure 3. The most influential factor, "media and internet" (37%), is associated with terms such as "social" (f=57) and "ideas" (f=19), emphasizing the role of social media and shared ideologies in spreading radical views. Yıldız (2020) and Filibeli and Ertuna (2021) highlight the significant role of digital platforms in exposing young people to radical ideologies, supporting these observations. K1 exemplifies this by stating, "One of the clearest examples I have observed is the rapid spread and adoption of radical ideas through social media platforms and the internet… youth from various nationalities and beliefs are being recruited by terrorist organizations like ISIS through social media." This finding illustrates how digital media catalyzes radicalization by fostering a sense of community and belonging among youth.

Table 6: Prominent Terms in Coded Areas

Main Code	Frequencies of the Top Two Words in Coded Segments
Economic factors	-Social (f=11) -Family (f=5)
İnadequate education	-
Negative experiences	-Political, Society (f=5) -Polarization (f=4)
Political climate	-Family (f=5) -Society (f=4)
family	-Crises, Economic, İdentity (f=2)
Personal quests	-Groups (f=9) -Identity (f=8)
Media and internet	-Social (f=57) -Ideas (f=19)
Social environment	-Social (f=10) -Economic (f=4)

649

Additionally, "personal quests" (17%) and "economic factors" (14%) play critical roles. Within "personal quests," terms such as "groups" (f=9) and "identity" (f=8) indicate that the search for belonging drives young people toward radical groups. McCauley and Moskalenko (2008) argue that the need for identity and belonging is a key motivator in radical engagement. K4 supports this by stating, "The primary cause of radicalization is the struggle for emotional independence, identity formation, and the search for acceptance." Economic difficulties, often associated with terms such as "social" (f=11) and "family" (f=5), further exacerbate vulnerability to radicalization, consistent with Köse and Coşkun's (2019) findings on how deprivation and social exclusion drive youth toward radical groups.

These findings reveal the multidimensional nature of radicalization, shaped by digital media, economic challenges, and identity needs. The high frequency of codes like "negative experiences" (e.g., "political" and "society," each f=5) and "political climate" (e.g., "family" f=5, "society" f=4) suggests that young individuals experiencing societal polarization are more susceptible to radical ideologies. Schmid (2013) supports this perspective, noting how social fragmentation and threats to democratic values accelerate radicalization. Consequently, comprehensive strategies are essential, including mitigating online influences, providing economic support, and fostering inclusive social environments to reduce youth vulnerability to radicalization.

4.3. Combating Radicalization

The data related to this theme elaborate on the challenges faced in combating radicalization and the effectiveness of the methods employed.
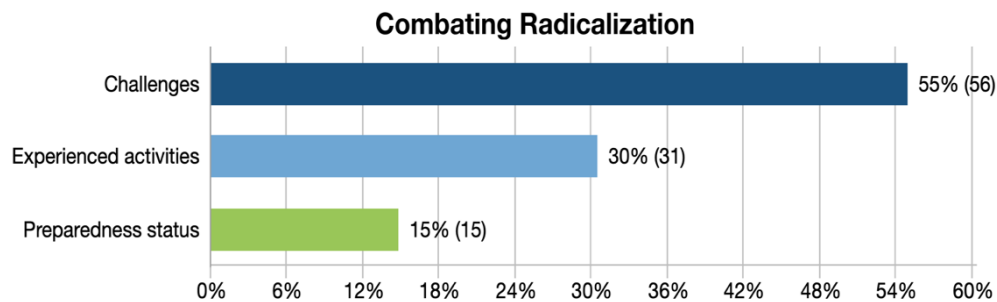

Figure 4: Distribution of Main Codes Within the Theme

As seen in Figure 4, youth workers encounter more challenges than activities when dealing with radicalization.
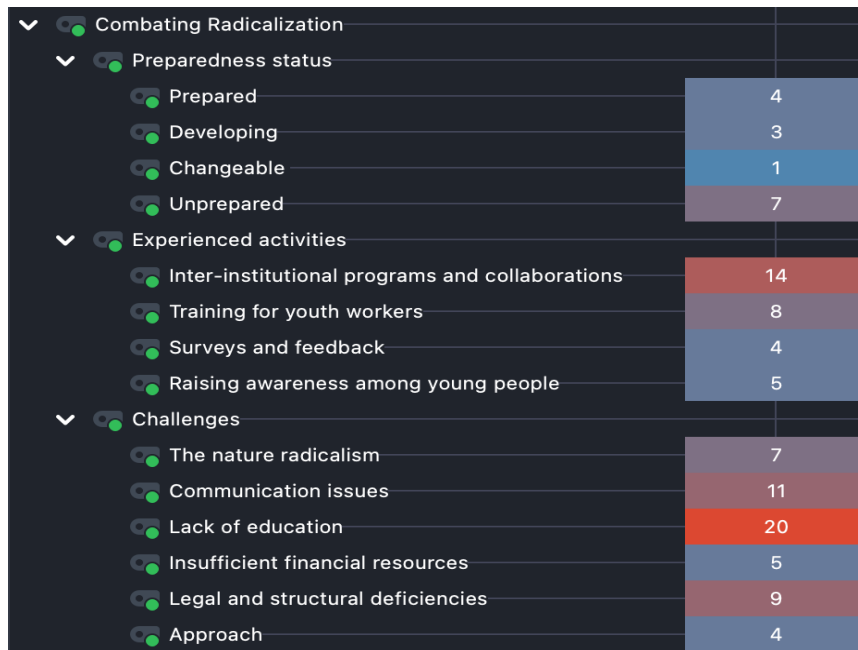
650

Figure 5: Frequencies of Sub-Codes

The frequency of sub-codes in Figure 5 reveals that youth workers often lack full preparedness and resources when it comes to countermeasures. The most commonly experienced activity involves inter-institutional programs and collaborations, while the most significant challenge identified is the lack of adequate training.

Table 7: Prominent Terms in the Sub-Codes of Challenges

Sub-Code	Frequencies of the Top Two Words in Coded Segments
The nature radicalism	-Difficult (f=6) -Signs (f=5)
Communication issues	-Student/s (f=7) -Difficulty, Significant (f=3)
Lack of education	-Training (f=17) -Received (f=10)
İnsufficient financial resources	-Groups (f=6) -Difficult (f=4),
Legal and structural deficiencies	-Student, Training (f=4) -Groups, İmportant (f=3)
approach	-Societal (f=4) -Social (f=3)

651

The challenges in combating radicalization, as illustrated in Table 7, align with various factors highlighted in the literature. The "nature of radicalism" code reflects the inherent complexity of radicalization and the difficulty in recognizing its signs. The frequent occurrence of terms such as "difficult" and "signs" underscores how challenging it is to fully grasp radicalism and identify early indicators. This aligns with Dalgaard-Nielsen's (2010) emphasis on the multidimensional nature of radicalization, which complicates early intervention efforts, particularly for those working with youth. The "communication issues" code reveals significant barriers to effectively engaging with at-risk youth. Terms such as "student" and "difficulty" highlight how communication becomes increasingly strained as young individuals become more susceptible to radicalization. K1 explains, "I believe new generations think differently from us, which makes communicating in their language essential in prevention efforts. Achieving this requires effective strategic communication." Benotman and Malik (2016) similarly emphasize the importance of tailored communication strategies that resonate with youth, noting that adaptive communication is essential for successful counter-radicalization efforts.

The "lack of education" code highlights vulnerabilities created by deficiencies in knowledge and training among those combating radicalization. The frequent use of "training" reflects critical gaps in the preparedness of youth workers. As K12 states, "Not everyone working in this field has a background in sociology, social work, or psychology; people come from a variety of professions. This results in a lack of training." Ranstorp (2009) underscores the importance of education programs in fostering resilience against radical ideologies, asserting that a lack of structured training leaves youth more susceptible to extremist influences. These findings suggest that expanding education and training programs aimed at increasing awareness and prevention is crucial.

Finally, the "insufficient financial resources" and "legal and structural deficiencies" codes highlight systemic barriers to effective counter-radicalization efforts. Limited resources and gaps in the legal framework hinder youth workers' ability to implement comprehensive interventions. Githens-Mazer and Lambert (2010) note that financial constraints and inadequate legal support significantly impede sustainable action in this field. Addressing these challenges requires increased resource allocation and policy reforms to support youth workers' efforts effectively.

These findings underscore the complexity of combating radicalization and highlight the need for comprehensive strategies addressing early detection, effective communication, and structural support. Such strategies are essential to

652

enhance the effectiveness of intervention efforts and mitigate the vulnerabilities that contribute to radicalization.

Table 8: Prominent Terms in the Sub-Codes of Experienced Activities

Sub-Code	Frequencies of the Top Two Words in Coded Segments
Inter-institutional programs and collaboration	-Projects, Universities (f=9) -Organization (f=7)
Training for youth workers	-Awareness (f=6) -Programs (f=5)
Surveys and feedback	-Impact, Project (f=5) -Participations (f=4)
Raising awareness among young people	-Legal (f=5) -Educational, Political (f=3)

The experiences of youth workers in combating radicalization, as illustrated in Table 8, are based on various practices and align with findings in the literature. The "inter-institutional programs and collaboration" code emphasizes the importance of collaboration with different institutions and organizations in efforts to prevent radicalization. The frequent use of terms such as "projects" and "universities" under this code indicates that joint projects are being conducted with stakeholders such as local authorities, educational institutions, civil society organizations, and law enforcement agencies. K7 highlights the significance of these collaborations: "We work in close cooperation with other institutions and organizations in our efforts to prevent radicalization. We carry out joint projects with stakeholders such as local authorities, educational institutions, civil society organizations and law enforcement agencies. Working together, we develop more comprehensive and effective strategies to prevent radicalization among young people." Relevant literature, including research by Schmid (2013) and Githens-Mazer (2010), supports the idea that inter-institutional collaboration enhances the effectiveness of anti-radicalization efforts and allows for the development of more comprehensive strategies.

The "training for youth workers" code demonstrates the positive impact of training sessions and workshops on radicalization and extremism for youth workers. The prominence of terms like "awareness" and "programs" reflects how these trainings help youth workers understand the radicalization process, identify its signs, and develop effective intervention strategies. K9 shares, "I attended training courses and workshops on radicalization and extremism. These trainings

and workshops helped me understand the process of radicalization, identify its symptoms, evaluate risk factors, and develop effective intervention strategies, helping me to work more consciously and actively on radicalization as a youth worker." This finding supports Borum's (2011) work, which underscores the importance of education and awareness in recognizing signs of radicalization and strengthening prevention efforts.

The "surveys and feedback" code highlights the significance of evaluating the impact of interventions and collecting feedback from participants. The frequent use of terms like "impact" and "project" indicates a need for assessing the effectiveness of anti-radicalization programs. Similarly, in the "raising awareness among young people" code, the emphasis on terms like "legal" and "educational" reflects the importance of educational and legal awareness efforts in increasing understanding of radicalization. Ranstorp (2009) highlights the critical role of educational and legal awareness programs in protecting youth from radicalization.

These findings reflect the experiences gained by youth workers in combating radicalization. Inter-institutional collaboration, training programs, and feedback mechanisms contribute to the development of more effective strategies by youth workers and enhance awareness among young people. These experiences highlight the significant role that youth workers play in strengthening the resilience of young people against radical ideologies.

4.4. Recommendations for Preventing and Combating Radicalization

Under this theme, the needs and recommendations of youth workers regarding the prevention and combatting of radicalization were examined.
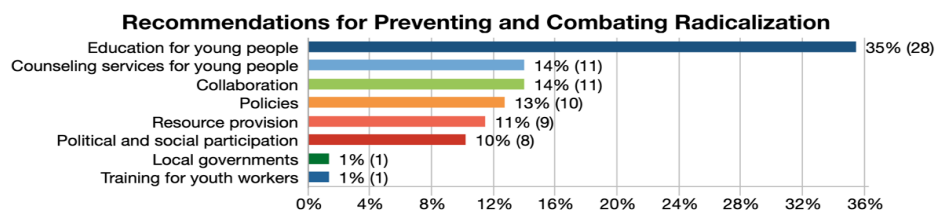

Figure 6: Distribution of Main Codes Within the Theme

According to the distribution in Figure 6, the most critical need identified is the education of youth. Following this, counseling services for youth also emerged as a significant requirement. These findings suggest a recommendation to develop a youth-centered approach to combating radicalization. Furthermore,

654

the importance of supporting these efforts with policies and collaboration was emphasized.

Table 9: Prominent Terms in Coded Areas

Main Code	Frequencies of the Top Two Words in Coded Segments
Training for youth workers	-Education (f=4) -Important (f=3)
Resource provision	-Resources (f=10) -Support (f=9)
Counseling services for young people	-Programs (f=8) -Support (f=7)
Local governments	-Councils (f=4) -Government, Represented (f=3)
Political and social participation	-Social (f=7) -Communication, Effective (f=5)
Collaboration	-Support (f=9) -Organizations, Resources (f=5)
Policies	-Resource (f=4) -Education, Important, Necessary (f=3)
Education for young people	-Awareness (f=14) -Media (f=12)

The recommendations of youth workers for combating radicalization align with the findings in Table 9 and are supported by the literature. The "Education for young people" code emphasizes the critical role of education in raising awareness and preventing radicalization. K2 states, "I think training that raises awareness about social media use would support efforts to prevent radicalization," highlighting the importance of awareness programs focused on social media usage for young people. This recommendation aligns with Borum's (2011) emphasis on the role of awareness and education in radicalization prevention efforts.

The "Resource provision" code highlights the importance of financial support for anti-radicalization projects. The frequent use of terms like "resources" and "support" underscores the necessity of funding for such initiatives, as expressed by K9: "In our work to address radicalization among young people, we need more financial resources for projects that aim to combat radicalization, raise awareness of youth workers on this issue, and develop effective communication and intervention strategies with young people with radical views." This aligns

655

with Githens-Mazer and Lambert's (2010) findings on how financial support limitations restrict the sustainability of counter-radicalization efforts.

The "Counseling services for young people" code underscores the importance of supportive services to reduce the risk of radicalization among youth. K4 emphasizes that "Effective strategies include providing education and awareness programs that focus on critical thinking, promoting emotional independence, and offering opportunities for young people to engage in positive social activities," thus highlighting the value of supportive counseling and engagement programs. This recommendation is consistent with Dalgaard-Nielsen's (2010) findings on the importance of social and psychological support programs for youth in countering radicalization.

The "Local governments" and "Political and social participation" codes underscore the importance of collaboration with stakeholders such as families, community leaders, and civil society organizations in the fight against radicalization. K6 expresses this by saying, "It is important to collaborate with stakeholders such as families, schools, community leaders and civil society organizations. I think it is important to educate and raise awareness among young people about the dangers of radicalization." This recommendation aligns with Schmid's (2013) findings on how community cooperation enhances the effectiveness of anti-radicalization strategies.

These recommendations demonstrate that youth workers require multifaceted approaches, including education for young people, financial support, counseling services, and community collaboration, to develop effective strategies in combating radicalization. Such comprehensive approaches contribute to raising awareness among young people and enhancing their resilience against radical ideologies.

5. CONCLUSION

This study provides significant contributions to the literature by addressing the complex dynamics of youth radicalization in Turkey, offering valuable insights from the perspectives of youth workers who play a pivotal role in understanding and combating this phenomenon. Youth radicalization, as supported by primary data and literature findings, is identified as a multidimensional issue driven by various social, economic, political, and psychological factors. Employing qualitative methods, the study focuses on the experiences and observations of youth workers, revealing that radicalization is influenced by rigid ideological beliefs, aggressive behaviors, the impact of digital media, economic inequalities, and societal fragmentation. By uncovering the socio-economic and cultural background of radicalization, the study sheds light on the unique conditions of Turkey.

The findings emphasize the critical importance of education, resource allocation, counseling, and collaboration across different societal sectors in mitigating risks associated with radicalization. Youth workers highlight the necessity of developing targeted communication strategies for young people, providing financial support, and creating specialized training programs. These recommendations align with previous studies that underscore the importance of a multidimensional approach to addressing the root causes of radicalization and fostering resilience among vulnerable youth populations.

The results also underline the necessity of inter-agency collaboration, involving local governments, educational institutions, and civil society organizations, in combating radicalization. The study's recommendations for enhancing awareness, strengthening support structures, and promoting inclusive policies reflect a holistic approach aimed at reducing the appeal of radical ideologies. This framework advocates for comprehensive prevention strategies that address both socio-economic and ideological dimensions, offering actionable insights for practitioners and policymakers.

However, the limitations of the study should be acknowledged. The relatively limited number of participants and the focus on a single national context constrain the generalizability of the findings. Future research could expand the knowledge base in this field through larger-scale studies, diverse methodologies, and comparative analyses conducted across different socio-cultural contexts. In particular, the influence of digital media on youth behaviors and the evolving dynamics of radicalization emerges as critical areas for further exploration.

In conclusion, this study examines interviews with youth workers, structured under four key themes: "Understanding Radicalization," "Factors

Influencing Radicalization," "Combating Radicalization," and "Recommendations for Preventing and Combating Radicalization." By focusing on the critical role of youth workers in understanding and addressing youth radicalization, the study offers valuable perspectives. It provides both theoretical and practical insights, laying a foundation for the development of comprehensive prevention strategies that tackle the root causes of radicalization while fostering inclusive and supportive environments for youth development.

6. CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

There is no conflict of interest between the authors.

7. FINANCIAL SUPPORT

8. AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Oğuzhan Bilgin conceptualized the study, developed the theoretical framework, and supervised the research process. He also contributed significantly to the data analysis and interpretation. Merve Zorlu was responsible for conducting the semi-structured interviews, transcribing the data, and performing analysis using MAXQDA. She also contributed to the drafting of the manuscript and integrating the findings into the broader context of the literature. Recep Yorulmaz led analysis and supported the development of the coding framework. He provided critical feedback on the manuscript and helped refine the overall structure of the article. Additionally, all authors were involved in the oversight of transcription and coding as required by the study's methodology. All authors participated in the review and approval of the final manuscript.

658

9. ETHICS COMMITTEE STATEMENT AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY COPYRIGHTS

The principles of the ethics committee were followed in the study and necessary permissions were obtained following the principles of intellectual property and copyright.

10. REFERENCE

Aslan, Ö., & Kıyıcı, H. (2017). Sosyal ve beşerî bilimlerden radikal örgütlere: Türkiye'de radikalleşme, terör ve üniversite. *Güvenlik Çalışmaları Dergisi, 19*(2), 21-46.

Avcı, E. (2011). *Radikal islamcı terörizmin meşru gösterilmesi: Türkiye Hizbullahı örneği* (Unpublished Doctoral Thesis). Kara Harp Okulu, Ankara.

Başdemir, H. Y. (2013). Fundamentalizm. *Dünyada ve Türkiye'de siyasal ideolojiler* (pp. 512-559). Ankara: Orion Kitapevi.

Borum, R. (2003). Understanding the terrorist mindset. *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin Criminal Justice Periodicals, 72*(7), 7–10.

Borum, R. (2011). Radicalization into violent extremism ii: A review of social science theories. *Journal of Strategic Security, 4*(4), 7-36.

Bozarslan, H. (2007). Türkiye'de Kürt sol hareketi (pp. 1169-1180). *Modern Türkiye'de siyasi düşünce: Sol.* İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları.

Brück, T., & Wickström, B. A. (2004). The economic consequences of terror: A brief survey. *Defence and Peace Economics, 15*(4), 343-350.

Coppock, V., & McGovern, M. (2014). 'Dangerous minds'? deconstructing counter-terrorism discourse, radicalization, and the 'psychological vulnerability' of Muslim children and young people in Britain. *Children & Society, 28*(3), 242-256.

Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (1990). Grounded theory research: Procedures, canons and evaluative criteria. *Qualitative Sociology, 13*(1), 3-21.

Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches (3rd ed.)*. SAGE Publications.

Creswell, J. W. (2015). *30 essential skills for the qualitative researcher*. Sage Publications.

Çolak, B. (2013). *Terör kıskacında üniversiteler*. Ankara: Altınpost Yayınları.

Dalgaard-Nielsen, A. (2010). Violent radicalization in Europe: What we know and what we do not know. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism, 33*(9), 797-814.

Davies, L. (2008). *Educating against extremism*. Trentham Books.

Demirden, A. (2021). Risk analiz yöntemlerinin psikoloji temelli değerlendirilmesi: Gençler arasında şiddet içeren radikalleşme risk analiz örneği. *Gençlik Araştırmaları Dergisi, 9*(23), 5-17.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2018). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research (5th ed.)*. SAGE Publications.

Doğanoğlu, M. (2016). Devrimci Doğu Kültür Ocakları (DDKO) ve siyasal ayrışma. *Ankara Üniversitesi SBF Dergisi, 71*(3), 941-959.

Doosje, B., Loseman, A., & Van den Bos, K. (2013). Determinants of radicalization of Islamic youth in the Netherlands: Personal uncertainty, perceived injustice, and perceived group threat. *Journal of Social Issues, 69*(3), 586-604.

Filibeli, T. E., & Ertuna, C. (2021). Sarcasm beyond hate speech: Facebook comments on Syrian refugees in Turkey. *International Journal of Communication, 15*(24), 2236–2259.

Fusch, P., & Ness, L. R. (2015). Are we there yet? Data saturation in qualitative research. *The Qualitative Report, 20*(9), 1408-1416.

Guest, G., Bunce, A., & Johnson, L. (2006). How many interviews are enough? An experiment with data saturation and variability. *Field Methods, 18*(1), 59-82.

Güneş, T. (2020). The role of youth workers in countering radicalization in Türkiye. *Journal of Social Policy, 19*(2), 195-215.

Hennink, M. M., & Kaiser, B. N. (2022). Sample sizes for saturation in qualitative research: A systematic review of empirical tests. *Qualitative Health Research, 32*(4), 657-669.

Horgan, J. (2008). *The psychology of terrorism*. Routledge.

Hsieh, H.-F., & Shannon, S. E. (2005). Three approaches to qualitative content analysis. *Qualitative Health Research, 15*(9), 1277-1288.

Kaplan, İ. (2020). Türkiye'de radikalleşme ve aşırıcılık: Eğitim ve sosyal politika arasındaki ilişki. *Güvenlik Bilimleri Dergisi, 9*(2), 173-200.

Kaya, A., & Koca, M. (2024). Co-radicalization: A scientific lens proposal to understand the social movements in Turkey. *Turkish Journal of Middle Eastern Studies, 11*(1), 49-72.

Koklu, M., Tutuncu, K., Sulak, S. A., & Kocak, E. (2019). Investigation of extremism behaviors of young people in Turkey and member countries of European Union. *Research on Education and Psychology (REP), 3*(2), 142-155.

Köse, T. & Coşkun, İ. (2019). *Türkiye'de üniversiteler ve radikalleşme.* Ankara: SETA Yayınları.

Köylü, M. (2024). Theoretical and philosophical approaches to the Kurdish separatist movement after 2000. *Akademik Yaklaşımlar Dergisi, 15*(2), 940-964.

Krippendorff, K. (2018). *Content analysis: An introduction to its methodology (4th ed.).* SAGE Publications.

Kubar, Y. (2019). Gençler arasında şiddetin nedenlerini belirlemeye yönelik alan çalışması: Elâzığ ili örneği. *Anemon Muş Alparslan Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi, 7*(4), 193-205.

Kvale, S. (2007). *Doing interviews.* SAGE Publications.

Kurt, M. (2023). Radical habitus: Trajectories of youth radicalization in Türkiye. *Current Anthropology, 64*(6), 692-710.

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry.* SAGE Publications.

Lyon, A. J., & Uçarer, E. M. (2001). Mobilizing ethnic conflict: Kurdish separatism in Germany and the PKK. *Ethnic and Racial Studies, 24*(6), 925-948.

Mardin, Ş. (1978). Youth and violence in Türkiye. *European Journal of Sociology, 19*(2), 229-254.

Mattsson, C. (2023). Youth work, organized crime, and concealed radicalization. *JD Journal for Deradicalization, 36,* 1-22.

McLellan, E., MacQueen, K. M., & Niedig, J. (2003). Beyond the qualitative interview: Data preparation and transcription. *Field Methods, 15*(1), 63-84.

McCauley, C. & Moskalenko, S. (2008). Mechanisms of political radicalization: Pathways toward terrorism. *Terrorism and Political Violence, 20*(3), 415-433.

McLellan, E., MacQueen, K. M. & Niedig, J. (2003). Beyond the qualitative interview: Data preparation and transcription. *Field Methods, 15*(1), 63–84.

Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook (2nd ed.).* SAGE Publications.

Moghaddam, F. (2005). The staircase to terrorism: A psychological exploration. *American Psychological Association, 60*(2), 161-169

Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Nesser, P. (2006). Jihadism in Western Europe after the invasion of Iraq: Tracing motivational influences from the Iraq war on jihadist terrorism in Western Europe. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism, 29*(4), 323-342.

Neumann, P. (2008). *Joining al-Qaeda: Jihadist recruitment in Europe*, Routledge.

Neumann, P. R. (2013). *The trouble with radicalization*. International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence.

Özbey, E. E. (2018). Turkey's fight against youth radicalisation: Small steps on a long path. *EuroMeSCo Policy Brief, 78*, 1-12. Retrieved from https://www.euromesco.net/publication/turkeys-fight-against-youth-radicalisation-small-steps-on-a-long-path/

Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods (3rd ed.).* SAGE Publications.

Ranstorp, M. (2010). *Understanding violent radicalization: terrorist and jihadist movements in Europe*. Routledge: New York.

Reilly, M., & Parker, N. (2013). Unsatisfactory saturation: A critical exploration of the notion of saturated sample sizes in qualitative research. *Qualitative Research, 13*(2), 190-197.

Sageman, M. (2004). *Understanding terror networks*. University of Pennsylvania Press.

Schmid, A. P. (2013). *Radicalisation, de-radicalisation, counter-radicalisation: A conceptual discussion and literature review*. The International Centre for Counter-Terrorism.

Schwandt, T. A. (1994). *Constructivist, interpretivist approaches to human inquiry*. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), Handbook of qualitative research (pp. 118-137). SAGE Publications.

Siegel, A., Brickman, S., Goldberg, Z. & Pat-Horenczyk, R. (2019). Preventing future terrorism: Intervening on youth radicalization (pp. 391-418). *An international perspective on disasters and children's mental health*. Springer.

Turkic Council & United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC). (2016). *Şiddete varan aşırıcılıkla mücadelede gençliğin rolü: Eğitimden radikalleşmeden arındırmaya kadar bütüncül yaklaşımlar* (Conference summary). Turkic Council.

Uslu, L. (2021). Terörün sosyolojik arka planı; DEAŞ örneği (pp. 49-82). *Tüm boyutlarıyla radikalleşme süreci ve radikalleşmeyle mücadelede ülke uygulamaları*. Ankara: Nobel Akademik Yayıncılık.

Van de Weert, A., & Eijkman, Q. A. M. (2019). Subjectivity in detection of radicalisation and violent extremism: A youth worker's perspective. *Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression, 11*(3), 191-214.

Veldhuis, T., & Staun, J. (2009). *Islamist radicalisation: A root cause model*. Netherlands Institute of International Relations Clingendael.

VERBI Software. (2021). *Computer software*. Berlin, Germany: VERBI Software. Available from maxqda.com.

Verschelden, G., Coussée, F., Van de Walle, T., & Williamson, H. (Eds.). (2009). *The history of youth work in Europe and its relevance for youth policy today*. Council of Europe Publishing.

Yıldız, E. (2020). *Gençlik, Radikalleşme ve Terörizm: PKK Örneği* (Unpublished Master's thesis). Selçuk Üniversitesi, Konya.

Wolfowitz, M., Hasisi, B. & Weisburd, D. (2022). What are the effects of different elements of media on radicalization outcomes? A systematic review. *Campbell Systematic Reviews, 18*(2), 1-50.