

WHAT INSPIRES AN EXTREMIST?

A PROSPECTIVE STUDY INTO THE PSYCHOLOGY OF NARRATIVES

RESEARCH QUESTION

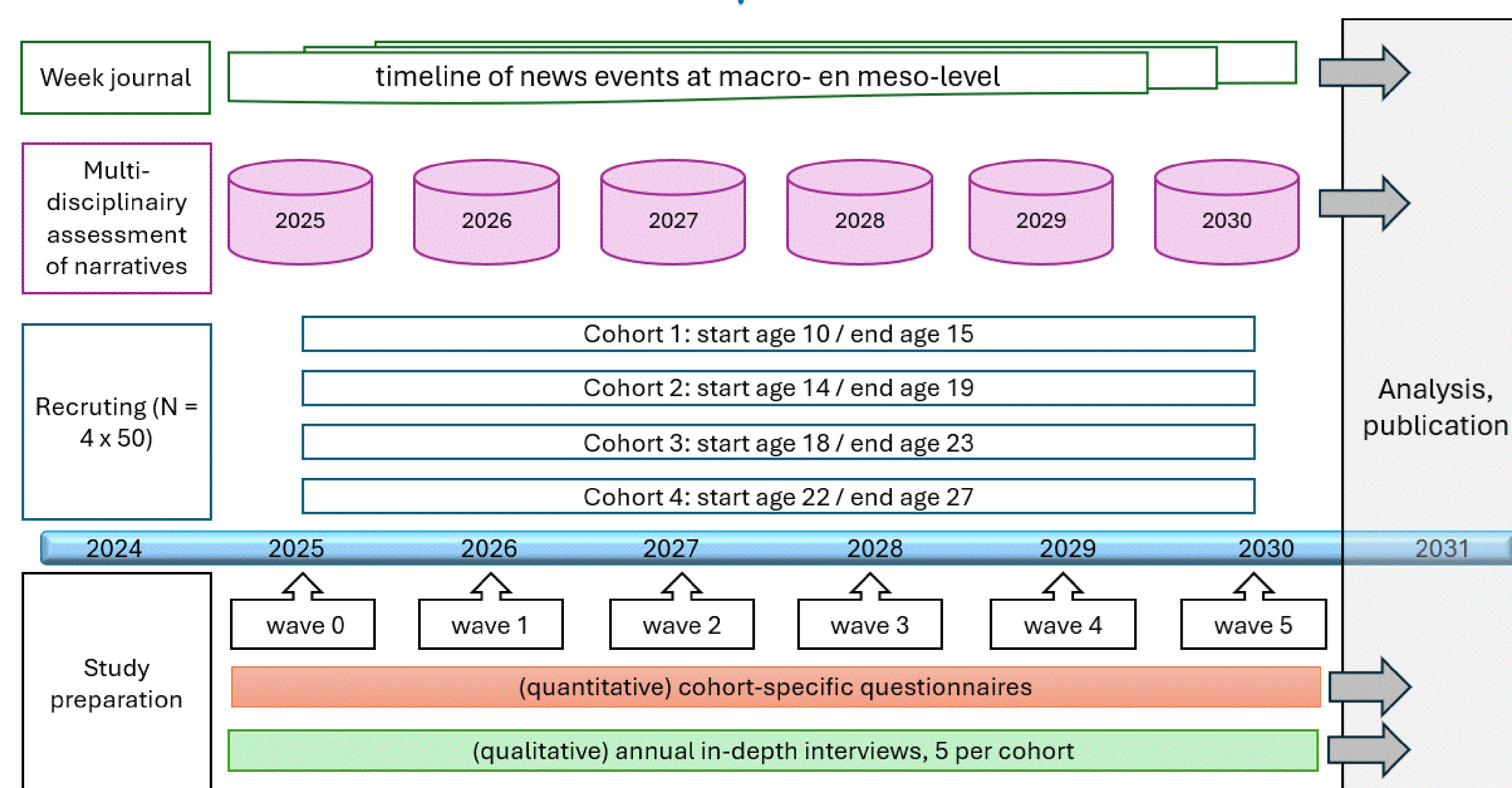
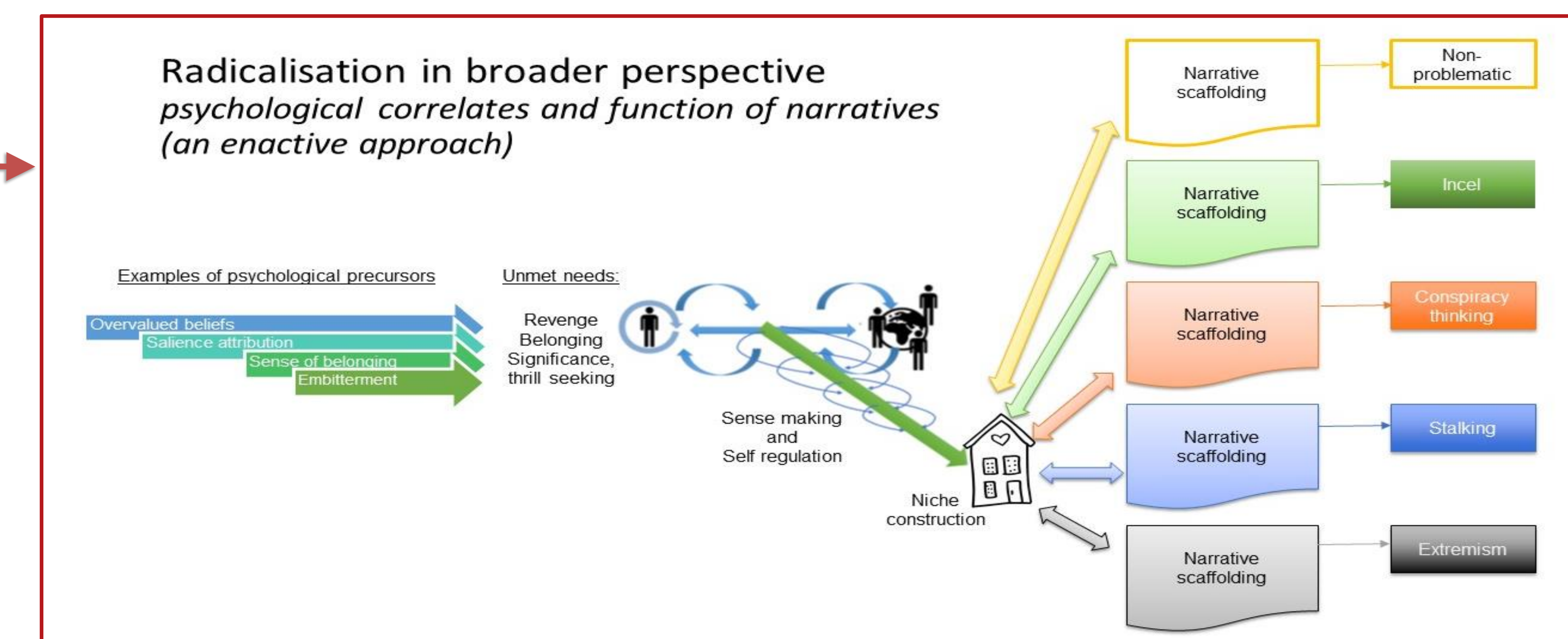
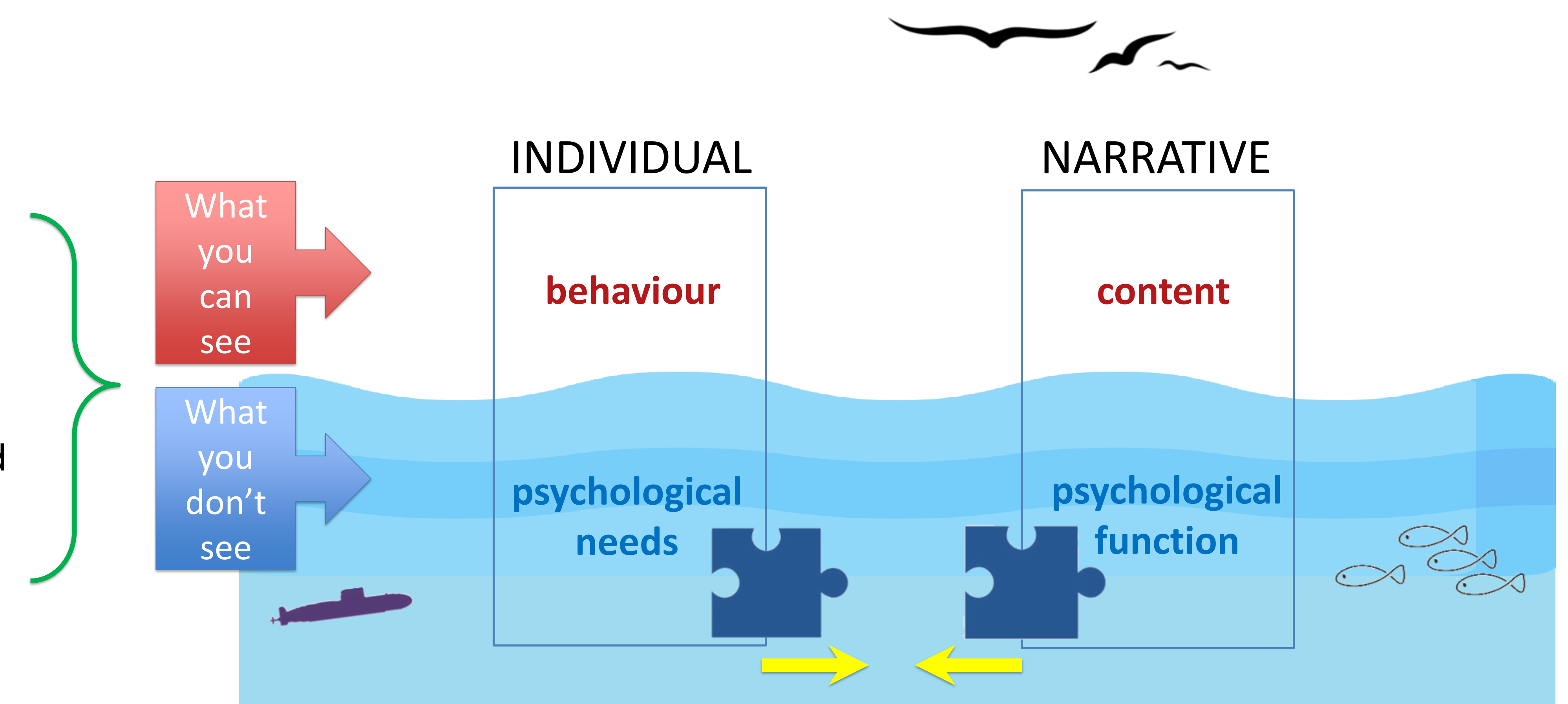
Why, when, and how do people embrace radical narratives?

Hypothesis

1. During lifetime people may develop unmet psychological needs (e.g. revenge, need to belong, quest for significance, thrill seeking)
2. People continuously shape a dynamic world by enacting embodied and embedded qualities through interaction with others; this we call a niche construction
3. Narratives (e.g. traditional ideologies, but also conspiracy thinking or stalking) are characterized by A) a visible content and B) an invisible psychological function
4. 1+3 = when people embrace a narrative the psychological function addresses the needs

Method

- We want to understand how people perceive themselves and the world, by using from the philosophy of mind the **enactive approach**
- Observational longitudinal accelerated design
- Repeated measurements and interviews over a five-year period
- 5 waves for 4 age-groups of 50 participants



"We want to demonstrate that radicalisation is a much more general process that does not exclusively lead to extremist violence, but may result in embracing any narrative, provided that this narrative offers the right psychological function to address the needs"



Contact: Bram Sizoo, b.b.sizoo@uva.nl