The Aim of the Project: For decades, researchers have tried to answer the question of what end states people desire and what states, when attained, make them happy and content. Cannon (1932), for instance, proposed that the living organism strives to achieve balance, or a "steady state" of a given need (e.g. optimal temperature). Cannon's theory, however, could not explain a variety of behaviors which instead to restoring, disrupt balance, such as creativity or self-sacrifice.

Recently, Kruglanski et al. (2020) proposed that this the balance *between* needs (or goals derived from those needs), rather than balance *within* one need, that should be considered to understand a person's behavior. Since people have at least several basic psychogenic needs (e.g. belonging, competence, autonomy), they all need to be satisfied in order for one to be content. Therefore, one switches between these needs, so that none is left unattended to (e.g., balancing work and leisure). When, however, one need becomes dominant and pushes other concerns to the background (e.g. one is overcommitted to work or political or religious cause), neglect or active undermining of other needs occurs (one may sacrifice their family, reputation or life at the altar of a cause). This particular imbalance of needs/goals is the definitional aspect of extremism and leads to a situation wherein one "sticks" to one goal and does not switch to others.

In the current project, we want to show that not only too rare, but also too frequent switches can be detrimental and they too create a state of motivational imbalance. When one has too many active goals and none of them is relatively more important than the rest, they all exert equal influence on a person's behavior and prompt one to switch between them. When switches are too frequent, one cannot make sufficient progress on any of the tasks. This is the case of excessive multitasking, which, as research shows, makes one underperform and produces the sense of constant dissatisfaction and alertness.

We thus argue that the optimal level of switching lies in between the two extremes (i.e. neither too rare, not too frequent switches are good). This optimal (moderate) rate of switching leads to the best overall progress (progress on all goals considered) and general and well-being. We thus expect an inversed "U" relationship between the rate of switching and overall goal progress and well-being *in the long run*. Moreover, we argue that both extremism and excessive multitasking are states of motivational imbalance and as such share some common characteristics and have similar consequences.

Research Plan. In the first, theoretical part of the project, we aim to fully develop the model and identify motivational, cognitive, behavioral and affective consequences of both types of imbalance (e.g., in extremism, attention is focused on the dominant goal and "tunnel vision" often occurs, whereas under multitasking, attention is overly diffused and one has problems sustaining it on one task for a longer period of time). Then, in Thrust 1 of studies, we will try to identify the *optimal* level of switching. We assume that how frequent switches are optimal, depends on the set of currently active goals or tasks. We will thus run three laboratory experiments and two studies in naturalistic settings (with students during exam session and among employees in reference to work-life balance) to test this hypothesis. We expect that the moderate level of switching will lead to best overall progress on all goals considered. In Thrust 2, we will run a longitudinal study (over one year and three measurements) to show that both types of imbalance (too rare and too frequent switches) lead to suboptimal functioning in terms of lower overall progress and lowered well-being. In Thrust 3, we will test some of the parallels of the two types of imbalance. We will show, for instance, that the two require energy and thus both will peak at a young age, in energetic people or in conditions in which energy is high (compared to when it is low). In the final set of studies, we will show that both types of imbalance lead to sub-optimal decision making: extremism leads to risky and prompt decisions, whereas having too many unprioritized goals leads to difficulty with choice and decisional impasse.

Project Significance and Expected Results: The project proposes a new theoretical account explaining how people should alternate between their goals in order to obtain overall satisfaction and maximum progress. It attains so by integrating two large literatures, on extremism and multitasking, and proposes that both are in fact related to the same processes—activation and importance of goals—but lie at different ends of the switching spectrum. The project also sheds light on two phenomena which both seem very relevant and alarming in recent years, namely, the raise of extremism and increasing multitasking. Since we show that they both stem from motivational imbalance, restoring the balance (via increasing/decreasing the importance of focal/alternative goals) would be the solution. The project thus offers practical implications for counteracting extreme behavior and reducing multitasking. The expected results of the project are development of the model of optimal goal switching and at least four publications in high impact psychological journals.