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Globalization and Radicalization: A Cross-National Study of Local Embeddedness and Reactions to Cultural Globalization in regard to Violent Extremism

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Abstract:

Local contexts have been increasingly influenced by the transformative power of cultural globalization. These dynamic processes have proliferated intercultural connectivity, catalyzing both exclusionary reactions of ethnic protection and integrative reactions of multicultural acquisition. To be able to negotiate a globalized cultural diversity, the individual needs to be securely and reliably embedded within the local sociocultural context conceptualized as secure life attachment. The present study investigates the interplay among life attachment, psychological reactions to cultural globalization, and various aspects of radicalization in student samples from Denmark (n = 223) and India (n = 254). Results reveal that insecure life attachment was directly associated with an extremist attitude and with endorsement of both violent and illegal means in relation to extremism. Furthermore, multicultural acquisition and ethnic protection appear to mediate the relationship between insecure life attachment and various aspects of radicalization. Insecure life attachment relates to an extremist attitude and acceptance of illegal means in relation to extremism through ethnic protection. Additionally, insecure life attachment is associated with acceptance of violent means in relation to extremism through both ethnic protection and multicultural acquisition. The results illustrate the key role of contextual safety and reliability as platforms for approaching cultural globalization and avoiding radicalized essentialist pitfalls.

Keywords: globalization, localization, acculturation, radicalization, extremism
Globalization and Radicalization: A Cross-National Study of Globalized Reactions to Local Embeddedness in regard to Violent Extremism

Transformative processes of cultural globalization have been a defining force shaping and changing contemporary societies. These sociocultural changes influence not only the local context surrounding the individual but also the individual’s self-understanding and contextual embeddedness reflected in the individual’s experience of belonging and being securely, safely, and meaningfully included in society (Bertelsen, 2018; Hermans & Dimaggio, 2007). Furthermore, the global processes of cultural interaction can challenge local contextual embeddedness and identity development and occasionally initiate extremist attitudes and violence based on essentialist perceptions (Kinnvall & Nesbitt-Larkin, 2011, Moghaddam, 2008).

A psychology of cultural globalization is developing around the study of different ways that individuals react to new cultural interaction and cultural negotiation brought about by globalization (Chen et al., 2016; Ozer, 2019). Cultural globalization describes the increasing contact and interconnectivity among diverse cultural streams across geographical distance (Ozer, 2019; Tomlinson, 1999). Through processes of opening and closing oneself to new cultural influences according to needs, wishes, anxieties, or uncertainties (Hermans, 2015), the defensive exclusionary and proactive integrative reactions to cultural globalization emerge as universal ways of adapting to and reconciling multiple cultural diversities (Chiu, Gries, Torelli, & Cheng, 2011; Ozer, 2019). That is, with exposure to multiple globalized cultural streams, individual differences reflect how people can be open and assimilative to obtaining cultural knowledge and multicultural experiences as well as opposed to assimilating and instead believing in the superiority of one’s heritage culture (Chen et al., 2016). Such general reactions can lead to creativity and innovation, but also to identity
confusion and defensive forms of localization and anxiety regarding cultural contamination (Morris, Chiu, & Liu, 2015).

The intertwined and complex processes of globalization and localization have been conceptualized as two sides of the same coin (Hermans & Dimaggio, 2007). Consequently, the globalized processes of cultural interconnectivity are contextually bound, shaping the local sociocultural context while new cultural influences are negotiated in relation to the local cultural stream. Additionally, the general approach of reacting to globalized cultural influences is formed by specific situations and conditions within a given local context, along with experienced societal stability and inclusion. One central response to an experience of fear and societal insecurity is essentialism, which aligns and reinforces ideologies and fundamentalism through a fixed and bounded understanding of how life and society should be. Such reactions of essentialism can be reflected in, for example, some forms of religious orthodoxy and nationalism (Kinvall & Nesbitt-Larking, 2011). Indeed, such experiences of societal instability and uncertainty can initiate radicalization processes of gradually accepting extremism and perhaps the use of violent and illegal means across sociohistorical and geographical differences (Hogg, Kruglanski, & van den Bos, 2013).

Local reactions to the universal process of globalization emerge as context-specific and should be examined in regard to their particularity and how these sociocultural contexts shape certain trajectories of radicalization (Ozer, 2019). Indeed, many detailed descriptions of specific examples and theories of such associations between globalization and radicalization have been published regarding both the cross-cultural and the culture-specific nature of the phenomena (Kinvall & Nesbitt-Larking, 2011; Moghaddam, 2008). However, empirical research employing inferential statistics is needed to scrutinize the underlying psychological mechanisms relating cultural globalization and extremism (Ozer, 2019). Accordingly, the present study examines how local
embeddedness and security within two greatly diverse sociocultural contexts spur reactions to cultural globalization that can either initiate or mitigate processes of radicalization. Relevant underlying psychological mechanisms related to globalization and extremism are examined among general population samples from both India and Denmark in order to determine whether such radicalization dynamics reflecting the interplay among social, cultural, and psychological factors could lead to extremism and how these dynamics would appear similar or differ across local sociocultural specificities. That is, the study cross-culturally investigates how experiences of local contextual challenges emerge as central to globalization related extremism.

A Secure Base for Exploring the World of Diversity

During times of rapid societal change, humans need a secure base within their local sociocultural context (Kinvall, 2004). The concept of life attachment reflects fundamental life conditions of being securely, safely, and meaningfully embedded within society, within communities, and within close relationships with other people. Such a secure life attachment would be the result of a local embeddedness where relational, institutional, and cultural contexts provide the economic conditions to meet the necessities for an acceptable life (Pickles, 2016). Conversely, an insecure life attachment refers to the experience of life within one’s country of residence as: 1) insecure with fear of adverse intrusion or destruction; 2) excluding in relation to social belonging and participation; 3) unreliable with changes that are uninspected and uncontrolled; 4) unfair in regard to the experienced treatment in general; and, 5) without the needed and expected opportunities necessary for well-being (Bertelsen, 2018). These aspects of an insecure life attachment relate to the individual’s feeling of living within one’s country of residence and regarding one’s material conditions (e.g., job, education, economy, housing/environment), as well
as one’s lifestyle and culture, which can be shared with family and/or friends, a nation, or a section of the population (Ozer & Bertelsen, 2019). The concept of life attachment is furthermore inspired by the attachment theory, stressing the importance of attachment to caregivers in regard to personal development. Such attachment provides the security and stability necessary to form a foundation for taking risks, exploring and interacting with the surrounding world, and eventually learning from new experiences (Bowlby, 1988). Life attachment does not, however, refer to the attachment to caregivers; instead, the concept is extended to capture the life conditions in which an individual is situated.

Humans have a general need for local environmental safety and for stable life circumstances that can provide a feeling of security in a globalized world. The concept of life attachment is associated with the concept of ontological security, denoting a sense of safety in the world and trust of others (Giddens, 1991). That is, a general human need for such an ontological security relates to one’s local context, providing a site of constancy in regard to both the social and material environment (Kinvall, 2004). These needs are rooted in human’s evolutionary biology, in which cultural narratives reflecting a coherent and shared understanding of life and society are adaptive by helping people deal with fundamental life issues. Such cultural narratives emerge as powerful when they increasingly overrule alternative perspectives and can be excluding in situations of anxiety and threat (Hermans & Dimaggio, 2007). Accordingly, an insecure life attachment could motivate an emotional reaction oriented toward preserving and defending one’s essentialist perspective and cultural narrative of a good and correct life.

Individuals characterized by an insecure life attachment will eventually seek to establish or reestablish a secure life attachment (Bertelsen, 2018). Consequently, in this study it was hypothesized that an insecure life attachment would be positively associated with various aspects of extremism reflecting a strong desire for comprehensive societal change. Such incentives for
reaching a secure life attachment could include motivations for transforming one’s local context to a more stable and homogenous character with an orientation toward the known—and away from the unknown. Such societal transformations relate to the experience of cultural threat (Obaidi, Kunst, Kteily, Thomsen, & Sidanius, 2018) and the defensive localization as a reaction to globalization (Hermans, 2015). That is, an insecure life attachment might initiate processes of closing oneself off from new cultural influences or at least limiting openness to intercultural contact.

Cultural Globalization and Local Reactions

Cultural globalization can be understood as one dimension of globalization among others, for example, political, economic, and technological dimensions. The complex connectivity of cultural globalization occurs through continually more dense networks of interconnections and interdependences across geographical distance (Tomlinson, 1999). Globalization is not a new phenomenon, but the acceleration of transnational interconnectivity is salient in contemporary societies (Kinvall, 2004). Cultural globalization is characterized by acculturative processes of direct or mediated and continuous or intermittent intercultural contact (Chen et al., 2016; Ferguson, Tran, Mendez, & van de Vijver, 2017). A psychology of cultural globalization is determined to examine the reactions and adaptations to new globalized cultural influences in relation to various ramifications of intercultural processes (Ozer, 2019). The exclusionary and integrative reactions to the inflow of globalized culture comprise an emotional and reflective component. Accordingly, the exclusionary reactions to cultural globalization are conceptualized as more reflexive responses to a perceived threat to one’s ethnic culture. Such reactions are fueled by negative emotional affect including envy, fear, anger, and disgust (Morris et al., 2015). These exclusionary reactions can lead to rejective and aggressive behavior in regard to defending one’s ethnic identity and to an
essentialist perception. On the contrary, integrative reactions are conceptualized as an effortful approach and learning mindset to include new cultural elements as resources. Driven by admiration and by positive intercultural affect, the integrative reactions lead to a behavior of accepting and amalgamating new cultural elements (Chiu et al., 2011).

Chen and colleagues (2016) have operationalized the general exclusionary and integrative reactions to globalization as multicultural acquisition and ethnic protection. These proactive and defensive responses to cultural globalization relate to individual differences in global orientation, denoting psychological processes of acculturating to the globalized world and to multicultural exposure. The two responses of multicultural acquisition and ethnic protection include affective, behavioral, and cognitive components. These components relate to either 1) learning and using new languages, obtaining new cultural knowledge and experiences, and learning new cultural customs, norms, and traditions or 2) sticking to one’s cultural norms and practices despite the present context, holding essentialist beliefs about cultural groups, and objecting to intercultural contact. Multicultural acquisition is a more agentic approach that exerts selectivity when integrating multiple cultural elements. This type of reaction is positively associated with openness to experience, extraversion, restraint, intellect, self-esteem, and cross-cultural efficacy. On the other hand, ethnic protection is negatively associated with the above psychological characteristics and in turn is aligned with conservatism, ethnocentrism, and resisting intercultural interaction. Although the responses of multicultural acquisition and ethnic protection emerge as contraries, they can co-occur and have shown only modest or insignificant correlations in research (Chen et al., 2016). With openness to intercultural contact being a reflective and open-minded reaction to cultural globalization, in the present study it was hypothesized that multicultural acquisition could be a mediating variable associating an insecure life-attachment and various aspects of extremism.
Accompanying the new cultural influences, globalization has been found to cause rootlessness and loss of stability related to neoliberal ideology with effects of capitalist development, media overflow, privatization, urbanization, and unemployment (Kinnval, 2004). In cases of experienced insecure life attachment and with changes in local contexts caused by globalization, ethnic protection and defensive localization can increase in emotional intensity to a point in which the individuals’ attitudes toward the constitution of society reaches a point of extremism (Hermans & Dimaggio, 2007; Ozer, 2019). In the present study, it is hypothesized that ethnic protection could be a mediating factor associating an insecure life attachment and various aspects of extremism. That is, globalization can spur radicalization among some individuals in contexts perceived as lacking certainty and security (Moghaddam, 2008; Ozer & Bertelsen, 2019).

**Extreme Local Reactions to Globalization**

Globally, the dynamic and intertwined relationship between the local context and the global processes emerges with globalization facilitating international and intercultural connectedness and exchange and localization emphasizing customs, practices, and traditions present in a specific context (Hermans & Dimaggio, 2007). Such a local-global nexus can result in extremization in contemporary socioculturally changing societies, which can further result in acts of violence and actual terrorism (Kinnvall, 2004). Indeed, an essentialist cultural identity and demarcation have emerged as a central component in negotiating self-uncertainty (Kinnvall & Nesbitt-Larking, 2011).

Globalization can cause a sense of uncertainty with the lack of superordinate, social, cultural, or religious structure among a multitude of different individual perspectives and opinions (Hermans & Dimaggio, 2007). Sources of uncertainty can range from close relationships and interaction with strangers to a macro level of immigration, unemployment, economic crisis, and climate change
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(Hogg, Kruglanski, & van den Bos, 2013). To withstand such uncertainty, the individual needs a secure local embeddedness and life attachment, thus providing a sense of stability in a changing and complex world (Hermans & Dimaggio, 2007). It can be observed that periods of societal instability and uncertainty coincide with the emergence of extremism, such as the great depression in the 1930s, which facilitated extremism across various contexts in the form of fascism, communism, and nationalism (Hogg et al., 2013). A common reaction to the structural transformations in society caused by globalization has been an attempt to recreate a lost sense of security through romanticizing and revitalizing an imagined past with an essentialist cultural point of reference. That is, structural conditions of insecurity appear to be closely associated with the emotional significance of cultural and identity enhancement and fortification. This gives rise to orientations toward profound societal changes in concert with the development of strong local identities (Kinnvall, 2004).

Extremism in this study is defined as “an intense desire for and/or pursuit of universal and comprehensive changes in own and common life socially, culturally and/or societally where the concern for human coexistence is set aside” (Bertelsen, 2018, p. 321). Accordingly, extremism can be conceptualized as a universal phenomenon with multiple manifestations across religious, political, and single-issue (e.g., environmental, territorial) specific discourses (Doosje et al., 2016). Consequently, societal extremism emerges as a human universal that occurs across history in societies, nations, cultures, and ideologies (Hogg et al., 2013). While extremist attitudes in and of themselves are often completely legal, the acceptance of illegal or even violent means to express one’s extremist views can extend the concept of extremism and result in possible acts of terrorism. Importantly, extremism as such does not include violent or illegal expressions; consequently these different aspects of extremism should be examined independently (Ozer & Bertelsen, 2018).
Accordingly, in the present study it was hypothesized that an insecure life attachment would be more strongly associated with extremist attitudes than with acceptance of illegal and violent means.

The global processes of cultural globalization can be understood as universal cultural interconnectivity. However, reactions to cultural globalization emerge within a local particular context in accordance with specific cultural traditions, social institutions, and historical discourses (Ozer, 2019).

**The Sociocultural Context of Denmark and India**

Denmark and India constitute highly dissimilar sociocultural contexts for comparison, investigated here in order to test the cross-cultural generalizability of the hypothesized model. In order to examine the interplay among life attachment, global orientations, and extremism, a description of some key features of the two specific contexts is foundational.

Regarding the sociohistorical and political structure, Denmark constitutes a small country with a population of 5.76 million. It is formed by the Nordic welfare model—that is, Denmark has a tradition of high taxes, strong labor market policies, equal wealth distribution, and generous social services. Although processes of globalization with neo-liberal influences and greater xenophobia have been challenging the Danish welfare model, there still exists a social consensus toward solidarity and equality (Nielsen & Kesting, 2003). A profound anti-immigration attitude has emerged as of late, one that has especially targeted Muslim immigrants within Denmark (Kinnvall & Nesbitt-Larking, 2011). India, on the other hand, is a large country with a population of 1.35 billion, influenced greatly by neo-liberal ideology and income inequality. India has responded to globalized socio-economic changes with an increase in religious, traditional, and nationalistic discourses to unite the multicultural and socially diverse population (Kinvall, 2007).
Concerning the cultural dimension, Denmark could until recently have been categorized as a culturally homogeneous society. On the contrary, India holds a long history of cultural pluralism shaped largely by colonialism. Regarding globalization, in the KOF globalization index score comprising measurements of economic, social, and political dimensions of globalization, Denmark reached an index score of 85.9 and India 56.2 in 2015. For comparison, the world average KOF score was 56.6 (Gygli, Haelg, & Sturm, 2018). Cross-national comparison of some of Hofstede’s and colleagues’ (2010) six cultural dimensions reveals some general differences in the countries’ national cultures: Denmark scores 18 and India 77 on power difference, reflecting that India has a hierarchical and centralized power structure as opposed to Denmark’s widespread egalitarian and decentralized power configuration that emphasizes individual autonomy. Accordingly, Denmark scores higher (76) on individualism as compared to India (48). This indicates that Indians in general emphasize their larger group memberships. Interestingly, Danish national culture scores lower on uncertainty avoidance (23) as compared to Indian national culture (40). This reflects a greater accept of uncertainty, ambiguity, and less predictability within Denmark as compared to India. However, Indian culture is still fairly tolerant of the unexpected. Lastly, Indian national culture is associated with a low score on indulgence (26) as compared to Danish culture (70). This suggests that Indians emphasize leisure time less and may feel restrained by social norms with a greater pessimism toward realizing impulses and wishes as compared to culture in Denmark.

Comparing the impact of terrorism (GTI) in the context of India (7.534) against the context of Denmark (1.512) indicates that India is much more influenced by terrorism than is Denmark (Global Terrorism Index, 2017). India’s ranking as the country eighth most impacted by terrorism relates to ethno-political unrest among, for example, Maoist groupings and by disputes regarding the former state of Jammu and Kashmir. Such instability and conflict can further create insecure life
attachment among civilians and provide recruiting possibilities for groups using illegal and violent means in regard to their extremist position.

Overall, Denmark has been greatly influenced by globalization for quite some time, while on the other hand the recent accelerating intensity of cultural globalization might appear much stronger in contemporary India. On the contrary, India has long been a multicultural nation, while Denmark is currently greatly influenced by and adapting to an increase in immigration and the transition toward a greater degree of multiculturalism. While Denmark has a tradition for egalitarianism and adherence to the law, India is characterized by great power asymmetry, violations of national laws, and ethno-political unrest.

**Current Study**

The aim of the present study is to examine the interplay among insecurity in contextual embeddedness, global orientations, and extremism across two highly dissimilar sociocultural contexts. Accordingly, a cross-cultural indirect effects model examined how insecure life attachment was associated with various aspects of extremism through multicultural acquisition and ethnic protection. This model was guided by four hypotheses based on the literature review: 1) insecure life attachment would be positively and directly associated with various aspects of extremism in both national samples; 2) insecure life attachment would be indirectly and positively associated with the three aspects of extremism through multicultural acquisition (insecure life attachment associated negatively with multicultural acquisition which would, furthermore, be negatively linked with extremist attitude) in both cultural samples; 3) insecure life attachment would be indirectly and positively linked with all aspects of extremism through ethnic protection in both national samples; and, 4) the relationships between insecure life attachment and an extremist
attitude would be stronger than the association between insecure life attachment and the acceptance of illegal or violent means. That is, regardless of the specific cultural characteristics, if one feels secure and safely included in one’s local context, one would be receptive to new cultural influences, consequently mitigating extremism, and if one feels unsafe, one would react to globalization with defensive localization that could evolve into violent extremism.

Method

Procedure

Data were collected through purposive non-random sampling using an online questionnaire. An invitation letter was distributed through student mailing lists and through relevant student Facebook groups. Students were sampled because young people in psychosocial moratorium are most involved with globalized new cultural interaction (Ozer, 2019) and particularly attracted to rigid and programmatic belief systems (Kinnvall & Nesbitt-Larking, 2011). The participants did not receive any compensation. The majority (97%) of the Indian participants was recruited through Amazon Mechanical Turk (Buhrmester, Kwang, & Gosling, 2011) with the same inclusion criteria of being students. The study adhered to the Danish national ethical guidelines for research. Institutional review boards or committees are not mandatory at Danish universities for such a questionnaire study.

Participants

Participants were 477 students studying in either India (n = 254) or Denmark (n = 223). This sample size was determined based on the guidelines of ten participants per variable in the model (Wang & Wang, 2012). The two national samples differed in regard to religion, gender, and mean age. Please see Table 1 for descriptive statistics.
Measurement

Participants answered questions concerning background information such as their age, gender, religious affiliation, and perceived socioeconomic status. Besides this background information, the following four measures were employed in their original English versions in both contexts. Both students in India and Denmark are proficient in English.

*Life Attachment Scale* (LAS; Ozer & Bertelsen, 2019) was included as a measure tapping into the individual experience of not being securely and meaningfully embedded within one’s sociocultural context. The scale comprises 14 items tapping into the individual’s lack of a sense of safety, inclusion, reliability, fairness, and facilitation of well-being within one’s country of living. The items represent the two domains of (a) material life conditions (e.g., job, education, finances, and well-being) and (b) lifestyle and culture. LAS can be employed as an aggregate score or as two subscales reflecting these domains of material life conditions and lifestyle/culture. In the present study, correlation analysis indicated a strong association between these two domains of LAS, $r_{\text{India}} = .87$, $p < .001$ and $r_{\text{Denmark}} = .83$, $p < .001$. Consequently, the aggregate measure was employed in the analyses. Internal consistency for this scale was good with Cronbach’s alpha $\alpha_{\text{India}} = .94$ and $\alpha_{\text{Denmark}} = .94$. All items were answered on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*. The sample item read, “In this country there is the risk of a sudden threat to the lifestyle and culture that are meaningful for me.”

*Global Orientation Scale* (GOS; Chen, 2016) measures individual differences in global orientations. This measure of the psychological processes of acculturating to cultural globalization consists of two subscales: 1) multicultural acquisition (13 items) as a proactive response ($\alpha_{\text{India}} = .88; \alpha_{\text{Denmark}} = .84$) and 2) ethnic protection (12 items) as a defensive response to globalization ($\alpha_{\text{India}} = .87; \alpha_{\text{Denmark}} = .79$). All items were answered using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*. Sample items include: “I am curious about traditions of other cultures.”
**Extremism Scale** (ES; Ozer & Bertelsen, 2018) consists of a unidimensional 14-items scale that taps into both a strong desire for comprehensive personal and societal change and aspects of intolerance. The ES has previously been validated in both Danish and American samples. Responses are scored on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Sample items include: “Most people in this country have a lifestyle and culture that is necessary to change totally.” The scale yielded good internal consistency with Cronbach’s alpha $\alpha_{\text{India}} = .88$ and $\alpha_{\text{Denmark}} = .87$.

**Pro-violence and Illegal Acts in Relation to Extremism Scale** (PIARES; Ozer & Bertelsen, 2018) includes six items pertaining to acceptance of the use of violence and six matching items relating to acceptance of the use of illegal means in relation to extremism. All items were answered through a 7-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. A sample item reads, “Using physical violence is the only thing that really works when it is a matter of…creating a new and better society.” Internal consistency ranged from acceptable to good with $\alpha_{\text{India}} = .87$ and $\alpha_{\text{Denmark}} = .92$ for the pro-violence subscale and $\alpha_{\text{India}} = .68$ and $\alpha_{\text{Denmark}} = .92$ for the pro-illegal acts subscale.

**Results**

All statistical analyses were conducted in either SPSS or Mplus 8 (Muthén & Muthén, 1998-2011). The hypothesized indirect effects model was examined through a structural equation model (SEM) utilizing partial (LAS, ES, & PAIRES) or fully aggregated (GOS) self-report measurement. SEM was computed employing maximum likelihood estimation with robust standard errors to non-normality of observations. Kline’s (2015) criteria for evaluating the model was used suggesting that

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1 For the parcel factor loadings, please see supplementary material here: [https://osf.io/z4c23/](https://osf.io/z4c23/)
the chi-square statistic should be non-significant \((p > .05)\) and the following fit index cutoffs should be satisfied: Comparative Fit Index \((CFI) \geq .90\), Standardized Root Mean Square Residual \((SRMR) \leq .08\), and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation \((RMSEA) \leq .08\). Furthermore, Little’s (2013) criteria for evaluating invariance was used, \(\Delta CFI (\leq .010)\) and \(\Delta RMSEA (\leq .010)\).

**Assessment of Measurement Equivalence**

All scales were examined for metric invariance (comparing an unconstrained model with parameters freely estimated for both groups against a constrained model with factor loadings constrained to be equal and intercepts free to vary across both groups) and scalar invariance (comparing the constrained model with factor loadings constrained to be equal and intercepts free to vary across both groups against a constrained model with both factor loadings and intercepts constrained to be equal across both groups), using total disaggregation and the comparative fit index \((CFI \geq .010)\) and root mean square error of approximation \((RMSEA \geq .010)\) criteria (Little, 2013). All the scales passed the metric test of invariance allowing for analysis of covariance. However, LAS, GOS (ethnic protection), ES, and PAIRES (violence) did not pass the scalar test of invariance. Furthermore, both the GOS (multicultural acquisition) and PAIRES (illegal) had two or more indicators passing the scalar invariance test, and consequently these subscales yielded partial invariance, which is enough for using the latent mean in statistical analysis (Steenkamp & Baumgartner, 1998).\(^2\) Because of the weak scalar invariance, in this study the analyses refrained from statistically comparing means across the two national samples.

**Correlation Analysis**

As reflected in Table 3, the bivariate correlations represent the comparable correlation matrix for the two groups. The multicultural acquisition was positively correlated with ethnic protection in

\(^2\) For a table with statistical details of the invariance tests, please see supplementary material here: [https://osf.io/z4c23/](https://osf.io/z4c23/)
the Indian sample and negatively in the Danish sample. Furthermore, multicultural acquisition was negatively correlated with two of the three measures of extremism in the Danish sample and uncorrelated in the Indian sample. Supporting the first hypothesis, insecure life attachment was positively associated with all three aspects of extremism in both cultural groups. Additionally, and supporting the fourth hypothesis, this association between insecure life attachment and radicalization emerged in both groups as stronger in relation to extremist attitude rather than in relation to accepting illegal or violent means.

**Structural Equation Model**

The hypothesized indirect effects model was then estimated through SEM analysis. Within this estimation, age, gender, and SES were controlled for vis-à-vis their effects on the mediating and outcome variables. These covariates were included to control for their effects on differences in observed means across contexts. The indirect effects model yielded a good fit to the data, $\chi^2(125) = 239.67, p < .001; \text{CFI} = .97; \text{SRMR} = .03; \text{RMSEA} = .05, 90\% \text{ CI} = .04 \text{ to } .05$. Within this model, insecure life attachment was allowed to covary with both age ($r = .45$) and gender ($r = -.39$). Multigroup SEM was then conducted to examine equivalence across the two contexts of India and Denmark by comparing constrained (factor loadings, intercepts, and structural regression paths constrained to be equal across both groups) versus unconstrained models (all parameters freely estimated for both groups). The results were inconclusive regarding invariance across the two groups, $\Delta \chi^2(48) = 120.92, p < .05; \Delta \text{CFI} = .021; \Delta \text{RMSEA} = .001$. Consequently, each factor loading, intercept, and structural equation path was examined for invariance across site by constraining one parameter at a time and examining the change in the CFI and RMSEA. However, none of the parameters was found to violate the assumption of invariance ($\Delta \text{CFI} \& \Delta \text{RMSEA} > .010$). Based on this invariance test, it can be concluded that the relationship between life
attachment, global orientation, and extremism was equivalent across the Indian and Danish samples; both samples were consequently grouped together in the examination of the indirect-effects model.³

The results of the indirect effects model (Figure 1 and Table 4) indicated that there was a direct and positive association between insecure life attachment and extremist attitude \( \beta = .55, p < .001, 95\% \text{ CI} = .45 \text{ to } .66 \), acceptance of violent means \( \beta = .53, p < .001, 95\% \text{ CI} = .41 \text{ to } .66 \), and acceptance of illegal means \( \beta = .57, p < .001, 95\% \text{ CI} = .44 \text{ to } .70 \). Furthermore, multicultural acquisition was negatively \( \beta = -.19, p < .001, 95\% \text{ CI} = -.30 \text{ to } -.09 \) and ethnic protection was positively \( \beta = .72, p < .001, 95\% \text{ CI} = .65 \text{ to } .79 \) associated with insecure life attachment.

Additionally, multicultural acquisition was negatively and significantly linked with acceptance of violent means \( \beta = -.17, p = .002, 95\% \text{ CI} = -.28 \text{ to } -.06 \) and unassociated with extremist attitude \( \beta = -.01, p = .863, 95\% \text{ CI} = -.06 \text{ to } .05 \) and accept of illegal means \( \beta = .02, p = .693, 95\% \text{ CI} = -.07 \text{ to } .10 \). Moreover, ethnic protection was significantly and positively associated with extremist attitude \( \beta = .35, p < .001, 95\% \text{ CI} = .25 \text{ to } .46 \), acceptance of violent means \( \beta = .19, p = .003, 95\% \text{ CI} = .06 \text{ to } .31 \), and acceptance of illegal means \( \beta = .24, p < .001, 95\% \text{ CI} = .11 \text{ to } .37 \).

Evaluating the indirect effects within the hypothesized model yielded four significant indirect paths. Insecure life attachment was indirectly and positively associated with extremist attitude through ethnic protection \( \beta = .25, p < .001, 95\% \text{ CI} = .18 \text{ to } .33 \). Insecure life attachment was also positively linked with acceptance of violent means through ethnic protection \( \beta = .13, p = .003, 95\% \text{ CI} = .05 \text{ to } .22 \) and multicultural acquisition \( \beta = .03, p = .009, 95\% \text{ CI} = .01 \text{ to } .06 \). Finally, insecure life attachment was indirectly and positively associated with acceptance of illegal means through ethnic protection \( \beta = .17, p < .001, 95\% \text{ CI} = .08 \text{ to } .27 \). Two indirect paths did not emerge as significant. That is, insecure life attachment was not associated with extremist attitude \( \beta \)

³ For a table and a figure reflecting the differences across the two national samples, please see supplementary information here: https://osf.io/z4c23/
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\[ \beta = .00, \ p = .861, \ 95\% \ CI = -0.01 \text{ to } 0.01\] or acceptance of illegal means \[\beta = .00, \ p = .705, \ 95\% \ CI = -0.02 \text{ to } 0.06\] through multicultural acquisition.

The hypothesized indirect effects model was then compared to an alternative model examining extremist measures as the mediating variables and global orientation as the outcome variable. The models were compared using the Bayesian (BIC) and Akaike Information Criteria (AIC) as recommended for comparison of non-nested models (Kline, 2015). A lower BIC and AIC value supported the hypothesized model, \(\text{BIC}_{\text{hypothesized model}} = 23057.92\) and \(\text{BIC}_{\text{alternative model}} = 23382.56\); \(\text{AIC}_{\text{hypothesized model}} = 22719.16\) and \(\text{AIC}_{\text{alternative model}} = 23052.07\).

**Discussion**

The results indicate that insecure life attachment is a strong predictor of various aspects of extremist mindset in both Denmark and India. Furthermore, global orientations emerged as possible partial mediators of this relationship. Ethnic protection in particular appeared as central in relation to the association between insecure life attachment and the various aspects of extremism examined in this study, in support of the third hypothesis. Even though the Indian sample reported a higher level of insecure life attachment as compared to the Danish sample, the relationship between the variables appeared to be equivalent across these two highly dissimilar contexts. These findings are discussed in relation to the importance of the local contextual embeddedness and how this relates to global processes.

**The Importance of Local Contextual Embeddedness**

The individual life-embeddedness within the local sociocultural context was in the present study found to be strongly associated with extremist attitudes. A sense of belonging, reflecting the experience of being valued and accepted within one’s social environment, has in research been
associated with psychological well-being through less hopelessness and depression (Fisher, Overholser, Ridley, Braden, & Rosoff, 2015). Such results emphasize the general importance of local contexts facilitating a sense of safety, inclusion, and reliability. Furthermore, there exists a fundamental human need for belonging, and a lack of such can result in a psychological vulnerability to exploitation by any group that can offer acceptance and security. Such fundamental connectedness and affiliation with specific groups that compensate for the lack of security in one’s sociocultural context can transform into radicalized trajectories when directed toward an extremist ideology or perception (Borum, 2014). As such, the contextual embeddedness or life attachment relating to the experience of a manageable everyday life can provide important resilience to radicalization trajectories.

Various context-specific characteristics might further enhance an insecure life attachment and the associated vulnerability to radicalization. The Indian social system might appear more uncertain, thanks to a stricter social hierarchy and no governmental safety net, as compared to the welfare system in Denmark. Research controlling for economic and religious variables indicates that fatalistic beliefs, rigid gender roles, and greater tightness are cultural factors associated with acts of extremism (Gelfand, LaFree, Fahey, & Feinberg, 2013). This suggests that cultural values promoting rigid thinking could facilitate essentialist thinking and violent extremism. Radicalization as the process of developing extremist attitude and endorsement of violent extremism does not automatically develop into action related to acts of terrorism (Borum, 2014).

The results associating insecure life attachment with radicalization concur with cognate research within social psychology. For example, Hogg, Meehan, and Farquharson (2010) examined Australian students in an experiment manipulating self-uncertainty. Their results indicate that uncertainty shifts identification with moderate groupings to radical groups. That is, self-uncertainty together with the experience of threat to one’s endorsed attitudes, values, and practices emerge as
central psychological mechanisms that can direct people into extremism. Insecure life attachment within the local context will cause distress and motivate one to establish or reestablish a safe attachment, in turn developing a sentiment for profound societal changes; that sentiment might be directed toward, and shaped by, the transformative effects of globalization which can be experienced as a threat to stability, security, and ethnic identity within one’s local context.

**When the Local becomes Global**

In the era of globalization, hardly any local context avoids the influence of the transformative effects of cultural globalization. In this study, cultural globalization emerges as central phenomena underlying part of the relationship between insecure life attachment and extremist endorsement. As globalization transforms the local sociocultural context, it might not be solely the cultural threat from the influx of new cultural practices that challenges an individual sense of belonging and identity, in turn prompting essentialist thinking. Additionally, the accelerating and rapid local sociocultural change can cause the individual to feel marginalized and excluded (Arnett, 2002), initiating an essentialist endorsement of a romanticized past of heterogeneity, simplicity, and stability. That is, the globalized reaction of ethnic protection to an insecure life attachment can relate to an experience of cultural flux and heterogeneity that challenges the firm structures, congruity, and predictability of contemporary globalized societies. Such uncertainty enhanced by globalization can foster strong negative reactions to new transformative forces that are experienced as an intrusion from outside the local context. This can furthermore initiate processes of defensive localization in which others are abjected (Hermans & Dimaggio, 2007). Such localization can project the negativity of uncertainty toward out-group members who pose a threat to the essentialist perception of a secure context. Ariely (2011) found that globalization was indirectly related to xenophobia, since within more globalized countries, the relationship between nationalism and xenophobic attitudes toward immigrants increased.
The results in the present study only partially supported the second hypothesis of an indirect effect between insecure life attachment and extremism through multicultural acquisition. Such openness to new cultural influences was not significantly associated with both extremism and acceptance of illegal means. Extremism can take many forms and can include left-wing political factions as well as single-issue concerns such as animal rights (Doosje et al., 2016). Such types of extremist endorsement could in some cases be associated with multicultural acquisition, which has furthermore been related to a liberal political orientation (Chen et al., 2016). Additionally, individuals can also be open to new cultural influences and at the same time be concerned about their ethnicity during globalization.

In the present study, local processes and globalization have been analytically disentangled. However, in reality these two aspects are said to be merely two sides of the same phenomenon (Hermans & Dimaggio, 2007). Consequently, it is impossible to distinguish clearly between the localization and globalization processes influencing a given context. Research has found that globalization undermines attachment to national and local identities. In addition, a globalized identity of cosmopolitanism does not emerge automatically to fill this identification vacuum, suggesting that the local-global nexus is more complicated than a mere continuum (Wang, 2016). The concepts of ethnic protection and multicultural acquisition have been found to be moderately and negatively correlated (Chen et al., 2016). This was also reflected in the Danish sample in this study. However, in the Indian sample the correlation was positive, yet weak. This dissimilarity could relate to the Indian history of both ethnic endorsement and strong multicultural tradition. Furthermore, it is reflected in regard to an insignificant relationship between multicultural acquisition and extremism among the Indian sample and the significant relationship in the Danish sample; this could be ascribed to the cognitive dialectic thinking style prevalent in Asian cultures, including a greater tolerance for contradictions, ambiguities, and inconsistencies as compared to the
Western analytic thinking style (Chen, Benet-Martínez, Wu, Lam, & Bond, 2013). Consequently, cultural specificity is still highly important and appears to shape the manifestations of cultural globalization in addition to the universal psychological mechanisms underlying the association between local embeddedness and radicalized reactions to globalization.

Limitations and direction for future research

Several limitations and research opportunities should be mentioned in relation to this study. First, the study is limited by its cross-sectional data. Although important differences in life attachment are captured by the cross-national comparison, longitudinal or experimental data would provide further evidence of the causal relationship among life attachment, global orientation, and extremist attitude. Second, the data is attitudinal and does not indicate any relationship between extremist attitudes and extremist behavior. Future research could scrutinize this important relationship. Third, although invariance applied for all parameters in the indirect-effects model, scalar invariance for the fully disaggregated measures was limited, and consequently the latent mean could not be statistically compared across the two groups in this study. Nevertheless, the statistical analysis of variance applied in the indirect-effects model is still valid. Fourth, the use of certain Facebook groups for recruiting participants could have affected the representativeness of the two samples (e.g., most Danish participants were studying either psychology or medicine). Additionally, the sampling of a general population aims at examining universal psychological reactions; extending the findings within this study to an actually radicalized sample would strengthen the validity of the study. Fifth, a universal approach to the mechanisms of life attachment, global orientation, and extremism does not capture the actual content of these variables. Qualitative research is needed to further explore the cultural specificity of these general associations within the indirect effects model.
Conclusion

The present study scrutinizes and provides empirical support for the theoretical and historically observed relationships between globalization and extremism (Kinvall, 2004; Moghaddam, 2008). The cross-cultural mechanisms of globalized intercultural dynamics emphasize the importance of both globalization and localization in regard to radicalization. Especially salient is the importance of a secure life attachment as a prerequisite for positive and reflexive reactions, while an insecure life attachment can lead to radicalized ethnic protection as a negative and emotional reaction to cultural globalization.

The present study suggests that prevention of radicalization processes among the general population can be pursued by providing the possibility for a secure and reliable contextual embeddedness that does not exclude or marginalize individuals. Furthermore, resources such as metacognitive life skills that address handling a possible insecure life attachment and negotiation of globalized diversity could be empowered through interventions and dialogue (Ozer & Bertelsen, 2019). In conclusion, the local-global nexus is a dynamic site of identity construction, positioning, and essentializing with the risk of leading to radicalized pitfalls in regard to establishing a sense of self and sociocultural rootedness within the diversity of cultural globalization.
References


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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>India</th>
<th>Denmark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td>Range: 18–29 years, M = 25.56, SD = 2.51</td>
<td>Range: 18–29 years, M = 22.74, SD = 2.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender:</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>32.7%</td>
<td>71.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SES:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below average</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>5.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Just below average</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>65.7%</td>
<td>40.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Just above average</td>
<td>16.6%</td>
<td>29.1%</td>
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<td>Above average</td>
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<td>15.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Atheism</td>
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<td>30.5%</td>
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Table 2. Means and standard deviations for the measures across the two national groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>India</th>
<th>Denmark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Insecure life-attachment</td>
<td>4.39 (1.21)</td>
<td>1.78 (0.88)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multicultural acquisition</td>
<td>5.24 (0.79)</td>
<td>5.84 (0.69)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic protection</td>
<td>4.68 (0.93)</td>
<td>3.08 (0.83)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extremist attitude</td>
<td>4.62 (0.93)</td>
<td>1.92 (0.81)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accept of violent means</td>
<td>4.20 (1.00)</td>
<td>1.37 (0.80)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accept of illegal means</td>
<td>4.63 (1.21)</td>
<td>1.81 (1.07)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.</td>
<td>2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
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<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Insecure life-attachment</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.51**</td>
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<td>2. Multicultural acquisition</td>
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<td>.24**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Ethnic protection</td>
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<td>-.42**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Extremist attitude</td>
<td>.65**</td>
<td>-.19**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Accept of violent means</td>
<td>.54**</td>
<td>-.19**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Accept of illegal means</td>
<td>.47**</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. *p<.05; **p<.01. Results above the diagonal reflects the Indian sample and below are the Danish sample.
Table 4. Path estimates and confidence intervals for the indirect effects model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Insecure life attachment</th>
<th>Multicultural acquisition</th>
<th>Ethnic protection</th>
<th>Extremist attitude</th>
<th>Accept of violent means</th>
<th>Accept of illegal means</th>
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<tr>
<td>Age</td>
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<td>.38, .53</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>-.10, .10</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>-.03, .12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>-.39</td>
<td>-.47, -.30</td>
<td>.12*</td>
<td>.02, .23</td>
<td>-.00</td>
<td>-.07, .06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES</td>
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<td>-.07, .13</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>-.04, .10</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>-.06, .07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insecure life-attachment</td>
<td>-.19**</td>
<td>-.30, -.09</td>
<td>.72**</td>
<td>.65, .79</td>
<td>.55**</td>
<td>.45, .66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multicultural acquisition</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic protection</td>
<td>.35**</td>
<td>.25, .46</td>
<td>.19*</td>
<td>.06, .31</td>
<td>.24**</td>
<td>.11, .37</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total and specific indirect effects:</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Insecure life-attachment</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Through EP</td>
<td>.25**</td>
<td>.18, .33</td>
<td>.17**</td>
<td>.08, .26</td>
<td>.17**</td>
<td>.08, .26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. * marks $p<.05$ and ** marks $p<.001$; Gender: male coded as 1 and female as 2.
Figure 1. The results of the indirect effects analysis

Note. *p<.05; **p<.01