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Countering Radicalization: An Empirical Examination from a Life Psychological Perspective

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Abstract

Life Psychology has emerged as an integrative framework theory that has been applied in interventions preventing and countering radicalization processes. Central to this theory is the experience of living in a safe and secure sociocultural context, designated as life-attachment and conceptualized as a root cause of radicalization. Furthermore, the theory emphasizes the interplay between generic life tasks (e.g., participating in community activities) and skills (e.g., taking one's own and others' perspectives into consideration) through which the individual can develop and reach a good enough life-attachment. A deficiency in development of life skills is a risk factor as it functions as an underlying mechanism regarding the relationship between insecure life-attachment and extremism. Through cross-national samples from the U.S. ($n=322$) and Denmark ($n=364$), the present paper operationalizes and validates the central concepts of life skills and life-attachment. Furthermore, these measures are examined in a statistical model hypothesizing insecure life-attachment as a root cause in relation to violent extremism and deficient life skills as a risk factor. Consequently, the study draws attention to how generic life skills can be developed as a way of preventing and countering radicalization.

Keywords: Life Psychology, risk factors, radicalization, extremism, intervention

**Countering Radicalization: An Empirical Examination from a Life Psychological
Perspective**

Violent extremism has become a major challenge in contemporary societies, especially among youth (Bizina & Gray, 2014). Previous research has approached this societal challenge by investigating relevant psychological mechanisms and dynamics along with situational factors that might predict radicalized trajectories (Gøtzsche-Astrup, 2018). Although research within this field has been increasing, more empirical research is needed to inform and strengthen the preventive and counter-radicalization interventions derived from such theories (Schuurman, in press).

Life Psychology was developed as an integrative theory concerning the agentic and structural dimensions of the basic human life task of establishing, maintaining, and developing one's own and common life (Bertelsen, 2013). Concerning radicalization, Life Psychology has provided the theoretical foundation for the "Aarhus model" for preventing and countering violent extremism, which is, furthermore, an integrated part of the Danish national prevention strategy for radicalization (Bertelsen, 2015, McNeil-Wilson, 2017).

Psychological research on radicalization processes has emerged as a central and important field of research fueled by the attempt to understand and prevent devastating acts of terrorism (McCauly & Moskalkenko, 2017). Forty years of research on violent extremism and terrorism have not determined particular psychopathology, personality traits, circumstances such as anomy, and other social and societal conditions as isolated root causes; still, these factors might be moderating, and thus influencing, the radicalization process (Gill & Corner, 2017). Consequently, the fundamental circumstances characterizing violent extremism are relevant to the examination of the complex and multifaceted individual radicalization trajectories facilitated by social and societal forces (Webber & Kruglanski, 2018). Such conception of social and individual circumstances that influence change in an individual's moderate attitudes concerning society toward endorsement of extremism and violent

behavior resonates well with the Life Psychological emphasis on the interplay between human agency and structural life conditions.

The present paper is guided by the aim of testing the Life Psychological theory of radicalization. This aim is reached through (1) developing and validating adequate scales to measure the Life Psychological concepts of life-attachment and life skills, and (2) employing these measures to test the Life Psychological model of radicalization. Our plan is to strengthen the empirical grounding of Life Psychology and discuss the empirical support for the Life Psychological intervention for preventing and countering violent extremism. Through such a generic approach to elucidating the early root cause and risk factors of radicalization, we examine how an insecure life-attachment among young students can predict radicalized attitudes, and furthermore how individual development of general human life skills might moderate this relationship between insecure life-attachment and radicalization.

The Theory of Life Psychology

The theory of Life Psychology takes its point of departure in the acknowledgement of how the individual and society are mutually constitutive (Giddens, 1991). Within such a conception, Heidegger (1967) elaborated on the double character of intentionality: humans are directed toward the world (*intention*) and equally directed by the world (*intentum*). The directedness toward the world relates to how one shapes our everyday life as part of a community, while the directedness from the world concerns how one is shaped by everyday life, i.e., how one's thoughts, feelings, and motives are directed by what he or she meets and engages with in life. This mutual directedness is manifest within Life Psychology in the relationship between (1) agency, i.e., the agentic life skills that humans develop through life and use when managing the related fundamental life tasks, and (2)

structure, i.e., the general socioculturally embedded life tasks that every human needs to manage in life.

The agentic directedness toward the world comprises two aspects: “want” (the intentional formation of needs, wishes, and motivation), and “ability” (the intentional formation of cognitive capabilities or know-that, know-why, and know-how). That is, the individual must be motivated for and must develop the necessary cognitive abilities for reaching a good enough life. The intenum dimension of being directed *by* the external structures likewise comprises two aspects: “external conditions” (material, cultural and societal life conditions, and life possibilities) and “being met” (the social and relational aspects of being supported, helped, and acknowledged; Bertelsen, 2009, 2015, 2018). An adequate match between the agency and structure dimensions of life skills is needed for reaching an optimal degree of challenge and a satisfactory flow in life (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Bertelsen, 2015), which are fundamental for maintaining a good enough life. Consequently, the generic life skills emerge as pivotal in relation to negotiating adequately the challenges in life and, consequently, in relation to addressing the experiences of uncertainty and insecurity in life without resorting to extremist attitudes and behavior.

Conceptualizing Life Tasks and Life Skills

Life Psychology assumes that there are generic life tasks in the sense that they apply to all humans regardless of the specificity of their sociocultural context. The conception of such life tasks includes the everyday challenges and conditions that individuals must manage in a comprehensible and meaningful way (Antonovsky, 1987) in order to establish, maintain, and develop ones’ own and common life. Everyday life consists of small life tasks, for example, in the relational domain where we maintain good and close relationships with family, friends, and colleagues. Similarly, larger life choices are part of life, like starting a family or readjusting relationships among colleagues. Such

life tasks emerge in an infinite variation depending on age, culture, and society. Relationships with others can appear superficially different among tribes in the Kalahari Desert as compared to a large Scandinavian city such as Copenhagen. Likewise, there are clear differences in the relationships that develop among children in daycare as compared to the relationships in adolescence, which again prove different from relationships developed later in life. Yet, behind this infinite variation lies a general human need to belong (Baumeister & Leary, 1995); it is therefore a general life task to be able to form close relationships that satisfy such needs. Correspondingly, there is a general human need to establish satisfactory material conditions in life. In one part of the world, such conditions can refer to organizing work and leisure time, taking and picking up kids, searching for fresh organic vegetables in a supermarket, and agreeing on what programs to watch on television. In another part of the world the material conditions can concern finding protection from harsh weather, getting access to clean water, collecting enough food to survive, or protecting oneself and one's family against various militia. Again, fundamentally, general life tasks concern establishing the desired, as well as realistic, life conditions.

It is impossible to survey the myriad of concrete life tasks. Instead, we can identify and specify a set of general human and generic life tasks. In Life Psychology ten life tasks have been identified (Bertelsen, 2013). The life tasks concern participation in establishing, maintaining, and developing own and common lives by managing and organizing various tasks, by forming close relationships with others, and by being a part of cultural and societal communities. The life tasks also concern attuning to surroundings in accordance with reality, in regard to both physical and biological conditions and in regard to normative and moral principles, as well as practical planning to make it possible to live in accordance with these principles. Finally, the general life tasks concern the ability of mentalization to comprehend own and others' perspectives on life—that is, having self-knowledge to understand one's own desires in life and to understand how one's perspective of the good life

might be different from others' perspectives, as well as understanding the larger system by which we frame common life through laws, institutions, and discourses (Habermas, 1987).

Consequently, establishing, maintaining, and developing own and common life necessitates general human and generic life skills that can be employed when handling the corresponding life tasks. Therefore, there are ten life skills that matches the life tasks and they are described in more detail in Figure 1. All ten life skills are reflected in the four aspects of “want,” “ability,” “external conditions,” and “being met,” and, consequently, the two dimensions of agency and structure. This conception matches several key definitions of life skills within the psychological literature. Ryan and Deci (2000) defined life skills as the ability to effectively interact with the environment. According to UNICEF (2003), life skills enable people to make informed decisions, communicate effectively, and develop coping and self-regulation that help them live healthy and productive lives. Accordingly, WHO's (1999) conception of life skills stresses how they enable people to handle everyday challenges. In order to be willing and able to handle life tasks to the extent required for a good enough life, humans need to develop a corresponding set of adequate life skills. These skills can aid in participating in and attuning to context, as well as taking into perspective the great variety of individually and culturally formed endeavors for reaching a good enough life (Bertelsen, 2018). Research has associated life skills with psychological outcomes like well-being (Seligman 2002), self-efficacy (Banduara 2013), and goalsetting (Sun & Frese 2013).

The main goal in life is the establishment, maintenance, and development of a good and desirable life (Little, 1983; Emmons, 1989, Bertelsen 1994). Violent extremism can be understood as a special, dangerous, and illegal way of handling challenging life conditions and life tasks by either the individual or the group. There are numerous definitions of violent extremism and terrorism (Smidt, 2013). One consistent thread obvious across these definitions is an intense desire for comprehensive changes in life without any concern for human coexistence and in opposition to

democratic deliberative principles regarding different desires and perspectives on own and common life (Bertelsen 2018). We assume that managing the challenges in life with consideration for the community and in a deliberative way that disavow violent and illegal means requires a developed set of general and generic life skills. Consequently, in this study we hypothesize that deficiently developed life skills can lead to endorsement of violent extremism.

Conceptualizing Insecure Life-attachment

As mentioned, research has not yet established specific factors as root causes of violent extremism within the economical, sociological, or political domain. These factors could be considered as risk factors and perhaps moderators of some fundamental life conditions that can initiate radicalization trajectories. Additionally, it has proven so far impossible to establish as root causes certain factors and diagnoses within the psychiatric and clinical psychological domain, but again more likely as risk factors with a moderating effect (Gill & Corner 2017). Because violent extremism can be defined as an intense desire for comprehensive changes in own and common life, without concern for deliberative attunement with the societal community and by employing violent and illegal means, it is possible to identify root causes that motivate such an experience of life. In the Life Psychological framework theory, such violent extremist pursuit for a good life is associated with the concept of a good life-attachment. That is, the extremist quest for a good life is triggered by the root causes of insecure life-attachment.

The conception of a secure life-attachment expands from the sociological understanding of individuals being embedded in larger contexts (Polanyi, 1957; Bertelsen, 2018). Such embeddedness within the global and local societies and communities, and within social networks of friends and family, may pertain to a degree of secure or insecure attachment reflecting how individuals experience and find security and comfort in their sociocultural surroundings. The

conception of a secure life-attachment is furthermore extrapolated from classical psychological theories of how infants' attachment to caregivers provides a secure base from which exploration of the world as a safe place is communal with the possibility of returning to that secure base (Bowlby, 1988; Weber & Fredrico, 2007). The Life Psychological conception of life-attachment does not, however, refer to the relationship with the caregivers but is rather extended to capture the life conditions in which an individual is situated. As the concept of attachment is extended to the greater sociocultural context of the individual, an individual with a secure life-attachment will experience a fundamental trust comprising the comprehension of the world as a good place to be and the close social communities and networks as being predictable and reliable (Erikson, 1950). Such a secure life-attachment corresponds to a sense of ontological security, including confidence in order and coherence in the world and the possibility of living a meaningful life based on the freedom to choose one's conduct of life (Giddens, 1991; Laing, 1969). Finally, the concept of secure life-attachment relates to the overall discourses that constitute sense and security in the context of the individual, enabling agency within the individual and common life (Berger, 1967).

Within the theory of Life Psychology, a secure life-attachment is characterized by five criteria. These are generalized criteria as they refer to a psychosocial condition rather than specific affairs and circumstances. The five criteria are relevant both in regard to the material life conditions (job, education, economy, housing/environment) and in regard to lifestyle and culture (see Table 2). The first criterion concerns the need for safety and underlies various life situations and groupings. For example, the experience of safety in life is central for homeless people (to be able to live on the streets without fear of physical assault and abuse; Thomas Gray, & McGinty, 2012), for pupils in school (to attend class without fear of criminality and school shootings; Pentek & Eisenberg 2018), and for those living with severe diagnoses such as schizophrenia (Lloyd, Lloyd, & Fitzpatrick, 2017). Additionally, the experience of safety in life has been found to be central in dangerous life

contexts and neighborhoods (Campbell & Schwartz, 1996) and in regard to these children's physical activity (Carver, Timperio, & Crawford, 2008). Overall, it is essential in life to feel safe both at home and within one's local community (Allik & Kearns 2016). The second criterion of inclusion reflects how humans are embedded in social relationships. Social exclusion has been associated with negative life experiences among children and youth (Gross-Manos, 2017). In a literature review, Wesselman & Williams (2017) conclude that social exclusion understood as rejection- and ostracism-based experiences has a strong, negative impact on peoples' conditions for experiences. Furthermore, social inclusion has been found to be important in regard to maintaining an adequate quality of life in rural areas (Casini, Boncinelli, Constini, Gerini, & Scozzafava, 2018). The third criterion is the need for a reliable world. This need reflects a confidence in order and coherence in the world, which is a precondition for a good life (Giddens, 1991). Furthermore, it relates to Berger's (1997) "sacred canopy" with an overall discourse providing the experience of the world as stable and intelligible. The fourth criterion concerns the experience of life being fair. The experience of fairness has been found to predict adjustment among young people in carceral settings (Cesaroni & Peterson-Badali 2016); likewise, the belief in a just world (the world is seen as fair and people will be treated fairly) has been found to improve life satisfaction within several groups, e.g., students (Correia & Dalbert 2007). Indeed, the belief in distributional fairness has been found to be an important motivational factor in democratic decisions (Sauermann 2017). Furthermore, the experience of and the belief in fairness plays a crucial role in people's willingness to disregard own interests to promote collective life and interests (Ostrom, 2000). The fifth criterion concerns the relationship between a safe life-attachment and the experienced possibility for establishing, maintaining, and developing life conditions and a culture that provides happiness and satisfaction. Research on well-being has been concerned with either one's subjective feelings or experiences or the structure of the surrounding world. Longo, Coyne and Joseph (2017) list 14 aspects of well-

being: happiness, vitality, calmness, optimism, involvement, self-awareness, self-acceptance, self-worth, competence, development, purpose, significance, congruence, and connection. Others understand well-being as a condition of options for actions in life. WHO (2014) defines mental health and well-being as “a state in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community,” that is, a general experience of fluency in the path toward getting needs, desires, and hopes fulfilled.

Insecure life-attachment is the result of an individual perceiving life as being – to some extent – insecure, excluding, unreliable, unfair, and without proper opportunities needed for well-being (Bertelsen, 2018). Approaching the individual’s general contextual embeddedness, the life psychological conception of an insecure life-attachment aligns with and further expands the contextual domain of culture captured in cultural-attachment theory (Hong, Fang, Yang, & Phua, 2013). Such a concept of insecure life-attachment apprehends an important generic aspect of being socioculturally embedded, which along with individual agency reflects parts of the complex dynamic interplay between the individual and society central to radicalization processes. Based on this conception of life-attachment, we hypothesize that an insecure life-attachment is a root cause that can lead to endorsement of violent extremism.

The Life Psychological examination of radicalization processes

Experienced or factual societal insecurity and uncertainty among the normal population, restraining the individual from achieving a good enough life, emerge as possible root causes of radicalization. Everyone can experience an insecure life-attachment through threats that can emerge as unforeseen natural disasters or a loss in the family, or on the societal level through war, financial crisis, or sociocultural exclusion and discrimination. Such experience of an insecure life-attachment can motivate the individual to endorse comprehensive societal changes, which is a part of an

extremist attitude. The dynamics of life tasks and life skills relate to other established risk factors of violent extremism, such as cognitive insecurity regarding a sense of self and belonging (Hogg 2012, Hogg, Kruglanski, & van den Bos, 2013).

A fundamental human reaction to an insecure life-attachment would be to seek restoration by means of one's general human life skills. However, if such re-attachment is distorted by individual (e.g., underdeveloped, dysfunctional, or misinformed life skills) or societal obstruction (e.g., political oppression), people with an insecure life-attachment might resort to extremism, employing illegal and/or violent means. This relationship between an insecure life-attachment and radicalization is consequently moderated by several socio-cognitive and social risk factors (Bertelsen, 2016). Among various relevant risk factors for radicalization are the development level of one's life skills employed to maintain a secure life-attachment and address challenges of such an attachment. Within this framework theory, an insecure life-attachment emerges as a root cause and deficient life skills emerge as a risk factor for the individual development of an extremist desire for profound changes in one's life and in society (see Figure 1). In the current study, we combine the previously stated hypotheses by examining insecure life-attachment as a root cause of violent extremist endorsement, which is further moderated by the development level of one's life skills.

Current study

The current study aims to develop the measures needed for an empirical Life Psychological examination of radicalization mechanisms and furthermore test such a model by employing these generic attitudinal measures within relevant samples of a normal population. First, a measure of life-attachment and life skills were developed. Second, these measures were validated for their statistical properties, and third, the measures were examined in regard to the Life Psychological model of radicalization.

In order to test the Life Psychological model of radicalization, we hypothesized that an insecure life-attachment would predict an extremist attitude, and furthermore that the degree of life skills development would moderate the relationship between insecure life-attachment and extremism, providing empirical support for empowering life skills in preventive and counter-radicalization interventions.

Methods

Operationalizing the Theory of Life Psychology: Developing Items for the Life-Attachment Scale and the Life Skills Scale

The current study includes an operationalization of the central concepts within the Life Psychology, particularly life-attachment and life skills. Thus, we tapped into respondents' individual self-report of their level of insecure life-attachment and deficient life skills. The scales were developed in accordance with the criteria for establishing sound psychometric properties (Robinson Shaver, & Wrightsman, 1991) by clearly founding operationalization on solid theoretical work delineated in the introduction.

The two scales were termed (1) Life-Attachment Scale (LAS; see Table 3) and (2) Life Skills Scale (LSS; see Table 4). Both were developed based on the theory of Life Psychology and previous empirical work related to this theory (Bertelsen, 2015). The items for LAS were developed as an aggregate measure encapsulating the two aspects of (a) material life conditions (e.g., job, education, finances, and well-being) and (b) lifestyle and culture. In accordance with the theoretical background, the items for each domain were developed in regard to five criteria: (1) a sense of security; (2) an experience of inclusion; (3) a sense of reliability and control; (4) a sense of well-being in regard to needs and life expectations; and, (5) a sense of fairness in society.

The Life Skills Scale was developed around the distinction among the four aspects of “want,” “ability,” “external conditions,” and “being met,” reflecting the dynamic relationship between the overall dimensions of individual agency and sociocultural contextual structures. These four aspects were represented by items pertaining to each of the ten life skills related to (1) relations, (2) framework, (3) community, (4) attentiveness, (5) pragmatics, (6) ethics, (7) awareness, (8) reflection, (9) empathy, and (10) navigation.

Subsequently, the original item pool was reviewed by a panel of relevant researchers to evaluate each item’s clarity and conciseness and to confirm that each was theoretically meaningful. The revised item pool was then examined and discussed within a focus group interview with university students regarding wordiness and clarity, to secure that the items were tapping into the phenomenon we were attempting to measure. Finally, the scales were translated from Danish to English using a back translation procedure (Brislin, 1986).

Participants

Participants were 686 students: 364 were high school students in Denmark ($M_{age}=17.93$, $SD=0.87$) and 322 were high school or college students from the U.S. ($M_{age}=18.54$, $SD=1.17$). Within the Danish sample, 65.7% percent were female, 33.2% were male, and 1.1% did not wish to report gender. Correspondingly, 65.9% of the U.S. sample were female, 33.0% were male, and 1.1% did not wish to indicate gender. In the Danish sample, 93.7% were born in Denmark, while 95% of the U.S. sample were born in the U.S.

All data was collected through an online questionnaire. The Danish sample consisted of students at high schools located within the municipality of Aarhus, and the students answered the questionnaire in class under teacher supervision. The U.S. sample was reached through a research

service company and participants were dispersed across the country. Only the U.S. students were compensated for participating.

To examine the construct validity of LAS and LSSI, additional data was collected online through Amazon Mechanical Turk. The 180 participants in this sample were all American college students ($M_{age}=22.67$, $SD=1.97$). Within this sample, 57.2% percent were male, and 42.8% were female. This sample was used solely to examine correlations between LAS, LSS, and criterion measures.

Measurements

Besides background information asking about age, gender, and country of birth, the questionnaire contained six self-report scales:

Life-Attachment Scale (LAS) described above includes 14 items tapping into the individual's lack of a sense of security within one's sociocultural context in regard to both material conditions and in regard to lifestyle and culture. All items were answered on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from (1) *Strongly disagree* to (7) *Strongly agree* (see Table 3 for a complete list of items and see Table 5 for means and reliability).

Life Skills Scale (LSS) comprises 40 items pertaining to insufficiently developed life skills divided across the four aspects of "want," "ability," "external conditions," and "being met." Each of the ten life skills are then represented with one item within each aspect. Responses are scored on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from (1) *Strongly disagree* to (7) *Strongly agree* (see Table 4 for a complete list of items and see Table 5 for means and reliability).

Extremism Scale (ES; Ozer & Bertelsen, 2018) consists of unidimensional 14-item scale that taps into both a strong desire for comprehensive personal and societal change (six items) and aspects of intolerance (eight items). Responses are scored on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from (1) *Strongly*

disagree to (7) *Strongly agree*. A sample item reads, “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 $\alpha=.92$.

Pro-violence and Illegal Acts in Relation to Extremism Scale (PIARES; Ozer & Bertelsen, 2018) includes six items pertaining to accepting the use of violence and six matching items relating to the acceptance of using illegal means in relation to extremism. All items were answered through a 7-point Likert scale ranging from (1) *Strongly disagree* to (7) *Strongly agree*. Sample items include “Using physical violence is the only thing that really works when it is a matter of ...creating a new and better society.” Internal consistency was good with $\alpha=.92$ for the pro-violence subscale and $\alpha=.92$ for the pro-illegal acts subscale.

Within the dataset employed to examine construct validity, the following scales were included in addition to LAS and LSS:

General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE; Schwarzer, & Jerusalem, 1995) measures the individuals’ belief in their ability to achieve goals. The scale comprises ten items and yielded good reliability with Cronbach’s alpha $\alpha=.89$. The items were answered through a 4-point Likert scale ranging from (1) *Not at all true* to (4) *Exactly true*. A sample item reads, “I can usually handle whatever comes my way.”

Self-Determination Scale (SDS; Sheldon, Ryan, & Reis, 1996) assesses individual differences in how people function in a self-determined way. Reliability for the scale was good with Cronbach’s alpha $\alpha=.85$. The scale includes ten items that each comprise two (A and B) statements. The scale is answered through a 5-point Likert scale whether (1) *Only A feels true* or (5) *Only B feels true*.

Sample items include: (A) “I do what I do because it interests me” and (B) “I do what I do because I have to.”

Intolerance of Uncertainty Scale (IUS-12; Carleton, Norton, & Asmundson, 2007) measures responses to uncertainty, ambiguous situations, and the future. The scale consists of 12 items and yielded excellent reliability with Cronbach's $\alpha=.92$. All items were answered on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from (1) *Not at all characteristic of me* to (5) *Entirely characteristic of me*. A sample item reads, "Uncertainty keeps me from living a full life."

Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS; Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985) is a measure of global life satisfaction. The scale consists of five items and yielded good internal consistency with Cronbach's $\alpha=.88$. All items were answered on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from (1) *Strongly disagree* to (7) *Strongly agree*. Sample items include, "So far I have gotten the important things I want in life."

Results

The aim of the analyses was to test the Life Psychological model of radicalization through validating and employing measures of life-attachment and life skills.

Analytic Plan

The analytic plan includes five steps. First, factor analysis was employed to examine and validate the factor structure of LAS and LSS. Second, the two scales were examined for statistical invariance across the two cultural contexts in order to establish equivalence as well as the generic qualities of these measures. Third, the construct validity was examined through correlation analysis of LAS, LSS, and relevant criteria scales. Fourth, the new scales were employed in a moderation analysis to test whether insufficient life skills moderate the relationship between insecure life-attachment and extremist attitudes.

Analysis of the Internal Structure of the LAS and LSS

To examine and validate the internal structure of the two Life Psychological scales, we employed an EFA/CFA procedure with the total sample divided, completely by random, into two subsamples. These two subsamples did not differ in relation to country of residence, $t(684.47) = -0.12, p = .91, d = .01$.

First, we used the first subsample to inspect the factor structure, without any presumptions of the scale structure, employing an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA). To determine the number of factors to extract, Parallel Analysis (PA) was employed (O'Connor, 2000). Within PA, the factors generated with the real dataset was compared with factors generated from a random-number dataset to secure that the real data provided larger eigenvalues than what would be expected from chance. Results indicated a one-factor structure for the Life-Attachment Scale and a four-factor structure for the Life Skills Scale. Principal axis factoring was then used, employing promax rotation ($Kappa = 4$), to examine the factor structure of both the LAS and the LSS. The results of the EFA yielded a good Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy ($KMO = .95$ for LAS and $KMO = .94$ for LSS). The item loadings in the LAS were all within the acceptable range ($> .4$), ranging from .64 to .82 (see Table 3). In relation to the LSS, the four factors established in the EFA reflected the division between the four aspects of “want,” “ability,” “external conditions,” and, “being met” with acceptable loadings ranging between .40 and .89 with no item loading above .30 on more than one factor (see Table 4).

Next, we sought to validate the factor structure achieved from the EFA employing a Confirmative Factor Analysis (CFA) on the second subsample. The CFA was conducted in Mplus 8 (Muthén & Muthén, 1998-2011) employing maximum likelihood estimation with robust standard errors. To evaluate model fit, we used Kline's (2012) guidelines: 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, for comparing nested models, Δ CFI \leq .01 and Δ RMSEA \leq .01 were employed as guidelines.

The one-factor structure of LAS indicated acceptable model fit, $\chi^2(77)=247.50, p<.001$; CFI=.90; SRMR=.05; RMSEA=.08. Item loadings ranged from .67 to .86, confirming that the LAS items tap into one common factor. Additionally, we tested LAS in a second order CFA to determine whether the scale could work as an aggregate measure as well as reflecting the two aspects of 1) material conditions and 2) lifestyle and culture. This change improved the model fit, $\chi^2(75)=223.41, p<.001$; CFI=.92; SRMR=.05; RMSEA=.08, indicating that LAS can be employed as an aggregate measure or as two highly correlated sub-scales, $r=.87$. As a consequence of this high correlation between the two subscales, the aggregate score was employed in our main analyses. However, other samples from other contexts might establish a clearer distinction between the material condition aspect and the lifestyle and culture aspect of life-attachment. The LSS was likewise examined as a second order CFA with both agency factors of “want” and “ability,” as well as the two structure factors of “external conditions” and “being met” loading onto two superordinate factors of general life skills. The model provided acceptable model fit, $\chi^2(735)=1173.79, p<.001$; CFI=.93; SRMR=.05; RMSEA=.04. However, the factor loadings ranged from .22 to .87 with one item (“want” in relation to maintaining community involvement) dropping below what would be considered an acceptable threshold. Still, this item yielded an acceptable loading in the EFA and was consequently retained in the scale in order to maintain the theoretical symmetry of the scale construct. This second order CFA confirms the four-factor structure of the scale as well as the applicability of using the scale as two overall aggregate measures for the agency and structure dimensions of life skills.

Consistency across Cultural Contexts

The Life-Attachment Scale and Life Skills Scale were developed to measure generic processes pertaining to the individual's everyday life within a given context. Consequently, they require cross-cultural equivalence in their psychometric properties. Accordingly, scalar invariance was examined across the two cultural contexts of the Danish and American samples.

First, LAS was examined across the two cultural samples indicating adequate fit, $\chi^2(154)=477.74, p<.001$; CFI=.91; SRMR=.05; RMSEA=.08. Loadings within the Danish sample ranged from .51 to .76 and from .70 to .84 within the U.S. sample. This unconstrained model was then compared against a constrained model with factor loadings set equally across the two locations (metric invariance) which yielded inconclusive results, $\Delta\chi^2(14)=-84.98, p<.01, \Delta\text{CFI}=.018$; $\Delta\text{RMSEA}=.009$. Consequently, we examined each item for invariance across site by constraining one loading at a time and examining ΔCFI and ΔRMSEA . As a result, none of the loadings was found to violate the assumption of invariance. Next, we compared the equal-factors-model against a constrained model with both factor loadings and intercepts constrained equal (scalar invariance), which yielded significant differences in some of the fit indices, $\Delta\chi^2(14)=-120.97, p<.01, \Delta\text{CFI}=.025$; $\Delta\text{RMSEA}<.005$. Again, we examined each scale-item for invariance across site by constraining one intercept at a time and found that six of the individual intercepts violated the assumption of invariance. Consequently, we can only claim partial scalar invariance across these two specific contexts. However, with the majority of the factor intercepts being invariant, the latent mean is estimated reliably, and the means can still be meaningfully compared across countries (Steenkamp & Baumgartner, 1998).

Second, we examined LSS across the Danish and American sample which indicated an adequate fit, $\chi^2(1472)=2490.78, p<.001$; CFI=.92; SRMR=.06; RMSEA=.05. Loadings within the Danish sample ranged from .22 to .88 and within the U.S. sample from .53 to .89. In the Danish sample, the item representing the dimension of "want" in relation to maintaining community

involvement loaded poorly (.22). We then examined for metric invariance across the two sites which did not violate the assumption of invariance, $\Delta\chi^2(44)=155.44$, $p<.01$, $\Delta CFI=.009$; $\Delta RMSEA=.002$. Testing for scalar invariance did, however, yield inconclusive results, $\Delta\chi^2(40)=463.18$, $p<.01$, $\Delta CFI=.026$; $\Delta RMSEA=.005$. Therefore, we examined each scale-item for invariance across site by constraining one intercept at a time, and none of the paths was found to violate the assumption of invariance (ΔCFI & $\Delta RMSEA \leq .01$). Thus, the LSS was validated in regard to cross-cultural equivalence.

Construct Validity

Next, we examined construct validity for LAS and LSS through bivariate correlations with proximal and well-established criterion measures. These correlation analyses indicate whether the relationship between the developed measures of life-attachment and life skills relates to established measures as expected, allowing us to test the criterion-related validity of the scales. For criteria validity, we hypothesized that deficiently developed life skills in regard to both the agency and structure dimensions would correlate negatively with self-efficacy and self-determination reflecting the possible challenges of being committed to and able to solve everyday life tasks. Additionally, insecure life-attachment was expected to correlate positively with intolerance of uncertainty and negatively with satisfaction with life, reflecting a sensitivity to contextual challenges and the associated implications for life satisfaction.

As hypothesized, deficient life skills measured through LSS were, as expected, positively and significantly associated with self-efficacy ($r_{\text{agency}}=-.37$, $p<.01$ and $r_{\text{structure}}=-.33$, $p<.01$) and self-determination ($r_{\text{agency}}=-.46$, $p<.01$ and $r_{\text{structure}}=-.45$, $p<.01$). Furthermore, the LSS exhibited expected significant correlations among the four subscales ranging from $r=.37$ to $r=.77$, reflecting these four aspects as distinct facets of the overall conception of life skills as an aggregate multidimensional construct. LAS measuring the experience of an insecure life-attachment correlated positively and

significantly with deficient life skills (both agency $r=.55, p<.01$ and structure $r=.64, p<.01$) measured through LSS, possibly reflecting how an insecure life-attachment could lead to poorly developed life skills and how deficient life skills could impair one's relationship and attachment with the sociocultural context. Additionally, insecure life-attachment was positively and significantly associated with intolerance of uncertainty ($r=.32, p<.01$) and negatively and significantly related to satisfaction with life ($r=.20, p<.01$). These associations between the Life Psychological scales and the criterion scales enhances the construct validity.

Testing the Life Psychological Model of Radicalization

With this initial validation of the Life Psychological scales of life-attachment and life skills, we subsequently proceeded to examine the hypothesized model of deficient life skills, moderating the relationship between insecure life-attachment and radicalization (see Table 5 for correlation matrix). In this study, radicalization was examined as an extremist attitude and acceptance of using illegal and/or violent means in relation to extremism (Ozer & Bertelsen, 2018). The moderation analysis was conducted employing Hayes' (2013) PROCESS macro (Model 1) using the whole sample of participants. In all the moderation analyses, we controlled for the impact of country of residence in order to reach generic results.

Concerning extremist attitudes, we first examined a moderation model employing the aggregate measures of LSS agency and structure dimensions. The overall model for LSS_{agency} yielded a significant model fit to the data, $F(4, 652)=62.05, p<.001, R^2=.29$. Within this model, both insecure life-attachment ($b=.30, 95\%CI [0.23, 0.37]$) and deficient life skills ($b=.29, 95\%CI [0.21, 0.37]$) were positive and significant predictors of extremist attitude. Furthermore, deficient life skills had a moderating effect on the relationship between insecure life-attachment and extremism, $b=0.08, 95\%CI [0.02, 0.12], t(652)=3.18, p=.002$. That is, with less deficient life skills (1 *SD* below the

mean), the level of insecure life-attachment increased the level of extremist attitudes ($b=0.19$, $p=.002$, 95%CI [0.07, 0.31]). This effect was stronger at relatively high-level deficient life skills (1 SD above the mean): $b=0.39$, $p<.001$, 95%CI [0.30, 0.48]. Overall, the pattern reveals that life skills moderate the relationship between life-attachment and extremism in that deficient life skills increased the level of extremist attitudes, while this effect was strongest for those relatively high in deficient life skills. However, deficiency in the structure dimension of life skills did not have a moderating effect on the relationship between insecure life-attachment and extremism, $b=0.04$, 95%CI [-0.02, 0.08], $t(652)=1.55$, $p=.123$. Next, as post hoc tests we compartmentalized the four aspects of life skills in a series of moderation analyses to determine which aspect would be significant vis-à-vis the moderation effect. As illustrated in Figure 2, both the “want” and “ability” aspects of life skills provided a significant moderation effect.

The abovementioned steps were repeated in regard to accepting violent means in relation to extremism. The overall model employing the aggregate LSS_{agency} as a moderating variable provided a significant fit, $F(4, 657)=37.29$, $p<.001$, $R^2=.20$. Again, insecure life-attachment ($b=.28$, 95%CI [0.14, 0.30]) and deficient life skills ($b=.31$, 95%CI [0.21, 0.41]) were positive and significant predictors of accepting violent means. Additionally, deficient life skills moderated the association between insecure life-attachment and accepting violent extremism, $b=0.11$, 95%CI [0.03, 0.16], $t(657)=3.60$, $p<.001$. In particular, with less deficient life skills (1 SD below the mean) the level of insecure life-attachment increased the level of extremist attitudes ($b=0.16$, $p=.015$, 95%CI [0.03, 0.29]). This effect was stronger at a higher level of deficient life skills (1 SD above the mean): $b=0.31$, $p<.001$, 95%CI [0.33, 0.57]. Overall, the pattern reveals that life skills moderate the relationship between life-attachment and the acceptance of violent extremism in that deficient life skills increased the level of accepting violence in relation to extremism, while this effect was strongest for those relatively high in deficient life skills. Using the $LSS_{structure}$ as a moderating

variable also provided a significant fit, $F(4, 657)=24.50, p<.001, R^2=.16$. Insecure life-attachment ($b=.16, 95\%CI [0.06, 0.25]$) and deficient life skills ($b=.28, 95\%CI [0.16, 0.39]$) were positive and significant predictors of accepting violent means. Nevertheless, deficient life skills did not moderate the association between insecure life-attachment and accepting violent extremism, $b=0.03, 95\%CI [0.01, 0.16], t(657)=0.76, p=.448$. Post hoc tests with compartmentalization of the LSS subscales revealed that the LSI aspects of “want” and “ability” were the only significant moderators (see Figure 3).

Finally, regarding acceptance of illegal means in relation to extremism, the overall model employing the aggregate LSS_{agency} yielded a significant fit to the data, $F(4, 655)=38.04, p<.001, R^2=.19$. According to this model both LAS ($b=.34, 95\%CI [0.25, 0.44]$) and LSS_{agency} ($b=.28, 95\%CI [0.18, 0.38]$) were significant predictors of accepting the use of illegal means. However, LSS_{agency} did not moderate the relationship between insecure life-attachment and accepting illegal means in relation to extremism, $b=0.5, 95\% CI [-0.03, 0.12], t(655)=1.51, p=.132$. Additionally, the employment of the aggregate $LSS_{structure}$ yielded a significant fit to the data, $F(4, 655)=38.04, p<.001, R^2=.20$. Again, both LAS ($b=.23, 95\%CI [0.13, 0.34]$) and $LSS_{structure}$ ($b=.35, 95\%CI [0.24, 0.47]$) were significant predictors of accepting the use of illegal means. As in the previous analysis, $LSS_{structure}$ did not moderate the relationship between insecure life-attachment and accepting illegal means in relation to extremism, $b=0.03, 95\%CI [-0.04, 0.09], t(655)=0.91, p=.364$. Accordingly, the post hoc analyses illustrated in Figure 3 did not yield any significant interaction effects (see Figure 4).

Discussion

Through a series of moderation analyses, we found that both insecure life-attachment and deficient life skills were significant predictors of central aspects of an extremist mindset.

Furthermore, the development level of the agency dimension of life skills was a significant moderator of the relationship between insecure life-attachment and extremist attitudes and acceptance of violent means. These findings indicate that more developed life skills can play a central role vis-à-vis perceiving one's context as an insecure and unjust place and addressing this insecurity through either civil or radicalized trajectories. Overall, our results provide preliminary support for the Life Psychological theory of radicalization. Furthermore, our findings of small-to-moderate effects indicate that additional variables are important in comprehending the underlying mechanisms of extremist attitudes. This is discussed in relation to psychological approaches for studying radicalization and their implications, along with important limitations and opportunities for future research.

Examining the Root Causes and Psychological Mechanisms of Radicalization

Various approaches to examining central psychological mechanisms of radicalization are converging in various ways as they share fundamental conceptions such as the experience of uncertainty, loss of significance, and social identity processes (Gøtzsche-Astrup, 2018). With a widespread assumption that radicalization can be captured as generic processes or pathways which might emerge among the normal population (Borum, 2012; Horgan, 2008) across diverse groupings and ideological concerns (Doosje et al., 2016), a focus on social processes has been emphasized (Webber & Kruglanski, 2018). The theory of Life Psychology coincides with these perspectives through a generic focus on the continuous interaction between the individual and his or her context. This interaction provides valuable insights to supplement current understanding of the complex phenomena of radicalization.

Within Life Psychology, radicalization is conceptualized as a process toward a position of extremism that is initiated and maintained by some fundamental psychological factors and

disruptive conditions in life, which is reflected in the conception of an insecure life-attachment. In classical attachment research, a safe interpersonal attachment has been associated with viewing the world as less competitive and less dangerous and in turn with a view of the world as a harmonious place, which furthermore reduces right-wing authoritarianism and hierarchically structured intergroup relations (Weber & Fredrico, 2007). A secure attachment system has furthermore been found to alleviate negative reactions to outgroup members and to reduce perceptions of threat from such outgroups (Koleva & Rip, 2009). Such tolerance and openness toward others emerge as the antipode of extremist attitudes. While the interpersonal relationships have been found to be relevant for the individual in regard to radicalization, the experience of how one is situated within the sociocultural context emerges as a key factor in our research through the concept of insecure life-attachment.

According to Doosje et al. (2016), the central factors within the initiative phase of radicalization are the feelings of insignificance, uncertainty, and injustice toward one's group along with social influence and the accelerating dynamics of globalization processes. The quest for significance can form a universal underlying motivation for radicalization through the importance of mattering to and obtaining respect from others (Kruglanski et al., 2014). Such aspects of meaning, competence, and control in life relate to the Life Psychological conception of reaching a meaningful life in which one is competent to employ one's life skills to solve various life tasks (Bertelsen, 2018). An insecure life-attachment relates to a loss of significance in which one's embeddedness in society is challenged, which could include the experience of discrimination and humiliation, thus initiating attempts to gain significance through radicalized trajectories (Kruglanski et al., 2014). In our study, such endorsement of extremist attitudes was clearly associated with one's feeling of being securely embedded within one's context and having developed the appropriate life

skills needed to reach such feelings of competence and control required for maintaining one's sense of significance.

Feelings of uncertainty relate to group processes and globalization through the dynamics of confirmation bias and social identity (Hogg et al., 2013). Concurring with Life Psychology, frustration stemming from uncertainty and insecurity about one's possibilities and social embeddedness are central initiating factors of radicalization reflected in the association between life-attachment and extremist attitudes. Uncertainty can relate specifically to the life skills of perspective taking. These skills include the conception of deficient development of a metacognitive understanding of one's own and others' thinking, and the societal organization as well as cultural values surrounding the individual, which can give rise to a sense of uncertainty (Bertelsen, 2018).

The Life Psychological approach to research on extremism relates to other theories examining common factors in describing the root causes and underlying psychological mechanisms of radicalization. Such common factors can be categorized as normal, adaptive social-motivational mechanisms— that is, “normal reactions to abnormal situations” (Gøtzsche-Astrup, 2018, p. 95). As such, the research field of a generic psychology of radicalization could be extended toward a quasi-experimental setup and toward inclusion of high-risk populations that experience actual and significant threats to their life-attachment. With the strengthening of empirical support, the theoretical developments can provide an important foundation for interventions aimed to prevent or counter radicalization processes.

Implications: The Possibility for Preventive and Counterradicalization Interventions

By empirically identifying root causes of radicalization it becomes possible to point out which general life challenges a mentor and mentee intervention could address, namely the life conditions encapsulated in the concept of life-attachment. That is, our results provide good reasons for

addressing an insecure life-attachment and how such a life-attachment can be negotiated and dealt with in a non-violent and legal way via the development of life skills. Specifically, interaction between a mentor and a mentee can support the individual in overcoming everyday challenges or perhaps changing a problematic life trajectory through (1) identifying a challenge and setting a goal that can be part of a solution for this challenge; (2) empowering one toward developing relevant life skills needed to reach this specific goal; and, (3) establishing concrete steps needed to reach this goal. Such discussion addresses both the concrete challenges in everyday life as well as the need to develop the metacognitive skillset and agency necessary to address general challenges in life and to navigate in a dynamically changing world (for a more detailed description of such intervention, see Bertelsen, 2018).

Participating in contemporary dynamic and globalized societies characterized by a decline in normative traditions and life trajectories – that is, less support from the sociocultural structure—introduces great challenges and general life tasks for establishing a secure and meaningful sociocultural embeddedness. In regard to this, development of general life skills could be one way of empowering the individual and mitigating the risks of radicalization.

Limitations and future considerations

Our study provides preliminary support for a generic framework approach to radicalization. However, the study includes several important limitations and suggestions for future research. First, sampling a normal population could limit the external validity in regard to whether it would be possible to reach similar results in a population at risk for radicalization. Replication of our findings in more diverse contexts and samples would strengthen the Life Psychological model of radicalization.

Second, our attitudinal study is based on a generic approach to extremist mindsets. Consequently, we have no evidence that endorsement of violent means in relation to extremism could transform into actual radicalized behavior. Additionally, our measurement does not capture the objective context including factual threats to one's life-attachment. Future research could test the applicability of this generic model among radicalized individuals or in specific contexts with higher threats to one's life-attachment. Furthermore, such examination could include the specificity of such radicalization trajectories, that is examining (1) the extremist ideology and the use of one's life skills in an extremist direction, and (2) the personal factors such as traits and upbringing conditions that might shape the way an insecure life-attachment is addressed and provide a cognitive vulnerability for endorsing extremist ideology through, for example, a need for cognitive closure.

Third, cross-sectional data does not allow us to establish any causality in the model. Further longitudinal and experimental research is needed to strengthen the empirical foundation of radicalization research and to establish the directionality of the relevant psychological mechanisms of radicalization (Gøtzsche-Astrup, 2018; Schuurman, in press).

Fourth, our statistical effects were small to moderate and only the two aspects of "want" and "ability" emerged as significant moderators in the tested model. This could be due to the moderate correlation between life-attachment and the structure aspects of life skills ($r=.47$ & $r=.58$). Consequently, a replication study could provide additional support for our model and perhaps extend to other relevant risk factors of radicalization. Additionally, future development of the LSS could emphasize the agency dimension of life skills, shifting the focus toward the importance of the capability to make choices and act in a given society.

Conclusion

Our study found that life skills moderate the relationship between an insecure life-attachment and aspects of extremism, which provides preliminary support for the Life Psychological approach to understanding and addressing radicalization processes. This model corresponds to and supplements other approaches addressing generic sociopsychological dynamics to comprehend central root causes and risk factors. Fundamentally, attaining a secure, manageable, and good enough life is central for (de)radicalization trajectories, and this can be addressed by developing the life skills necessary to reaching a balanced sociocultural embeddedness.

Addressing the societal challenge of radicalization through interventions that empower the individual's agency based on well-developed and well-formatted general human life skills required for functioning within a given sociocultural context could be one fundamental way for vulnerable individuals experiencing an insecure life-attachment to reach an acceptable life. Even though life-attachment might be experienced as – and in fact might be – insecure, such skills would equip the individual to engage in societal improvement in a manner that proves respectful to others and to their conduct of life. We hope that our study contributes to the important quest of establishing an empirically founded psychology of radicalization.

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Table 1. An overview of the general human life tasks and life skills in terms of Life Psychology

Task / Skill	Skill description	Example
Relation	The relational skill belongs in the category of participation. This skill is about close social relationships. It enables one to participate actively in creating, maintaining, and developing significant social and personal relationships.	E.g., relationship to family, friends, and colleagues
Framework	The framework skill belongs in the category of participation. This skill is about the basic material framework and activities constituting one's life. It enables one to participate actively in creating, maintaining, and developing the framework and activities that are necessary to balance one's everyday life in private, at work, and projects, according to one's own interests.	E.g., an overview of time and tasks that must be done
Community	The community skill belongs in the category of participation. This skill is about making a difference when it comes to the greater good. It enables one to participate in creating, maintaining, and developing one or more communities in one's own personal way.	E.g., do volunteer job, do something for your community
Attentiveness	The attentiveness skill belongs in the category of realistic attunement. This skill is about being present and being focused on, as well as absorbed and engaged in something. Furthermore, it is about assimilation/accommodation regarding the concrete situation or activity one is part of.	E.g., to focus on what you are doing, not letting yourself be disturbed
Planning	The planning skill belongs in the category of realistic attunement. This skill is about creating an overview of what needs to be done to find the most efficient way to reach that goal. It is about what milestones are to be achieved on the way to the goal. It may be necessary to identify and overcome some obstacles (either in one's surroundings or created by oneself).	E.g., a plan of every step toward the goal and how to overcome obstacles
Norm-value	The norm-value skill belongs in the category of realistic attunement. This skill is about assessing whether what one is doing or what one is part of is in accordance with his or her personal norms and values.	E.g., how to take action and behave in an acceptable way
Awareness	The awareness skill belongs in the category of metallization (perspective taking). This skill is about using one's senses in relation to the perceptions coming from the surrounding world (sounds, visual impressions, people's body language or nonverbal communications) and sensations or affects in one's own body (not intentions and thoughts, but affects, body posture, etc.).	E.g. to sense the body language of others or sensation in one's own body

Contemplation	The contemplation skill belongs in the category of metallization (perspective taking). This skill is about taking into perspective one's own thoughts, feelings, and motivation in a given situation, or perspective on one's own and our common lives in general.	E.g., to find out what you yourself think, feel, and want
Empathy	The empathy skill belongs in the category of metallization (perspective taking). This skill is about taking into perspective other people's thoughts, feelings, and motivation in a given situation, or their perspective on their own and our common lives.	E.g., to understand what other people think, feel, and want
System	The system skill belongs in the category of metallization (perspective taking). This skill is about seeing the world (nature, culture, society) and life from a System perspective (laws, regulations, institutions, procedures, as well as scientific and cultural discourses). It enables one to comply with, and deliberate critically and innovatively on, the transaction between the System and the lived lifeworld.	E.g., to relate to certain rules, conditions, procedures, or explanations

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Table 2. An overview and description of the five criteria for a secure life-attachment

Criteria	Description in regard to life-attachment
Safe (without fear of hostile or destructive intrusion).	Life cannot be experienced as good enough if one incessantly experiences the danger of criminality, violence, repression, or abuse. Overall, a secure life-attachment would be threatened if one experienced threats to personal material conditions or lifestyle and culture.
Inclusive (without fear of being excluded from the community).	Inclusion concerns the experience of acceptance and tolerance among citizens in a society regarding equitable civil participation. Inclusion can be understood by its antipode exclusion, which concerns deprivation of basic citizen rights, equitable access to material resources, and acceptance of lifestyle and culture.
Reliable (without fear of sudden and unwanted changes in the fundamental values of life).	A good enough life is founded on the experience of control in regard to establishing, maintaining, and developing one's material life condition and preferences for lifestyle and culture. Such experience of control means that attitudes and behavior most likely will imply the anticipated results, which necessitates a reliable world.
Fair (without fear of being subjected to intolerable injustice and lack of recognition).	A good enough life includes the experience of being treated justly in regard to both one's material conditions and one's lifestyle and culture.
Facilitating well-being (without fear of insufficiency constraining fulfillment of basic needs, realistic desires, and hopes for a good enough life).	The above-mentioned criteria regarding the experience of life as safe, reliable, fair, and inclusive are often seen as part of the definition of well-being. Here we have chosen a more general approach to well-being, whereby these criteria, as well as the aspect of well-being, are singled out as independent criterion. This conception of well-being reflects a general experience of the possible life-activities within the present life conditions are valuable and good.

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Table 3. Item wording, EFA loadings, and means for the Life-Attachment Scale

Item wording	loading	<i>M</i> (<i>SD</i>)
1. In this country there is the risk of a sudden threat to my material conditions (job, education, economy, housing/environment).	.78	2.81 (1.75)
2. In this country there is the risk of a sudden threat to the lifestyle and culture that are meaningful for me.	.79	3.01 (1.88)
3. In this country there is a danger of being deprived of control over my material conditions (job, education, economy, housing/environment).	.82	2.82 (1.73)
4. In this country there is a danger of being deprived of control over the lifestyle and culture that are meaningful for me.	.79	2.82 (1.77)
5. In this country there are no possibilities for acquiring the material conditions I would like to have (job, education, economy, housing/environment).	.64	2.25 (1.47)
6. In this country there are no possibilities for acquiring the lifestyle and culture that are meaningful for me.	.75	2.22 (1.51)
7. In this country I can't count on being treated justly regarding my material conditions (job, education, economy, housing/environment).	.73	2.91 (1.84)
8. In this country I can't count on being treated justly regarding the lifestyle and culture that are meaningful for me.	.75	2.88 (1.90)
9. This country makes it difficult for me to create and maintain my material conditions (job, education, economy, housing/environment).	.80	2.61 (1.73)
10. This country makes it difficult for me to create and maintain the lifestyle and culture that are meaningful for me.	.81	2.70 (1.84)
11. In reality I am excluded from the decisions that are important for my material conditions (job, education, economy, housing/environment).	.75	2.57 (1.59)
12. In reality I am excluded from the decisions that are important for the lifestyle and culture that are meaningful for me.	.76	2.51 (1.62)
13. I am not considered and accepted as equal with all other citizens in this society.	.72	2.81 (1.95)
14. In this country there is no tolerance for the lifestyle and culture that are meaningful for me.	.73	2.42 (1.61)

Note: The means and standard deviations represent the whole sample while the factor loadings represent the EFA subsample. Loadings below .2 has been suppressed.

Table 4. Item wording, EFA loadings, and means for the Life Skills Scale

Item wording	loading					<i>M (SD)</i>
		1	2	3	4	
These days I am not especially concerned with....						
1. creating close and good relationships with family and friends.	.70					2.39 (1.66)
2. creating an overview of my time, tasks and activities, and establishing their order of priority.	.66					2.66 (1.64)
3. doing volunteer work, being a member of an organization, club or ethnic/religious community.	.40		.23	-.23		3.92 (2.10)
4. being able to concentrate on what I am doing.	.66					2.76 (1.65)
5. planning practical steps toward a definite goal and overcoming the obstacles I meet.	.67					2.69 (1.54)
6. behaving in a way that I feel is in order regarding myself and others.	.64		-.22			2.54 (1.60)
7. understanding the body language of others.	.58			-.20		3.04 (1.80)
8. finding out what I feel about my goals.	.69					2.75 (1.63)
9. understanding other people.	.66					2.52 (1.66)
10. relating to rules, requirements and procedures plus learning to understand different explanations, knowledge, and beliefs.	.65					2.94 (1.69)
I don't know how to...						

1. create close and good relationships with family and friends.	.47	.28	2.30 (1.53)
2. create an overview of my time, tasks, and activities and to establish their order of priority.	.76		2.72 (1.70)
3. do volunteer work, be a member of an organization, club or ethnic/religious community.	.48		2.49 (1.70)
4. concentrate on what I am doing.	.78		2.87 (1.73)
5. plan every step toward a definite goal and overcome the obstacles I meet.	.72		2.85 (1.66)
6. behave in a way that I feel is in order regarding myself and others.	.57		2.24 (1.50)
7. understand the body language of others.	.63		2.56 (1.57)
8. find out what I feel about my goals.	.88		2.90 (1.69)
9. understand other people.	.66		2.37 (1.53)
10. relate to rules, requirements and procedures plus learning to understand different explanations, knowledge, and beliefs.	.62		2.39 (1.41)
<hr/>			
The neighborhood I live in makes it difficult for me to...			
<hr/>			
1. create close and good relationships with family and friends.		.79	2.07 (1.52)
2. create an overview of my time, tasks, and		.83	1.97 (1.43)

activities and to establish their order of priority.		
3. do volunteer work, be a member of an organization, club or ethnic/religious community.	.71	2.17 (1.66)
4. concentrate on what I am doing.	.82	2.09 (1.54)
5. plan every step toward a definite goal and overcome the obstacles I meet.	.89	2.03 (1.51)
6. behave in a way that I feel is in order regarding myself and others.	.84	1.96 (1.43)
7. understand the body language of others.	.72	2.01 (1.45)
8. find out what I feel about my goals.	.77	1.99 (1.48)
9. understand other people.	.76	2.07 (1.53)
10. relate to rules, requirements and procedures plus learning to understand different explanations, knowledge, and beliefs.	.77	2.02 (1.42)
<hr/>		
People in this country are not ordinarily disposed to help me in being able to...		
<hr/>		
1. create close and good relationships with family and friends.	.83	2.91 (1.74)
2. create an overview of my time, tasks, and activities and to establish their order of priority.	.86	3.10 (1.74)
3. do volunteer work, be a member of an	.81	2.93 (1.69)

organization, club or ethnic/religious community.		
4. concentrate on what I am doing.	.83	3.06 (1.74)
5. plan every step toward a definite goal and overcome the obstacles I meet.	.87	3.07 (1.72)
6. behave in a way that I feel is in order regarding myself and others.	.83	2.86 (1.70)
7. understand the body language of others.	.83	3.09 (1.73)
8. find out what I feel about my goals.	.86	3.12 (1.75)
9. to understand other people.	.87	3.03 (1.71)
10. relate to rules, requirements and procedures plus learning to understand different explanations, knowledge, and beliefs.	.82	2.93 (1.66)

Note: The means and standard deviations represent the whole sample while the factor loadings represent the EFA subsample. Loadings below |.2| has been suppressed.

Table 5: Means, reliability, and bivariate correlations for LAS and LSS in relation to measures of radicalization

	<i>M (SD)</i>	α	Extremism Scale	Proviolence subscale	Pro illegal acts subscale
Life-Attachment Scale	2.67 (1.33)	.95	.45**	.34**	.38**
Life Skills Scale - agency	2.70 (1.00)	.91	.40**	.36**	.32**
LSS - Want	2.82 (1.13)	.86	.30**	.32**	.24**
LSS -Ability	2.57 (1.19)	.91	.39**	.30**	.32**
Life Skills Scale - structure	2.52 (1.15)	.95	.47**	.37**	.40**
LSS - External conditions	2.04 (1.22)	.94	.45**	.40**	.35**
LSS - Being met	3.01 (1.46)	.96	.37**	.25**	.34**

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

Figure 1. The Life Psychological model of radicalization

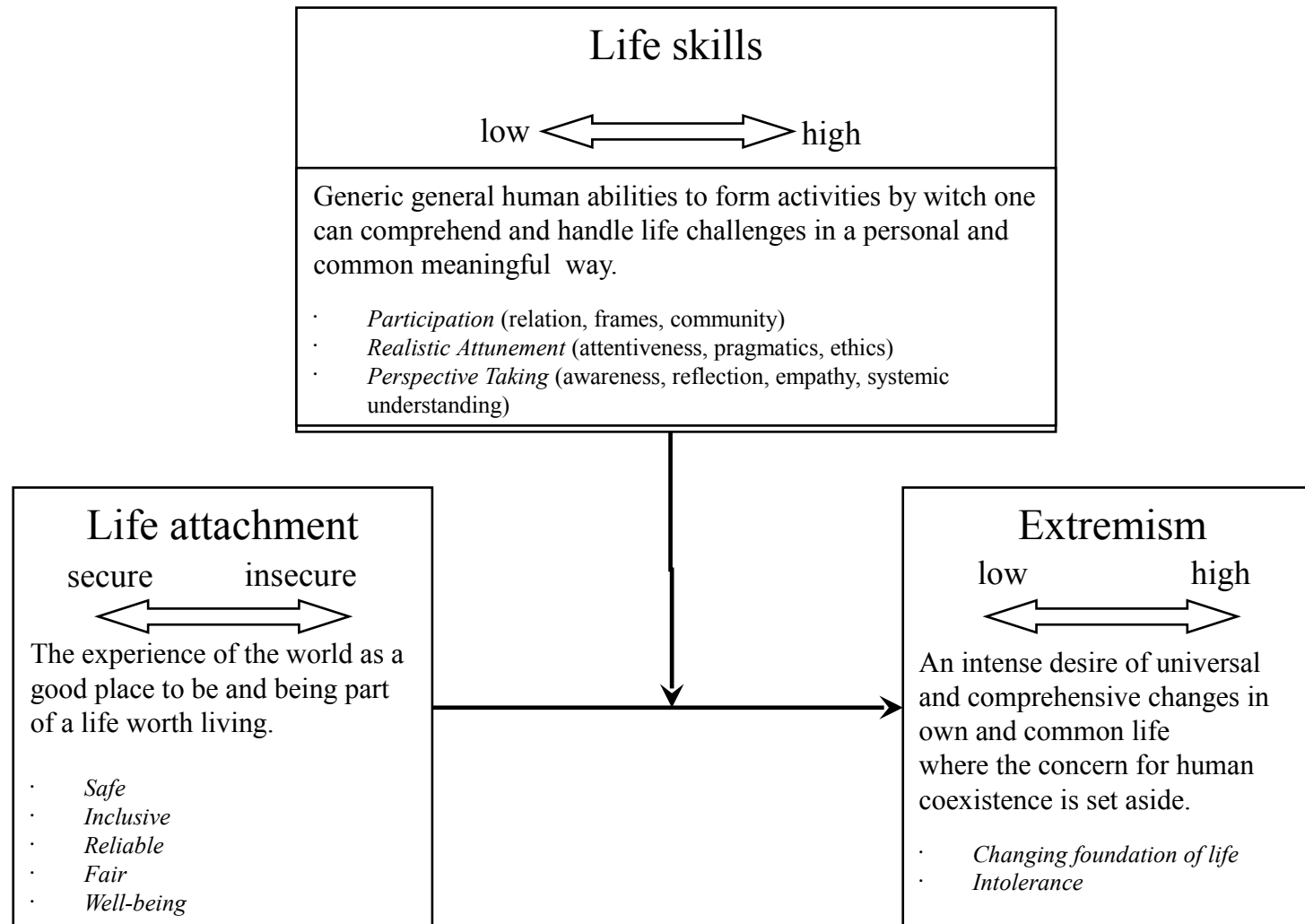
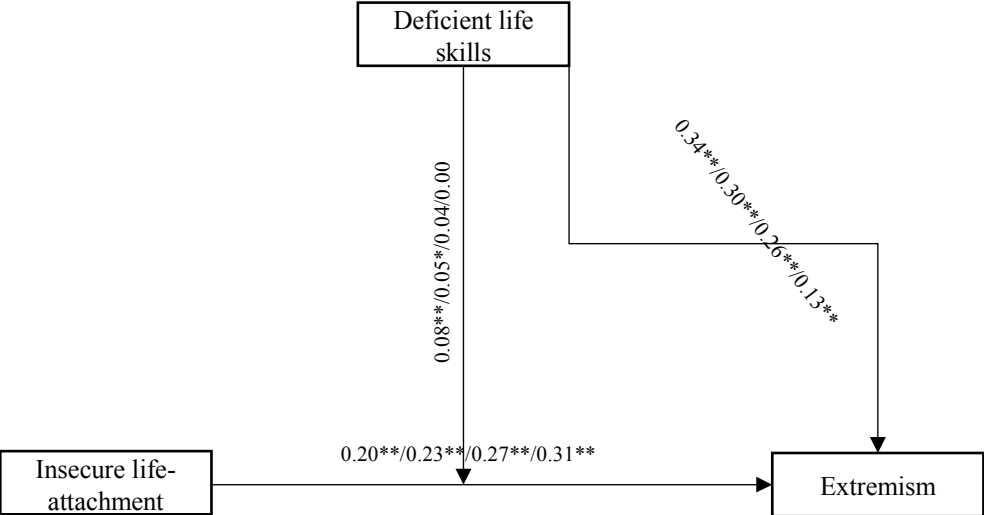
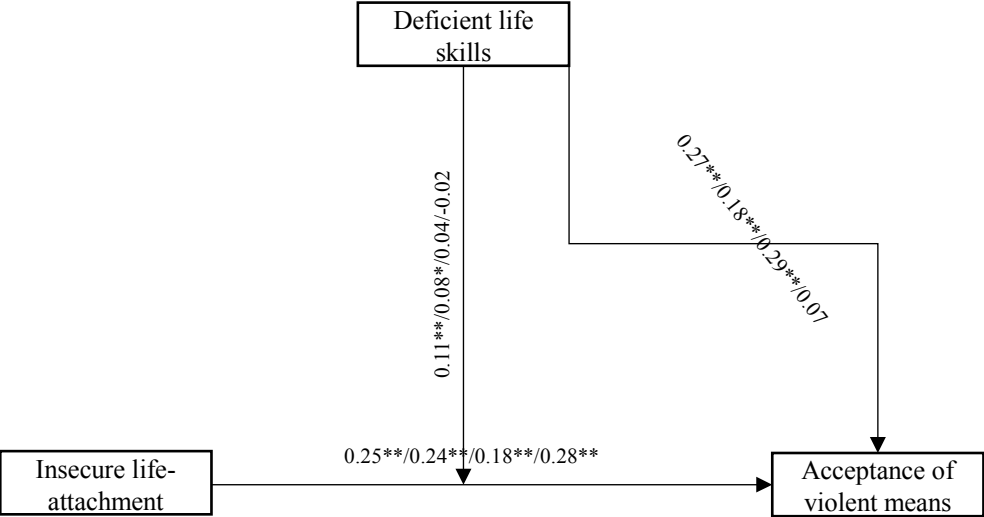


Figure 2: Results of the moderation analyses on extremism



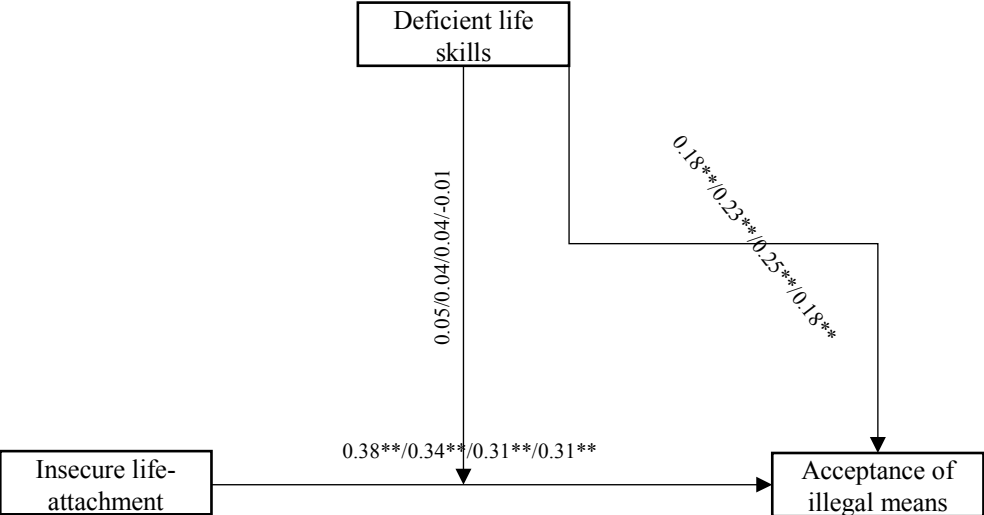
Note. Coefficients for the LSS subscales are displayed in the following order: LSS-Want/LSS-Ability/LSS-External conditions/LSS-being met. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

Figure 3: Results of the moderation analyses on acceptance of violent means in relation to extremism.



Note. Coefficients for the LSS subscales are displayed in the following order: LSS-Want/LSS-Ability/LSS-External conditions/LSS-being met. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

Figure 4: Results of the moderation analyses on acceptance of illegal means in relation to extremism.



Note. Coefficients for the LSS subscales are displayed in the following order: LSS-Want/LSS-Ability/LSS-External conditions/LSS-being met. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.