

THE POLICY OF NATIONAL SECURITY

Special issue
EXTREMISM, INTERNET, GENDER



THE POLICY OF NATIONAL SECURITY
Special issue "Extremism, Internet, Gender", 2022

Publisher

Institute for Political Studies
Address: 36 Svetozara Markovića Street, Belgrade
www.ips.ac.rs
Telephone: 011/3349 203; 011/3349 204; 011/3349 205
Mail address: pnb@ips.ac.rs

For publisher

Živojin Đurić

ISSN 2334-959X UDK 351.862/.863(497.11)

DOI: 10.22182/pnb.specijal2022

Special Issue 2022

The journal is published twice a year

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50 copies

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FOREWORD

Dear readers,

Here lies before you a special edition of “The Policy of National Security” journal entitled “Extremism, Internet, Gender”. As it can be noticed from the title, three very significant topics, quite current in the contemporary society, were analyzed.

The topics are indeed significant, but the reason for creation of this special issue is even more significant. Namely, in the previous issue of the journal, I already stressed that the mission of our journal, besides publishing papers written by prominent local and foreign experts in the field of security studies, will also be publishing papers written by young researchers. All of us who are involved in scientific work are aware of the fact that every beginning is difficult, and thus, young colleagues should be encouraged and given a chance. Exactly for this reason, this special issue publishes papers written by postgraduate students of the prestigious Faculty of Social Sciences of Charles University in Prague (Department of Security Studies and Department of International Relations), founded in 1348.

The idea for this sort of cooperation came completely naturally and unexpectedly, given that, as a visiting professor at Charles University, I encountered high levels of knowledge, dedication and talent among students attending my lectures within my postgraduate course entitled “Ideology and Symbols in Radicalization and Violent Extremism”. During my stay in Prague, I held a series of lectures after which the students wrote essays I later graded, and even then, I realized that I held in my hands a series of high-quality papers that could be, with certain modifications, quite easily published. Even though selecting papers for publishing was quite difficult, given the fact that the students of the Faculty of Social Sciences “did their assignment” well, ten best papers were selected. Given that, as a professor and mentor, I was involved in the entire process of the creation of their papers, I felt responsible (as well as happy) to support this “student issue” through writing. Thus, in this issue, through reading these eleven papers, you will have a chance to read about the newest trends in the field of extremism, with a special focus on the Internet and gender.

The first paper in this journal is of a propaedeutic character in that it explains the methods of researching extremism and presents what young researchers should know about the challenges that await them in this quest. This contribution is followed by others, dealing with the topics of right-wing extremism in the EU (Slovak – case study), and the FTFs (Foreign Terrorist Fighters), whose return from Syria and Iraq to European countries is under way and which is deemed to be one of the biggest challenges to the entire Europe and which will open numerous, not only security, but also legal, health, social issues, etc. The journal also contains analyses on the topic of still under-researched extremist groups, such as the “Grey Wolves” from Turkey. Several papers deal with the issue of the role of women in extremist and terrorist organizations, as well as the intersection of women and online radicalization. Given the fact that virtual communication has become our “reality”, the phenomenon of “online radicalization” was examined as well, with a special emphasis on the role of Twitter and recruitment of the younger generation of men in America. The new misogynistic trends in extremism were examined as well with the goal of explaining the INCEL (Involuntary Celibate) movement. Also, one paper in this issue is dedicated to international organizations (OSCE) and their role in countering violent extremism and radicalization. For this issue of the journal, a review of the book “Balkan geopolitical paradigm” by a young and successful author Vanja Glišin was prepared.

We owe a great debt of gratitude for creation of this special issue to Markéta Kocmanová, Lecturer from Charles University (Institute of Political Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences), a scholar truly dedicated to her students. She is the main culprit of this fruitful cooperation which began with her invitation for me to teach in Prague, and continued with this special issue, containing the papers of our students. Last but not the least, I thank the Head of the Department of Security Studies, Doc. PhDr. Vít Strátecký, M.Phil., Ph.D. for wonderful hospitality during my stay at Charles University. I hope for interesting new joint projects to be completed with the esteemed colleagues and students from Charles University in the future.

*Editor-in-chief,
Dr Marija Djoric*

*Marija Djoric**

Institute for Political Studies, Belgrade

CHALLENGES FACED BY YOUNG SCHOLARS IN RESEARCHING EXTREMISM

Abstract

In this paper, challenges most often faced by young researchers who deal with extremism are analysed. The amorphousness of this phenomenon, temporal and spatial conditionality, as well as numerous indistinctions regarding its definition, make extremism quite interesting, albeit complex for research. The author first explained the nature of the phenomenon of extremism, and then highlighted its characteristic forms and classification criteria. The paper provides explicit guidelines on how young researchers can collect data with the help of relevant research methods. The challenges most common faced by young researchers in the beginning of their research are hereby listed, as well as advice on how to overcome these challenges. The main goal of the paper is to present a realistic overview of all difficulties that researching extremism entails, but at the same time to shed light on new scientific approaches that can be useful.

Key words: extremism, terrorism, defining extremism, research, science, scientific work.

* Email: mara.djoric@yahoo.com

INTRODUCTION

The search for knowledge about extremism sometimes resembles the quest for the Holy Grail. So far, no one has been able to formulate a universally acceptable definition of extremism, and yet, everyone is still persistently searching for it. Extremism, in fact, is quite a tempting phenomenon in the eyes of young researchers, precisely due to its ambiguity, security aspect and amorphous definition. At the very beginning, a logical question arises: How can we research something that we have not defined? This is precisely where the charm of researching extremism lies, given that researchers constantly encounter its many faces and forms that denote the extremely dynamic nature of this phenomenon. This dynamism of extremism is attractive, especially to young researchers, yet one should have in mind that that attractiveness is in fact a double-edged sword. On the one hand, the dynamics by which extremism changes and adapts to the modern age makes this phenomenon interesting; on the other hand, it is precisely this continuous chain of changes that makes researching extremism laborious, requiring absolute commitment of researchers, which can be very demanding for young scientists.

Let us first deal with the elementary things regarding extremism. In order to understand a social phenomenon, one should primarily define its essential characteristics (that is, its nature). While in natural sciences researchers, for example, know for certain the content of atoms (protons, electrons, neutrons) or the Pythagoras's theorem ($a^2 + b^2 = c^2$), the situation in social sciences is quite different. Contrary to natural phenomena, which are exact and precise (and thus, their forecast is simpler and more precise as well), in social sciences, nothing is quite simple and precise.¹ Even though people attempted since the ancient times to foresee occurrences of phenomena in a society based on a cycle (cyclic theories)², rectilinear movement (linear theories)³, theories of progress⁴...they often forgot one significant factor – human beings and their unpredictable actions. Given that extremism is, first of all, a social (and then political, psychological, legal...) phenomenon, it is clear that (when speaking of long-term) it is difficult to predict its development and movement.

1 For example, there isn't a formula used for precisely determining occurrence and course of a coup with clearly defined actors, goals and final results; the same is true for terrorist attack as well.

2 For example, Plato, Oswald Spengler, Arnold Toynbee.

3 For example, Augustine of Hippo.

4 For example, Condorset Antoine Nicholas, Anne Robert, Jacques Tuirgot.

Exactly due to all of the above, young researchers must understand the nature of extremism in order to finally be able to make predictions regarding this phenomenon. Then, one should examine all the forms of manifestation of extremism, determine classification criteria, find similarities and differences (*genus proximus* and *differentia specifica*) between extremism and other similar phenomena (terrorism, radicalism, fundamentalism...). It is quite significant to take into consideration the time and space in which extremism is being examined, since what is nowadays deemed as extremism might have been once in the past a widely accepted occurrence or behaviour. The same should be said for spatial context as well – if something is perceived as extremism by, for example, the West, it might be a common norm in Afghanistan and *vice versa*.

Only when they perceive all these elements can young researchers be able to understand (or even create) the definition of extremism. Here we face a new problem, given that there isn't a universally accepted definition of extremism (the UN still haven't managed to do that for terrorism, let alone for extremism), and thus, interpretations are different and quite often coloured by ideology. Contrary to terrorism, extremism is not exclusively a political phenomenon, and thus its dispersive nature asks for a multidisciplinary approach.

As it can be noted, even in the mere beginning, that researching extremism is a difficult, complex, uncertain, albeit quite exciting and interesting process. The beauty of it all lays in the fact that, when researching extremism, the youth is knocking on the door of one new cognitive process that will give a significant contribution to the society, depicted in prevention of terrorism. Whether will some of them shyly open this door a little bit or will they enter the research world of extremism with pride depends on their persistence, dedication, hard work and a little bit of luck.

NATURE OF EXTREMISM

In order to determine basic characteristics of the phenomenon of extremism, one should first of all perceive its essence, that is, its nature. We wouldn't be wrong if we said that this is one of the most uncatchable social phenomena.⁵ There are several reasons why it is hard to research the phenomenon of extremism:

5 Andrew Heywood stated in his works that ideology is one of the most uncatchable phenomena, but this can rightfully be said for extremism as well. See more about the phenomenon of ideology in: Heywood, Andrew. 2020. *Political ideologies: an introduction*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

1. Extremism is differently interpreted depending on temporal and spatial context. Let us firstly deal with temporal context, using the example of inquisition. During several centuries of existence of inquisition, torture of the accused was legalized by passing a papal bull entitled *Ad extirpanda*.⁶ In contemporary times, this would represent use of extreme means and methods, and it is known, for example, that torture in prisons is forbidden by the *European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment*⁷, as well as by numerous other international and domestic legal documents. Regarding spatial context, suffice it to say that stoning to death is still a legal punishment method in some countries while, for example, in the majority of countries of the contemporary world, this is perceived as extreme.⁸

2. Extremism is often identified with related phenomena (especially with terrorism). However, for example, while terrorism represents exclusively a political phenomenon, we cannot say the same for extremism. We have previously stressed its dispersive nature, and thus, extremism can be found in sports as well (for example, football hooliganism or extreme sports⁹), arts¹⁰, religion and finally, in politics. The next main difference between terrorism and extremism lays in the fact that every terrorism is at the same time also extremism, while *vice versa* does not apply. Namely, it is not necessarily that every extremism should grow into terrorism. In order to understand the relation of extremism and its related manifestations, we will provide an illustration that points to the fact that extremism intertwines and, in many cases, comes into

6 This bull was passed by Pope Innocent IV in 1252. See more in: Wood Barry. 2020. *Invented History, Fabricated Power: The Narrative Shaping of Civilization and Culture*. London: Anthem Press, p. 229.

7 Council of Europe [CE], H (87) 4 (1987), European Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (1987), Adopted by the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, on 7 July 1987.

8 The Iranian judiciary, for example, imposed a moratorium on stoning only in 2022; in Afghanistan, the Taliban continue to implement this method of punishment; in Sudan, individuals were sentenced to stoning in 2022; Brunei recently passed a new law stipulating that the act of homosexuality should be punished by stoning to death, etc. It is believed that a dozen of countries world-wide are still practicing this form of punishment.

9 Mountain biking, paragliding, bungee jumping, scuba diving with sharks...

10 Let us take the example of the Nazi idea of the so-called *degenerative art* which mocked creations of certain artists (expressionists) and exiled them from the country, while other ("eligible") artists were used for glorification of the Third Reich. See more in: Wasensteiner Lucy. 2021. *Twentieth Century German Art Exhibition: answering degenerate art in 1930s London*. Oxford: Routledge.

contact with terms such as radicalism, fanaticism, fundamentalism, populism, etc., but these are not identical phenomena. These circles that are mutually intertwining (but are not identical) in the illustration, represent a relation between extremism and its related terms.

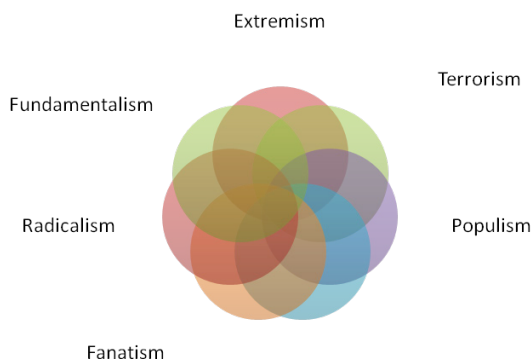


Illustration no. 1: Djoric Marija. 2021. *Ekstremizam i nova realnost: svet u doba koronavirusa*. Beograd: Institut za političke studije, p. 51.

3. There is no single universally accepted definition of extremism. Even though it was definitely present among people as a social phenomenon for a long period of time, extremism was established within the scientific system only in the eighties of the 20th century, primarily thanks to researchers (Uwe Bakes and Erkhart Jesse).¹¹ The fact that it was just recently established within the scientific discourse does not mean that extremism did not exist before. As far back as in Aristotle's 'Nicomachean Ethics' do we find an analysis of extremism, albeit not under that name, but as *akrai* (extreme), opposite to moderate action (*mesotes*), which was most desirable for the life within the political community (Aristotle 2020). Besides that, it should be stressed that short definitions of extremism¹² are not productive and lead to its simplified perception. During my many years of professional research, I encountered numerous definitions of extremism, but I believe that it can be best

11 See more in: Backes, Uwe. 2006. *Politische Extreme: eine Wort- und Begriffsgeschichte von der Antike bis in die Gegenwart*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht; or Backes Uwe, Jesse Eckhard. 2006. *Gefährdungen der Freiheit: extremistische Ideologien im Vergleich*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.

12 Short definitions are inherent to natural sciences, while social sciences demand for wider and more comprehensive definitions in order to provide as detailed as possible description of characteristics of social phenomena. Moreover, one should have in mind that definitions of social phenomena are prone to change, given that we are speaking of quite dynamic phenomena.

understood when compared with the phenomenon of love:¹³

Every individual perceives love differently, in their own personal way, and despite the fact that we cannot find the right words to define love, every each of us knows how to recognize it. It is similar in the case of the phenomenon of extremism.

Even though the previous statement cannot be qualified as a scientific definition, it depicts the nature of extremism in the best way possible. Still, when we dive into professional analysis of definition of (political) extremism, it can be said that extremism represents “behaviour and opinion in the field of politics that is borderline permissible, with a tendency of crossing the line, and which is contrary to legal, customary and cultural norms of a society. As such, political extremism is always an unwanted occurrence due to the fact that it does not correspond with the modern democracy value system (such as tolerance, parliamentarism, compromise, dialogue, given that it directly undermines the legal state and rule of law. Its crucial characteristic is the use of violence, that is, propensity to violence (that does not always have to be realized)” (Đorić 2014, 37).

4. There isn't a unique psychological profile of a terrorist. Many international organizations, representatives of non-governmental organizations, and even states themselves¹⁴ have spent vast amounts of funds in order to profile a violent extremist/terrorist. Mostly all these attempts failed due to a simple reason – every radicalization process is individual, and thus factors that motivate an individual towards extremism differ from one to another. However, professor Kruglanski and his associates managed to identify several drivers of violent extremism. Their significance quest theory identifies “3 general drivers of violent extremism: need, narrative, and network”.¹⁵ Apart from pull and push factors, there

13 This paraphrasing is motivated by the definition of power provided by Joseph Nye: “Power is also like love, easier to experience than to define or measure, but no less real for that”. See more in: Nye S. Joseph Nye Jr. 2004. *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*. New York: Public Affairs.

14 For example, France spent around 2.5 million EUR for a deradicalization program conducted outside prisons, organized in 2016 in Château de Pontourny. This was a pilot program of this sort (lasting for ten months) in France, employing 27 individuals, among whom were psychologists, social workers and special educators. It was planned that another 13 centers of that sort were to be open. Attendance was supposed to be voluntary, primarily for youth aged 18 to 30, obsessed with extremist ideas. In spite of big financial investment and efforts made by the educators, the program was unsuccessful. See more in: Fillion, Stéphanie. 2017. “What we can learn from France’s failed deradicalization center”. La Stampa. September 02, 2017. <https://www.lastampa.it/esteri/la-stampa-in-english/2017/09/02/news/what-we-can-learn-from-france-s-failed-deradicalization-center-1.34412986/>

15 Kruglanski Arie, Jasko Katarzyna, Webber David. 2018. “The Making of Violent Extremists”,

are also individual factors that drive an individual to extremism (psychological characteristics, emotional problems...). What we can conclude is the following: every radicalization process is individual, albeit this is true for deradicalization process as well.

In order to grasp better the nature of extremism, we must research its form. Here a characteristic problem emerges because young researchers often, with no relevant criteria, conduct classification of extremism, singling out the following: violent, right-wing, left-wing, individual... etc. Such approach is wrong because it is not systematic. There are different classifications of extremism, but for each of them, the most important thing is that there is a **criterion** based on which it will be conducted. For example, Uwe Backes used two criteria for classification of forms of extremism: according to the dimensions of civil equality and civil liberty: anti-democracy and anti-constitutionalism (Backes 2007, 251). The most common criteria based on which classification of extremism is being conducted are the following: violence (violent/non-violent extremism), program-goal orientation (ideological, ethno-separatism, religious extremism), number of actors (individual/*lone-wolf*/group), relation towards political sphere (political/non-political extremism)...¹⁶

HOW TO RESEARCH EXTREMISM?

Even the ancient Greeks stressed that knowledge can be increased by reading, observation, contemplation and participation (which will all be explained on the example of extremism in the following pages). Guided by this ancient Greek hypothesis, we can say that, for every beginner planning on researching extremism, it is advisable to first read up the existent literature from this field (*desk research*). The best is to start from shorter texts (research papers published in scientific journals), and then analyse scientific monographs and encyclopaedia. Platforms such as *Google Books* and *Google Scholar* can be a good first step in finding relevant literature (based on key words). After this step, a researcher can start searching for literature (in available libraries or electronic databases). Reference list created by authors we are reading can also be a significant helping hand in selecting relevant literature.

Observation is also quite significant for young researchers who have embarked on the path of researching extremism. There are two

Review of General Psychology, Vol. 22, No. 1, p. 107-120

¹⁶ See more in: Đorić, Marija. 2021. *Ekstremizam i nova realnost: svet u doba koronavirusa*. Beograd: Institut za političke studije, p. 55-58.

types of observation: with participation and without participation. Having in mind security challenges carried along with the phenomenon of extremism, it is better to choose the former. For example, when researching football hooliganism (which represents a sort of extreme behaviour), researchers can go to a high-risk football match and observe behaviour of hooligans along with the rest of the regular audience. In such moments, it is important not to reveal the true reason for attending the match, but to act as a “regular spectator”. Mimicry is exactly what is expected from individuals dealing in scientific research of extremism. Observation doesn’t necessarily mean going to high-risk events¹⁷, but it can imply observation of such events online, on TV, etc. The most important thing for researchers when observing some form of extremism is – their safety. They must foresee all security risks threatening them and organize observation in a maximally secure manner.¹⁸

On the other hand, observation with participation is not recommended due to security risk to which researcher might be exposed.¹⁹

Finally, contemplation represents the “mother” of all methods of increasing knowledge. It implies wise reflections on the given phenomenon, synthetisation of the entire previously acquired knowledge, use of inductive-deductive method of making conclusions, and, above all – logic. Hermeneutics is also often used in researching extremism, especially when speaking of symbols of extremist groups, that are quite diverse and useful for identification of extremism ideology. Dialogue can also have an inspirational impact on the contemplation process, given that it is thought provoking. The questions asked by others (or the ones we pose to them) might represent a quite exquisite *brainstorming*, bringing us closer to making conclusions. This is like the old, well-known Socratic “elenctic method (maieutic), that is “giving birth” to knowledge”.²⁰

While we have listed some methods of gathering information, it is important knowing that information on extremism can be gathered from open, as well as from confidential sources. Open-source information represent information gathered from all publicly available sources (books, scientific papers, media...), while confidential sources are problematic

17 Despite everything, the best impression is made during live observation on the spot.

18 This can be achieved by observation from a safe distance or by leaving the event if it is estimated that the situation might become dangerous.

19 This form of collecting data is more characteristic of operatives engaged in the security sector.

20 At this point, it is important stressing that not only our colleagues, professors, academicians and other subjects of the academia can provoke our thought process, but the non-expert public, eager to find out something new, as well. Specifically, during my professional engagement as a university professor, on many occasions, my students inspired me to new ideas, thoughts and conclusions by their creative questions and constatations – which was precious for my research work.

given that researcher cannot adequately quote them. In such conditions, information gathered from confidential sources can be best used for making better judgements and analysis of the phenomenon, no matter the fact that the source cannot be quoted.²¹ Scientific gatherings and conferences can be quite useful for young researchers when collecting information. Not only do they enable exchange of ideas with older and more experienced colleagues, but during such sorts of events, young researchers might even learn of some exclusive information still not listed in monographs and research papers. At this moment, it is important stressing that scientific ethics reiterates that the ideas and thoughts (especially innovative ones) of others must be quoted, even if they were collected in oral form. In this case, the name of the quoted individual must be listed, along with the type of scientific gathering, place and time. Such form of scientific honesty is more than needed, given that, in this way, we are, first of all, paying tribute to our colleagues and their work, but also, we are protecting ourselves from possibly non-checked information presented in oral form.

In order for young researchers to know how to prepare for researching extremism, they should, first of all, ask themselves several questions:

1. Why am I interested in this topic? This is quite a significant question, since it speaks of our motivation. A man is capable of even moving the mountains, if necessary, only if guided by the right motive. The best motive in this case would be “the thirst for knowledge”, a common trait of nature of every man, as stated by Aristotle (Aristotle 2020). This motive is one of the strongest (and at the same time the most honest ones), since it implies “knowledge for the sake of knowledge”, which is the basis of every scientific research work, given that such work asks for the “entire body and soul”. The humane, philanthropic motive, can be singled out as well, referring to the fight “against evil” (extremism) as a sort of contribution to the common good. There are other motives, such as adventurism, social status, competition among colleagues... but they are all short-term and do not produce long-term results.

2. What do I want to achieve in theoretical/empirical research?

Even though researching extremism seems exciting at a first glance, young academic workers should know that it is not a “James Bond job” and that they will spend much more time in the

²¹ These sources partially refer to, for example, the *Chatham House Rule*, implying that information collected from a gathering where sensitive topic is being elaborated can be quoted, albeit the source must not be listed. This usually refers to meetings of international organizations/institutions, when the topic is of a sensitive nature.

office, library, at their work stations, than in the field. In order to, for example, conduct one valid empirical research (*in the field*), the researcher must beforehand be well-versed in theoretical knowledge.²² Moreover, it is of a great importance to set a scientific research goal (so that the research paper does not end up being too broad and thus lose its sense and purpose), which is most often being done through choosing a research question, that is, general hypothesis of the research.

3. What aspect of extremism do I wish to analyse? It is quite important knowing that, contrary to terrorism, which is a *par excellence* political phenomenon, extremism can occur in almost all spheres of life. Because of that, it is of crucial importance to study its psychological, social, criminal-legal, political, economic, cultural... nature. It is best to start from single segments to general, and thus, for example, one could first research extremism in one segment of the society (for example, in sports, in the form of football hooliganism), and then arrive to other manifestations of extremism, only to finally form a general image of extremism. It is also useful to research specifics of extremism in one region (or one state) and then focus on another, and finally, with the use of the method of comparative analysis, discover their similarities and differences. For example, the root of extreme right-wing is not the same in the EU, the US and in the Western Balkans. While right-wing extremism in the EU is generated primarily from xenophobia, which emerged as a result of migrations (from the Middle East and North Africa), the extreme right-wing in the US still has a racist background, to which testifies the continuing existence of the Ku Klux Klan and other similar racist organizations.²³ In the Western Balkans, yet, the situation is different, and the main generator of the extreme right-wing can be found in the post-conflict heritage, based on civil wars of the nineties. Besides this “old” generator of extremism, it turned out that there are also new ones, among which are the COVID-19 pandemic and the migration crisis.²⁴

22 And this can be achieved only through long-term and detailed examination of theory and literature.

23 See more in: Djorić, Marija. 2014. *Ekstremna desnica: međunarodni aspekti desničarskog ekstremizma*. Beograd: Udruženje Nauka i društvo Srbije, p. 245-252.

24 See more on new generators of extremism in the Western Balkans in: Djoric, Marija, Bojan Klacar. 2021. *Potential Generators of Right-Wing Extremism in The Era of COVID-19 Pandemic*. Sarajevo: IRI.

MOST COMMON CHALLENGES FOR YOUNG RESEARCHERS

First of all, we must state that it is not the same if you research extremism in Africa or, for example, in some country of the West. In the latter case, resources are richer and more available, which significantly eases the research process. For example, libraries at some American or European university campuses are equipped with the most contemporary literature, and the present staff is very eager to give a helping hand and instantly order new books if they are needed by students or researchers. Such approach to work significantly eases the research process. On the other hand, lack of resources drives young researchers to turn to some other forms of gathering knowledge, to go to the scene of action, to use an empirical approach (fieldwork), to give an original contribution. It all depends on the approach, as well as the motivation of young researchers.

Besides lack of literature, one of the most common challenges is – relevance of literature. Fifteen years ago, when I first started researching this phenomenon as a young teaching assistant, not only did I face the lack of literature on extremism (usually papers on terrorism could be found), but also, at the given time, I faced sensationalist writing about extremism (which was not scientifically founded). Even though sometimes even journal articles, podcasts, YouTube videos, and social media postings can be used for data gathering, it is important to make a distinction between scientific valid and non-scientific non-valid sources of information. It is very important to approach every (even scientific) reference from a critical standpoint. The fact that someone represents “the Alpha and Omega” of the academic world does not mean that their statement or conclusion must be unmistakably accurate. This is exactly why young researchers should examine different, and if possible opposite approaches and make their own conclusions from them. In order for this to happen, a researcher must possess significant foreknowledge, acquired only through dedicated work when examining literature (desk research).

The second challenge is of a security nature.²⁵ Namely, researching such security sensitive topic might represent some sort of a risk to researchers. Of this speaks the best the case of professor Adrian Guelke²⁶

25 See more on security challenges in: Gaćinović, Radoslav. 2020. “Osnovne funkcije države u procesu izgradnje sistema bezbednosti”. *Politika nacionalne bezbednosti* 2/2020. Beograd: Institut za političke studije, p. 277-295.

26 Some of his most known works: Guelke Adrian. 2027. *Rethinking the rise and fall of apartheid: South Africa and world politics*, London: Bloomsbury Academic; Guelke Adrian. 2022. *Peace Settlements and Political Transformation in Divided Societies: Rethinking Northern Ireland and South Africa*. Oxon and New York: Routledge; Guelke Adrian. 2012. *Politics in deeply divided*

from Queens University in Belfast, a well-known expert in the field of researching terrorism. In 1991, he was shot in the early morning while asleep in his house in south Belfast. Members of the loyalist terrorist organization from Ireland claimed responsibility for the attempted murder (he survived the attack).²⁷ This does not mean that everyone who researchers security topics²⁸ will be a potential target of extremists and terrorists, but surely, they will be a subject of their interest. Due to all of this, researchers must be strictly professional when writing or speaking of the phenomenon of extremism. This would entail citing relevant research sources, elaborating firstly the phenomenon, and not individuals in extremist/terrorist groups, and to always be objective when making conclusions (without dealing with politics, ideology and emotions²⁹).

The next challenge refers to gender sensitive issues, which especially reflects on female researchers. Prejudices stating that politics (as a public sphere of action) is predominantly a “male thing” (especially in patriarchal environments) might represent a sort of a Gordian knot for women.³⁰ They will often encounter contestation, and they might need a longer period of time to prove themselves and express their knowledge. In this case, an advice should be given to women researching extremism through support and a promotion of a motto that **knowledge is the only authority**. The moment when you start having a good command of the subject you deal with (which is exclusively the result of your work, effort and love for your work), no one will care for your gender, where you come from, what is your religion, etc. Besides, sometimes it can be easier for women researchers of the so-called “male phenomena” (such as extremism) to observe some events in which extremists take part (for example, football hooligans), since they are perceived as “benign occurrences”³¹. Moreover, women can stand out faster from the crowd

societies, Cambridge: Polity Press, etc.

27 See: Encyclopedia. (n.d.). “Guelke, Adrian”. *Encyclopedia.com*. Last accessed 15 September 2022. <https://www.encyclopedia.com/arts/educational-magazines/guelke-adrian>

28 See more on security topics in: Đorić, Marija, Tanja Milošević. 2020. “Uticaј Saudijske koalicije na nacionalnu bezbednost Jemena”. *Politika nacionalne bezbednosti* 2/2020. Beograd: Institut za političke studije, pp. 153-174.

29 The last thing on the list might sometimes be difficult since we are all living beings, made of flesh and blood, with specific emotional set – albeit one should work of achieving the highest level of objectivity.

30 The prejudices stating that politics are predominantly a “male sphere of action” originated in the ancient period. Namely, even in ancient Greece it was believed that governing the *polis*, and thus politics as the public sphere of action, is reserved to men. Contrary to that, *oikos* (as a synonym for house, craft) belonged to women, as a private sphere. Of course, many centuries have passed since then, but in primitive and misogynistic communities, stereotypes still persist.

31 This would mean that hooligans in a football matches do not even assume that a woman could

of predominantly male researchers exactly due to “oddity” of the topic they deal with. To conclude, success in the academia should not be predisposed by gender, but it should exclusively be based on knowledge and results. And when speaking of prejudices, they can sometimes stand in our way, but they must not prevent us from fulfilling our goals. After all, prejudices exist so that they could be refuted.

Besides the previously listed challenges, financial problems, faced especially by young researchers, should be mentioned as well. Namely, it is quite expensive to travel to a scientific gathering abroad at your own expense. However, there are always grants for young researchers³² that might provide financial support, it is only necessary to express an interest on time and write a good paper that will be accepted. International contacts are quite desirable, not only for exchange of knowledge, but also for creation of a network of contacts with colleagues world-wide, which will be quite precious at one point in the future.

CONCLUSION

Even though this paper was paved with the good intention of the author to stress the most important issues faced by young colleagues who decided to research extremism, this does not mean that all existing challenges were analysed. They will be conditioned by correlation of socio-political events, personal factors of researchers, working environments and many other factors. Scientific work can sometimes resemble the Sisyphean work (especially in the beginning of the research), but quite often it provides a significant feeling of satisfaction in the end.

The goal of this a little bit unusual paper was to encourage all the ones who decided to dive into the adventure known as – researching extremism, but also to light the way to all of them preparing themselves for researching extremism. It is much easier when we know what awaits us and it is good to prepare on time for scientific research challenges and possible obstacles on the way.

Besides the fact that basic characteristics of extremism, its forms and definitions, should be examined, every young researcher also needs a certain dose of dedication. This dedication will serve as a “tail wind” that will push us forwards when the days of hardship in the process of research arrive (and they always do arrive). Apart from that, we need the audacity to go to places never stepped into before. And, of course – the observe them, exactly due to prejudices. This is an example of prejudices working “for” women researchers.

32 The author of this paper used grants intended for young female researchers aged to 35 many times.

love of knowledge, which should be the predominant motivating factor. Some of us were pushed into research by the need for passing knowledge to the arriving younger generations (students).

As stated in the beginning, the quest for knowledge on extremism is like the quest for the Holy Grail. It is possible that none of us will ever find it, but we will set many hypotheses along the way which will, let us hope, one day become scientific laws. For every great piece of work, it is necessary to stand out and make the first step, which is usually the hardest thing to do. As the Chinese wise man Lao Tzu said: *The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step.*

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* Manuscript was received on September 12, 2022 and the paper was accepted for publishing on October 3, 2022.

*Peter Zilka**

*Graduate Student of Security Studies, Institute of Political Studies,
Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University Prague*

FAR-RIGHT EXTREMISM IN THE EUROPEAN UNION: A SLOVAK CASE STUDY

Abstract

History often deemed as an ongoing spiral, can easily repeat itself and present a new security challenge. Inasmuch as people are driven by fear and grievances during uneasy times, it can often open doors to populism and demagoguery as tools for power seeking groups – an unfortunate reality from the last century. Such political strategies have nowadays taken new shapes in the age of social medias, and due to the series of ongoing crises the European Union is facing, it can have far reaching consequences if it follows the current tendencies present in its member states. The aim of this paper is to observe on a case study of Slovakia, how such far-right tendencies can achieve a representative breaking point from marginal extremist groups into the mainstream political discourse. Accordingly, an ontological approach is adopted in order to assess how either a refugee crisis, a pandemic or a war at the border represents influential factors under which fear and grievances are shaped by the local political elites during the last two decades. Key findings have demonstrated how such tendencies can open doors for inexpertise, leaving the population in doubt under a discourse that contest every major topic, jeopardizing professional opinion, undermining the authority of state institutions, and on overall creating dangerous polarisation and ideological division within the society.

Keywords: Far-right, Extremism, Populism, European Union, Slovakia

* Contact: 90924780@fsv.cuni.cz

INTRODUCTION

During the last two decades, the resilience of the European Union and of its member states is constantly put in front of new crises and consequent challenges. Among those, the rise of far-right extremism is showing itself not as a country specific phenomenon, but to a certain extent affecting every member state. However, some countries domestic political scenes are demonstrating worrisome political heading, where the possible implications could present far reaching consequences also for the EU's decision making process. Such example of turbulent domestic realities particularly demonstrates the case of Slovakia, a country that was for years governed under corruption structures, rotting judicial, police as well as intelligence institutions and processes. After years came an anti-corruption government whose ambitious project has been however thwarted by the COVID-19 as well as Ukrainian crisis, while far-right narratives deepened polarization within the society and attacked liberal values as well as democratic principles. This paper will seek to outline a historic time axis of far-right extremism and the consequent breaking point where such narratives broke into mainstream discourse. For this purpose, the conceptual lens of ontological (in)security will be applied in order to explain how civilian anxiety gave space for such alternative movements.

CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND

Regarding the arising implications within a surge of far-right extremism in Europe, a major concern of security studies is drawing attention to possible effect on new far-right terrorist groups. Correspondingly, scholars are calling into question some past assumptions of the seminal work of David C. Rapoport on the Four Waves of Modern Terrorism. Here, the author listed such waves as follows: 1. Anarchist Wave (1880s-1920s), 2. Anti-colonial Wave (1920s-1960s), 3. New left Wave (1960s-1990s), and the last, current 4. Religious wave (1979-). Each with unique characteristics, dominant motivations and specific leading groups, with an approximate duration of forty years (Rapoport 2002). As the current world events are demonstrating a decline of the leading radical Islamic groups such as Daesh or the remnant fractions of al-Qaeda, scholars are questioning a possible new fifth wave of right-wing terror. According to Leonard Weinberg and William Eubank, the possible end to the fourth wave could follow the same patterns of its predecessors: “*a normal distribution, a distribution of terrorist attacks that slope upward,*

reach a peak, and then descend to a minimum level” (Weinberg and Eubank 2010, 599). Hence, as Vincent Auger emphasise, since 2010, there has been a significant increase of such motivated incidents, while they have not expressed themselves to be as deadly as jihadist attacks, the number of conducted attacks in the United States as well as in Europe nevertheless remains higher. What according to him remains important is to evaluate whether it is not just a “transient phenomenon” caused by local political dynamics, and thus a continuation of the fourth religious wave (Auger 2020, 87-93).

Among the scholars researching on the multiple crises that the EU has faced during the last decade and the consequent rise of populism in the EU as well as other security related issues, a concept of ontological security has gained significantly on popularity. According to Catarina Kinnvall et al., “*the greatest security challenge facing people across Europe is not physical, despite the threats of Putin and ISIS, but a sense of fear and anxiety that seems to permeate everyday lives of many European citizens and denizens*” (Kinnvall et al. 2018, 249). Therefore, Ontological security represents studying how a human being perceives and consequently cope with anxieties, danger perceptions vis-à-vis his own identity and autonomy, by looking for routines, spaces or autobiographical narratives that could reassure him (Agius et al. 2020, 436). Such feeling of ontological insecurity can be brought by traumatic events, either directly or non-directly experienced, such as under terrorist attacks, violent crimes or physical traumas (Kaunert et al. 2020, 44) . To understand how such narratives can create debates or be misused by political groups that are misinterpreting certain international events or crises as a threat to the state identity, disrupting the previously established routines and presenting itself as actors that could rehabilitate it (Potočárová 2018). Correspondingly, focusing on dynamics of “belonging” where Europeans are questioning who they are and where do they belong, and “othering” where specific groups such as migrants or minorities are antagonistically portrayed (Kaunert et al. 2020, 42).

EARLIER DEVELOPMENT

It is beyond doubt that the period following the events of November 1989 where Slovakia had the opportunity to find its first steps of freedom wasn't so bright as people expected, and represented years of harsh reality for many. The period of the 1990s, during which Slovakia became independent by peacefully separating itself from the Czechoslovak republic in 1993, was a rocky road to establish itself as

a democracy. A turbulent period marked by political and intelligence games, large scale economic fraud but also a dominance of various mafia groups and many more shady activities – a reality that affect many young independent countries. Such facts in essence jeopardized the country's international establishment and membership in many organizations such as the case of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Consequently, becoming independent and determining an own identity, would not only mean a rise of nationalism, but also of extremist tendencies. As in many countries in Europe, Slovakia also experienced, primarily among the youth, its own period of skinhead subcultures. As Pavol Struhár argues, such presence has increased in particular after the year 1995 in every major city, due to the spreading influence of international neo-Nazi groups such as *Hamerskins*, *Combat 18* or *Blood and Honour*. Their activities, not being different from those of other international peer groups, consisted of meetings, music production or internet activities. A rising existence manifested itself by aggressive activities that primarily targeted ethnic minorities, generally the Roma communities. Due to such major crime-related issues disturbing the public order, up to 2001 national security forces had to conduct series of raids in order to gradually diminish their presence – nowadays such groups and their sympathizers have redirected their activities into either football hooligan clubs or civil society groups (Struhár 2016, 10-11).

During the first decade of this century, extremist tendencies among the population once again represented an attitude shared only by specific identity groups rather than an observable notion among a significant share of the population. If we look at the given political reality back then, Slovakia had elected a pro-democratic government that established various significant socio-economic reforms that consequently guaranteed a membership in the EU as well as the NATO alliance. Thus, a positive period that would not generate negative feelings and consequently provoke grievances inside the population or give them reasons to look for alternative movements. As a matter of fact, a significant category of active groups were the so-called “nationalists”, i.e. groups with a strong nationalist voice. The main ideological belief of these groups focused on the continuation of the legacy established by the first Slovak republic, a historical formation that collaborated with the German Reich. Their discourse marked by the glorification of their leaders such as the then president Jozef Tiso, minister of interior Alexander Mach a leader of the Hlinka Guard militia – symbols of the Holocaust in Slovakia (Struhár 2016, p. 10). One of the most controversial groups within this line was the civil society group “*Slovak Togetherness*” (Slovenská Pospolitost’), renowned

for their marching activities dressed in historical guardsman uniforms, similar to those of the Hlinka Guard. Firstly established as a political party in 2005 and within a year dissolved for being anticonstitutional, their renowned leader Marián Kotleba has nevertheless continued in his political career under a new, own, more “moderate” political party, the “*Kotleba-People’s Party Our Slovakia*” (Kotleba-Ludová strana naše Slovensko - LSNS) (Mikušovič 2007).

LASTING SCARS OF THE FINANCIAL AND MIGRANT CRISIS

As previously mentioned regarding ontological insecurity, dissatisfaction, fear, grudges and anxiety caused by globalization, social and economic changes have apparent influence on far-right extremism. The aftermaths of the Financial crises of 2008, also expressed via an opinion poll conducted in February 2009, showed that half of the population manifested large concerns for negative impacts on their lives, while another third of the population had moderate concerns. Only 13% of the respondents expressed no concerns (SME 2009). Yet, the far-right scene under Marián Kotleba’s LSNS was not able to mobilize an electorate for the parliamentary elections in 2010 with only 1,33% and in 2012 with only 1,58% of the total amount of votes. One explanation behind this can be found in their political campaign where their main themes were rather focusing on problems related to Roma communities, labelled as “parasites”, and how to prevent them from taking advantages from the state while they terrorise other polite citizens – thus a willingness to create a home defence militia. On the other hand, the traditional long time established Slovak National Party (Slovenská Národná Strana - SNS), with 5,07% obtained votes in the 2010 elections and 4,55% of the votes in 2012. Its program adhered to their traditional discourse oriented on the “southern threat” – how our Hungarian neighbour could threaten once again our sovereignty and territorial integrity. Both of these parties were emphasizing that there was a need for a strong national state in order to overcome the economic challenges, while none of them argued how to do it rationally (Kluknavská 2012, 12).

The aftermath of the migrant crises from 2015 expressed also itself in arising crisis of political parties, the trust towards the democratic system and of its principles. As the Slovak parliamentary elections were scheduled for March 2016, the issue of migration became the core topic of political campaigns, of the pre-election discourse, and opened doors for polarization. As Ľubomír Zvada argues under a security dilemma lens,

either the stable high profile political parties such as Direction-SD (Smer-SD), SNS or outsider parties such as LSNS and We Are Family-Boris Kollár (Sme Rodina–Boris Kollár), have decided to ride on the wave of Islamophobia and hatred, presenting the refugee crisis as an existential threat for Slovakia and its identity, consequently spreading moral panic (Zvada 2018, 226-231). Not only have traditional political parties been defeated, showing a considerable level of an unstable voters behaviour (Gyárfášová and Slosiarik, 2016), but also a normative rupture between the east and the west. As Aliaksei Kazharski draws out, such rupture or gap is not mainly a consequence of the far-right discourse, but a result of mainstream political parties co-opting with such rhetoric into their own political agenda and making the anti-liberal as well as anti-European discourse normalised (Kazharski 2018, 774).

Due to such discourse gaining momentum and being employed from each side, the citizen's anxieties have demonstrated themselves in public as well as on the internet. It is certainly not a unique phenomenon as people all over the EU have exhibited their Islamophobic emotions by protesting on the streets against migrant quotas, or with unfortunate events of Muslim minorities being directly confronted with violence. Yet, as people feared the multiple and recurrent terrorist attacks, an important fact is that Slovakia has not experienced any terrorist attack on its territory, had not to deal with the foreign fighters phenomenon or its youth being en-masse radicalized. Meanwhile the refugee distribution quotas set by the EU institutions were moderate and Slovakia itself represented only a transition hub for them. Despite such facts, Slovakia has been witnessing a large-scale propaganda on the internet where hate speech was also spread by politicians not taking responsibility for their disinformation (Walter 2019). Muslim minorities, while consisting only of 0.2 percent of the Slovak population, were deemed according to opinion polls, as unwanted for as much as 68% of the respondents, stating that they would not want them as a neighbour. Not to mention the multiple anti-Islamization protests organised by the political party LSNS, where one of their most famous mobilised 14 thousand citizens (Hafez 2018, 439-442). As an illustration of the changing tendencies where members of the LSNS group were seen firstly as outsiders, have now members in the parliament whose attitude can be demonstrated by dubious violent incidents, such as the example of a verbal assaults on a Muslim family in Bratislava (Dugovič 2016). Showing an alteration in political culture, where state representatives are being chosen for being able to propose an alternative truth and not their added value in terms of expertise.

RECENT DEVELOPMENT

Such political changes, disparities and doubtfulness of the voters and their ontological insecurity, has been considerably deepened by the COVID-19 pandemic and people fearing unemployment and social isolation. The consequences of this crisis have expressed themselves as an interconnected relation of polarisation and consequent medical difficulties. Such disorder has been in large part caused by the spread of disinformation and a wrangled-up government that wasn't able to unite the country with a constant reassuring political discourse. Thus, creating space for the opposition and far-right political scene to doubt every decision, causing not only a low vaccination rate, but also an effect where citizens do not trust the public experts. An effect where either doctors or scientist competency is being disregarded, by going against their recommendations and regulations because "people's freedom is being violated". Despite critical numbers of hospitalized patients, people have been encouraged to participate in demonstrations in the streets of Bratislava as well as in front of houses of the members of the government's pandemic committee (Osvaldová et al. 2021; Lendel 2021). The situation went as far as inciting own followers to raid grocery stores under the anti-mask protests. Here, such action went as far as altercations between the protestors and police forces occurred (Šnidl 2021). It is without a doubt that such pandemic reality in Slovakia was largely caused by the constant spread of Russian disinformation narratives.

With this in mind and the current situation in Ukraine, it is impossible to look for explanations to the rise of extremism and far-right relevance in Slovakia, without connecting it to the Russian hybrid strategy seeking EU destabilization. In addition to the spread of disinformation, a significant security concern for the intelligence community was comprised by the presence of the notorious Russian motorcycle club with close ties to Putin, "*Noční Vlci*" (*Night Wolves*) establishing their European base on the Slovak territory and interacting with locals as well as politicians, or the activities of paramilitary organization such as "Slovenskí Branci" (Slovak Conscripts) considering themselves as allies of Putin's Russia (Golianová and Kazharski 2020). Even a week before the latest Russian invasion on the territory of Ukraine, the discourse of SMER-SD, LSNS and Republika1 has been accusing the government, the parliament

1 Newly established far-right party constituting of politicians that left LSNS due to internal discords. Despite considering themselves as a traditional political party different from the LSNS party, their extremist tendencies are undeniable. More concerning, the party consists of high profile members such as a former military attaché, police investigative or a former officer of the Military Intelligence service. Hence, an arising concern of extremist tendencies present in the Slovak state

members of the collation and the president Zuzana Čapútová of treason due to the signature of a defense cooperation agreement with the United States, hanging billboards with such statements all around Slovakia (Osvaldová 2022).

Later, with an obvious Russian guilt of aggression, Slovakia still represents an exemplary case of engrained doubt caused by years of Russian disinformation campaigns. Despite the former weeks of the campaign forcing such parties to turn down their pro-Russian discourse, they eventually returned to charge in line with Russian propaganda narratives – questioning authenticity of the various events of atrocities in Ukraine and criticizing the government for providing weapons to Ukraine with claims that it will endanger the country (Webnoviny.sk 2022). Such engrained consequences have been moreover underlined by serious evidences under a recent operation of the Military Intelligence, broking a Russian GRU spying network that sought to recruit nationals for cooperation, among them an university pro-rector or a conspiracy-website journalist (Janicek 2022). For these realities, a recent opinion poll conducted by the Slovak Academy of Science has demonstrated reasons to be even more concerned, where results are showing that one third of the respondents believe that the war in Ukraine was deliberately provoked by the West and Russia only responded to such act (SAV 2022).

CONCLUSION

As can be seen on this case study of far-right extremism in Slovakia, a series of global crises and little time for the institutions as well as for the civil society to recover – grievances can accumulate. A constant accumulation of anxiety does not predict positive governance for any country, even less if that country represents a target of a hybrid strategy enacted by a regional power in order to destabilize the overall EU decision making process. It is too early to presuppose whether such extremist tendencies can transform into terrorist acts by frustrated people due to inflation and recession. However, it remains a fact that the current realities do not demonstrate ordinary behaviour, and disinformation campaigns were able to obscure the behaviour of some individuals. Currently, civilians are ready to verbally assault politicians, send bullets in envelopes, propagate death threats behind their keyboards, or even further, visiting some of the politician's private property and violently protest – such attitude needs to be observed attentively. What is sure for now, that extremist tendencies will not disappear from countries

institutions management.

such as Slovakia where internal political struggle is engaging in a fight for power with the previous corrupt political figures trying to save their neck – in such struggle, spreading disinformation narratives can become a dangerous weapon to establish democratic doubts. Only stable governments that are able to properly communicate with their own population will be able to protect themselves from disinformation campaigns and appease far-right extremist tendencies. Such scenario, however, cannot occur if further boundaries and regulations to secure internet platforms are not set.

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* Manuscript was received on September 1, 2022 and the paper was accepted for publishing on September 19, 2022.

*Anastasia Latenkova**

*Graduate Student of Security Studies, Institute of Political Studies,
Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University Prague*

UNRETURNED FOREIGN FIGHTERS AND THEIR FAMILIES IN IRAQ AND SYRIA

Abstract

The main subject of the paper is foreign fighters and their families who remain in Iraq and Syria. The paper aims to shed light on the current state of unreturned foreign fighters and their families in Iraqi and Syrian camps and prisons to facilitate the discussion on an appropriate response towards the “unreturned”. The paper additionally attempts to reflect on possible consequences of the current state of the foreign fighters and their families in Iraq and Syria. Theoretical framework of the paper revolves around the definition of a foreign fighter and potential causes for becoming one. The paper employs qualitative methodological approach and relies upon secondary descriptive data collected through the analysis of academic resources and news outlets. The paper explores three main sections of the discussion: the unreturned in Syria, the unreturned in Iraq, and stateless humans. As a result, the paper demonstrates how the unreturned foreign fighters and their families, isolated and condemned, are cemented into a socio-judicial limbo. They live in dire conditions having no determined future or a community to return to. The paper concludes that such conditions are compatible with a rationale for joining the IS. Such a conclusion represents a serious challenge which, if neglected, can lead to the reemergence of the next IS.

Keywords: ISIS foreign fighters, returning ISIS fighters, ISIS, Iraq, Syria, repatriation, terrorism

* Contact: 76008292@fsv.cuni.cz

INTRODUCTION

It is approximated that at least 40000 foreigners from over 120 countries embarked on a journey to become a part of the Islamic State (hereafter “IS”) in Syria and Iraq (United Nations 2019, 16) (Acheson and Paul 2020, 4). While the notion of foreign fighters exhibiting religious extremism is not a unique feature of the IS, the number of foreigners joining the IS was unprecedented. Since the visible demise of the IS, the international community has attempted to decide upon appropriate measures for the foreign fighters returnees and ensure domestic security with their return. Additional challenge arose with the fact that many foreign fighters also had families who would need to be potentially repatriated as well. Whereas foreign fighters’ families have also posed security concerns to the countries, their real threat remains rather dubious. Nonetheless, the number of foreign fighters returnees is, in fact, not as big as it was initially expected. In 2018, it was estimated that only 17% of IS-affiliated foreigners have returned to their countries (Cook and Vale 2018, 7,15). This indicates that a substantial number of foreign fighters remain in Syria and Iraq, while countries and organizations are trying to decide upon adequate repatriation response and deradicalization mechanism. To adopt appropriate policies, however, it is crucial to understand what is happening to unreturned foreign fighters and their families in Syria and Iraq. This paper henceforth attempts to explore conditions of unreturned foreign fighters and their families in Iraq and Syria and reflect on possible consequences of the current situation.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

To be able to analyze the phenomenon of foreign fighters and their families who are still trapped in Syria and Iraq, it is necessary to define what constitutes a foreign fighter and what drives a person to join the IS as a foreign fighter. According to David Malet (2013, 9), foreign fighters are those who participate in insurgency during a civil conflict but are not citizens of the conflict state(s). Barak Mendelson (2011) further adds that foreign fighters are a feature of asymmetric conflicts where one of the conflict sides are represented as a non-state actor. Mendelson (2011, 193-194) also differentiates foreign fighters from foreign trained fighters. Foreign fighters, according to Mendelsohn, participate in a conflict which is occurring outside of his own country and is not his own country’s war. Foreign trained fighters, in their turn, are normally local people who travel to a different area, undergo training there, and return to execute attacks

elsewhere, most frequently in their own country. Thomas Hegghammer (2010) further elaborates on the definition and suggests that a foreign fighter is an agent who fulfils four criteria. First, it is a person who has entered an insurgency group and operates with it. According to the author, this point differentiates foreign fighters from international terrorist who usually operate out-of-area and concentrate on violence against non-combatants. Second, Hegghammer agrees with other authors and states that a foreign fighter is a person who does not have a citizenship of the conflict state, neither does he have a strong relationship with its warring segments. This point eliminates returning members of diaspora or various exile radicals who already have preexisting interest in the conflict. Third, a foreign fighter should not have a connection to official military organizations. This way the author excludes soldiers who follow their generals despite their ideology or kinship. Lastly, a foreign fighter is unpaid, hence foreign fighters are distinguished from mercenaries who follow the greatest monetary benefit (Hegghammer 2010, 57-59).

There is no unique reason why foreign fighters join the IS. Benmelech and Klor (2016), for instance, believe that foreign fighters did not join the IS due to purely political or economic reasons. Instead, they were compelled by the ideology and the challenges they encountered while trying to integrate to a rather homogenous Western society. Thomas Hegghammer (2010) states that foreign fighters were not actually invited wherever they went, hence there was no evident financial reason for a foreign fighter to join an insurgency group as there is usually no looting, money or power gaining possibilities. Religious reason seems to be the most prominent reason for religious extremism: foreign fighters tend to be driven by the idea that Muslim umma is under an existential threat. Thus, it is necessary to rise against the massacre of Muslim people and the occupation of (holy) Muslim lands. They are additionally supported by the commands of Islamic law which encourages the participation of all Muslim believers, regardless of where they live (Hegghammer 2010, 65, 73-74) Malet (2010), however, emphasizes that recruiters into the IS play a crucial role in the number of foreign fighters that eventually joined the IS. Recruiters tend to emphasize the need of a defensive response to sustain survival of the community. Recruiters are perfect marketing strategists: they develop a targeting plan and create an emotive narrative that resonates with people. Malet (2010) demonstrates four stages in the recruitment model. Firstly, rebels, who are usually a weaker segment of the local conflict, would try to seek external assistance and specialists by purposefully using emotive narratives to evoke outrage, fear, and resentment in their target's mind and heart. As a next step they would

continue strategic targeting of outside groups or even governments who might have ethnic, religious, or ideological connection to the insurgencies. Then, within such groups, rebels would detect active individuals suffering of (perceived) marginalization. Both social bonds and grievances would constitute a flawless rationale to join the insurgency. Last step includes persuasion of potential recruits: they are often told that their common group is existentially threatened, hence recruit's involvement is a key to the group survival. Moreover, recruiters frequently use manipulative strategies for to make their target feel as if he is obliged to fulfill his duty to the common group. A regular profile of a person who recruiters target for foreign fighting is a man in his early 20s. He is usually a first- or second-generation immigrant who is coming from lower socio-economic class. Additional important feature that recruiters seek is prior military experience (Malet 2010, 100-109).

THE UNRETURNED IN SYRIA

Once Syrian Democratic Forces (hereafter "SDF") recaptured areas from the IS, they have gathered alleged IS members, including foreigners, together with their families and detained them. According to March 2019 statistics, SDF still held around 1000 foreign fighters (Jenkins 2019). Kurdish-lead authorities have chosen a specific method in regard to foreigners who were alleged of joining the IS. While Syrian citizens were transferred to the ad hoc counterterrorism court and put on trial, foreigners were not prosecuted. The explanation lies in the belief that foreigners affiliated with the IS should be a legal hardship of their home countries. Kurdish authorities have expressed their desire for the foreign governments to take their own citizens back to their courts (Houry 2019). However, not all countries would like a foreign fighter to return on their soil due to internal fear and security challenges. Some countries have also expressed their hesitance over the possibility of prosecution at home. France and the UK, for instance, decided to use the possibility of residency and citizenship revocation, additionally suggesting that the foreign fighters should be persecuted and left locally, where they are detained (Bąkowski and Puccio 2016) (Mehra and Paulussen 2019).

The challenge, however, lies in the judicial system established in the north of Syria. It is flawed and is short of international acknowledgement. The main obstacles consist of the inadequate defense mechanism, subsequent absence of defense lawyer, and lack of trained professionals among local judges and prosecutors. Additionally, there is no functioning mechanism for the formal appeal process. Thus, the

possibility of a fair, internationally recognized trial is rather dubious. Besides listed challenges, Kurdish forces were perpetually accused of torturing detainees to death, even for smaller charges than terrorism (Mehra and Paulussen 2019)(Alarabiya News 2021). Since SDF denies such accusations, it is complicated to assess how many detainees have been tortured. Even if international community assists Syrian judicial system with the conduction of fair trials, the SDF is still an improbable long-term jailer, simply due to its own uncertain future in the country: SDF does not hold international (judicial) recognition. Setting a tribunal similar to those in the Balkans and Rwanda is also a rather dubious solution, because setting tribunals is a lengthy process, whereas witness protection is complicated in a country torn by war (BBC 2019). As a result, with no international agreement or unified response, detained foreigners are stranded in a legal vacuum in the north of Syria.

In addition to detained male foreign fighters, SDF also detains women and children affiliated to the IS. Unlike men, women and children are held in camps (al-Hol camp being the largest), instead of prisons, and are not normally brought to trial. Analogous to men, however, women and children are living in the legal limbo: they cannot leave the camp whereas SDF is waiting for the countries to repatriate these people. While Indonesia, the U.S., Russia, Kazakhstan, and a few other countries, have repatriated their citizens from the camps, other countries, unfortunately, withheld from active repatriation of women and children (Mehra and Paulussen 2019) (Dworkin 2020)(Blinken 2021). Sweden and France have chosen a distinct approach and have accepted only orphaned children from the camps. The official justification of reluctance towards women and children repatriation was often framed within an argument that some countries do not have a consular representation in Syria anymore. The sincere reason, however, it is argued, is more trivial: countries see mothers and their children (some of whom became fighters as young as at the age of nine) as a security threat and a potential jihadi for whom they do not have a proper prosecution mechanism. Moreover, the countries have grown less trustful of IS-affiliated women, since within the IS women were found to execute not only caregiving function but, encouraged by the IS itself, also an active role in recruitment, suicide attacks across Europe and combat. The situation with children is rather polemic since many of them were brought to life while their mother lived in the areas controlled by the IS and clearly had no choice in choosing their whereabouts (Chatterjee 2016, 213)(Middle East Eye 2017)(Houry 2019).

Houry (2019) points out that the situation with IS-affiliated women and children started to resemble endless detention with neither legal basis

nor a return plan. In the meantime, some women lamented interrogations and beatings occurring in the camp. Furthermore, health conditions in the camp are reportedly meager. Camp inhabitants are helpless against various diseases, including tuberculosis and hepatitis A, which spread quickly, and impact children the most. Doctors Without Borders have even named the humanitarian situation in the camps “shameful”, as there is no protection from COVID-19, no safe drinking water resources, and no sanitation infrastructure (Médecins Sans Frontières 2021). Besides the lack of physical health assistance, psychological support in the form of, for instance, trauma counselling is absent, too (Saad 2020).

The other side of the coin, however, is that camps, like prisons, have practically accumulated thousands of people who might still share the IS ideology. While IS fighters might have been defeated, the ideology behind the IS is very much alive in the minds of remaining people. Aggravated by the dire conditions in the camps, some radicalized mothers raise their children with an idea of violent jihad and future Caliphate. In the camp al-Hol, it has been reported that strong female believers in the IS ideology continue strict policing through *hesba* (“religious police”) groups and confront women who do not feel affiliation with the IS anymore and do not act accordingly. Moreover, such *hesba* units execute internal punishments: through torture, flogging, murder, etc. SDF, in its turn, claims that they do not have enough resources to terminate pro-IS activities in the camp (Mironova 2020)(Coles and Faucon 2021)(Saleh 2021). The situation is worsened by the cases of sexual violence, forceful recruitment, and human trafficking affiliated with these camps (U.S. Department of State 2021, 531-533). On the one hand, it is crucial, given the circumstance, to ensure that camp residents are deradicalized and reintegrated to stop the spread of the IS ideology. On the other hand, the logical question is how can countries ensure that women and children repatriated from Syrian camps do not commit terrorist attacks or continue recruitment once returned?

THE UNRETURNED IN IRAQ

In Iraq many foreigners, including women and children, affiliated with the IS were detained as well. Contrary to the Syrian approach, Iraq conducted trials against foreign fighters who were charged for their involvement with the IS and, in addition, accused of illegal trespassing to the foreign territory. Trials were administered against not only men, but also women and children above the age of nine. It might be shocking that foreign children as young as the age of nine can be sentenced for an

illegal entry onto the foreign territory while they most probably did not have any choice (Houry 2019). Their parents brought them across the border. Despite the persecuted children above nine years old, younger children also must experience the life of prison as they are often detained in the same cell as their mothers. It is rather unjust that a simple fact of being born “within” the IS condemned those children to a life in prison. Iraqi legal proceedings are rather of questionable nature, as the trials are often rushed and last around ten minutes each. As a result, detainees are sentenced to harsh punishments, including death penalty and mass hangings, without individual regard to their actions. Both IS combatants and civil IS employees have the same chance of being sentenced to death penalty. Yet detainees do not have access for an adequate and practical defense to argue for their case (Revkin 2018). Another remarkable concern is that in Iraq IS-affiliated detainees tend to be mixed with convicts charged for other crimes which poses a security concern of possible spread of jihadi ideology among other prisoners. At the same time, Iraqi prisons are usually described as overcrowded places that lack enough guards who could have potentially prevented intermingling between prisoners and contain ideology spread. There is, additionally, certain ambiguity over what will happen to all the IS-affiliated foreigners once their sentence in Iraq comes to an end. There is no definite answer to whether these people will be repatriated or sent elsewhere (Houry 2019).

Similar to Syria, Iraq also hosts camps for displaced families (women and children) of IS-affiliated fighters, both local and foreign. People who live in those camps are afraid to return to their neighborhoods: it is claimed that they are being harassed by police, ex neighbors, and family members for being wives and offspring of IS fighters. Foreign women often claim to be either afraid of the home community or not willing to live in the lands of infidels. The situation in such camps is dreadful. Camp inhabitants are suffering from lack of education, health facilities, and food suppliers. Camp residents often lack any documentation and hence cannot freely travel around the area, neither can they pass military checkpoints in the country. That means people from such camps are not allowed to enroll into education facilities or visit doctors outside the camp (Greenwood 2017)(Beaubien 2022). Communal stigma against fighters’ families on one side and no prospects in the camp, on the other, leaves them in a limbo. At the same time, Iraq declared that they would like to close those camps (Human Rights Watch 2021). The question is then what will happen to camp residents? While local IS-families might have a chance of reintegration into their own local community, families of foreign fighters do not have such an opportunity.

STATELESS HUMANS

It has been already mentioned that some countries revoked the citizenship of their foreign fighters, leaving them stateless. Additional challenge that unites Syria and Iraq is children born into foreign fighters' families while they were living under the IS. Such children do not have birth certificates that would be recognized internationally (Luquerna 2020). Moreover, even if there was IS documentation on those children, most of it was lost or destroyed during the fight. Both issues practically make such children stateless human beings. Furthermore, as countries do not have diplomatic representation in the north of Syria, for example, the whole process of establishing identity and verifying parental lineage, which could grant those children a citizenship, becomes burdensome. Nonetheless, it is noteworthy that there was a small progress related to recently born children. SDF and local administration offices in Northern Syria, for example, began issuing birth certificates to those children who were born to foreign women in the SDF camps. However, this tactic has not yet been applied to children who were born before the camp, under the IS. The issue persists (Houry 2019).

CONCLUSION

There are certain limitations to the paper's content. First of all, it is rather problematic to find information on the conditions in the prisons and camp. Uncomfortable truth of the hardships within these institutions is not something that is widely shared by local forces or governments. As a result, the paper had to heavily rely upon secondary data. Secondly, when talking about unreturned foreign fighters and their families living in camps and prisons, it is complicated to completely isolate them from local IS-affiliated "community". After all, they represent one societal sector which undergoes similar problems with local judicial system, dire conditions, and community rejection.

It is unclear what the future holds for the foreign fighters and their families remaining in Iraq and Syria. There is no particular deradicalization program in place. Neither there is a reintegration plan for the prisoners. In fact, camps and prisons become new ideological battlegrounds that reinforce jihadi ideology and violent extremism. Foreign fighters' home countries could potentially repatriate their citizens and work on deradicalization of these individuals, but the question of foreign fighters is not that easy, and it heavily depends on the political environment of each individual country. Moreover, some foreign fighters and families do not

have any citizenship, leaving them in a stateless limbo. Foreign fighters and their families typically represent a substantial security concern for their countries. As a result, these people are not welcomed neither in Iraq or Syria, nor in their home countries. In the meantime, foreign fighters and their families undergo brutal conditions of rather unjust judicial system and basic necessities deprivation. Additionally, it is especially acute to consider the future of children who have never had a chance to experience life outside of violence. How can they become a part of a nonviolent society, after having lived through the IS ferocity and the hardship of a prison sentence? It is crucial to consider the unreturned seriously, as those people, unwanted and isolated, are living in extremely poor conditions with no prospects, no determined future. These conditions resonate with potential reasons for joining the IS which were outlined in the beginning of the paper. As a result, foreign fighters and their families might continue supporting the IS or return to the community that truly accepts them – to their ideology and IS companions. They can also radicalize fellow prisoners or camp residents. In such a case, the world is only delaying the re-emergence of the next IS.

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* Manuscript was received on September 14, 2022 and the paper was accepted for publishing on September 30, 2022.

*Camilla Biolcati**

*Graduate Student of Security Studies, Institute of Political Studies,
Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University Prague*

FOREIGN FIGHTERS OF AL-SHABAAB: SOMALI-AMERICAN COMMUNITY IN MINNESOTA CASE STUDY

Abstract

The purpose of the paper is to contribute to the vast literature regarding the topic of foreign fighters, specifically in reference to Somali youth residing in the U.S. state of Minnesota who have joined the Al-Shabaab terrorist group. The research is carried out by tracing and analyzing theory regarding the processes of radicalization, and then applying it to the Somali-American community employing the method of content analysis. The choice of this method stemmed from the need to understand and explain a certain behavior or pattern, relating in this specific case to the inner and deeper motivations that led a certain community to be more vulnerable to the influence of jihad. The research question of this research raises concern regarding the most relevant factors that may have influenced some members of the Somali American community in Minnesota to approach the world of jihad and the al-Shabaab group specifically. The research also examines what were the recruitment techniques used by members of that group in order to have a greater grasp on the Somali youth. Therefore, through the study of the current debate among scholars regarding the push and pull factors that cause an individual to take up the life of a foreign fighter, this paper seeks to shed light on which ones best apply to the particularity of the example of the Somali community in Minnesota. As in fact a diaspora community, this characteristic is of fundamental importance for understanding the dynamics by which nationals embark on the activities of extremist groups far from one's home country. The conclusions that can be drawn from this research regarding factors that have a greater impact

* Email: 13972428@fsv.cuni.cz

on the radicalization process of American youth of Somali origin and the ability of the Al-Shabaab group to take full advantage of the particular condition of that community in the recruitment process. Indeed, what emerges from this analysis is the level of influence of those identity-nationalist and identity-religious elements, as well as the economic and social factors that characterized the two waves of radicalization and recruitment of Somali-American youth of Minnesota examined in this research, referring to the period between 2007 and 2009.

Keywords: Somali-American community, Minnesota, Radicalization, Foreign fighters, Youth.

INTRODUCTION

In light of the fact that Minnesota has produced a high number of foreign fighters oriented towards various terrorist organizations, including mainly ISIS, the purpose of this paper is to analyze the choice of Somali-American youth in Minnesota to join the Al-Shabaab group, covering the time framework from 2007 to 2009. Although East Africa has been the main pool of foreign fighters for Al-Shabaab, in the short period analyzed from the Minneapolis city area alone, at least 20 young boys left for Somalia to join the jihad (Harrington and Thompson 2021).

In light of the fact that the Somali-American community in Minnesota has produced more foreign fighters than any other state in the United States, therefore, the purpose of this paper is to analyze what were the main reasons. Why this trend in this specific community? What are the vulnerabilities that have led Somali-American youth to radicalization and how is recruitment conducted in the Minnesota community? After briefly introducing the phenomenon of foreign fighters and different theoretical models of the radicalization process, the main factors that influenced Somali American youth between 2007 and 2009, in the so-called two waves, will be analyzed.

FOREIGN FIGHTER PHENOMENON AND THE PROCESS OF RADICALIZATION

The addressed phenomenon is of relevant interest as, since recent years, the insurgency of violent non-state actors started to rely more and more on the inclusion of the so-called foreign fighters. There is still a lot of discussion and disagreement on the legal and universally accepted definition of this phenomenon. However, for the purpose of this

paper, the definition proposed by the Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights seems the most suitable and even the most widely accepted one:

“A foreign fighter is an individual who leaves his or her country of origin or habitual residence to join a non-State armed group in an armed conflict abroad and who is primarily motivated by ideology, religion, and/or kinship” (UNODC/TPB 2019, 11).

The formulation of this definition has been constructed following and on the basis of the first appearance of the Foreign Terrorist Fighter terminology, in the Resolution 2170 of the Security Council of the United Nations in 2014 (UNSC, S/RES/2170). This particular year could be considered, of course, not the birth of the phenomenon of foreign fighters, but rather the pivotal moment when it began to be perceived as a threat by the international community and governments in particular. Indeed, the reference in the Resolution was geared toward the escalation of violence that was taking place in Iraq and Syria and the increased flow of fighters from the West to these territories in conflict. Above all, the concern revolved around the willingness of repatriation from the volunteers, which was mostly worrying Western governments about a possible ‘blowback’ against them (Malet 2015, 1).

In any case, the use *per se* of foreign fighters is certainly not new; it became more defined as a phenomenon at the time of the establishment of the Westphalian international system of sovereign statehood, and thus the emergence of nation states. For instance, the United States were the first to make it illegal for their nationals to join foreign military forces, punishing it with the loss of citizenship under the Neutrality Act of 1794 (Malet 2013, 36). The example was followed by many other countries. Medieval Europe, to say, has always seen the use of multinational forces in combat, or trivially the use of mercenaries, which differ significantly from the actual meaning of foreign fighters. A good example to clarify this differentiation can be traced back to the Spanish Civil War, which involved many transnational forces. Indeed, unlike the mercenaries who fought as labor and thus for money, the recruitment of forces in this confrontation was based primarily on ideological affinities. Similarly, the Arab mobilization of volunteers in the anti-Soviet jihadist movement directed against the Soviet Red Army occupation can be considered another good exemplification (Malet 2013). Hence the difference relies on the motivation that moves them to get engaged in an armed conflict in another country.

There is no fixed pattern of reasons why an individual decides to leave his or her country and join the struggle in a foreign country. The

characteristic of voluntariness is not to be underestimated, but there are also a number of external factors that facilitate this choice. What academics have found are a numerous set of push and pull factors that contribute to a radicalization process in an individual and thus to a conscious choice to make this decision.

Especially young people are more vulnerable to get influenced and radicalized, and above all are more likely to be recruited by terrorist groups. The youth represent an important source for terrorist organizations, and due to certain individual and contextual factors, they are more easily involved in violent extremism. The range of motivations varies widely, from pursuit of a group identity, ideological affinity with that group, to a sense of social, cultural and political exclusion. There are also economic reasons: poverty and unemployment play a role, as does the quest for fame, glory and respect, for what seems like a heroic and exciting adventure. In addition, there are the influences derived from the circle of family and friends or from the community one attends in general, which may be that of a religious leader. Scholars didn't find a universal method of radicalization, but rather a variety of push, pull and individual factors that influence a person and can lead this person to violent extremism. In fact, radicalization does not necessarily mean being a terrorist, but inversely it can be said that there is no violent extremism without radicalization.

In general, radicalization is defined as a process whereby an individual gradually moves toward the implementation of violent acts based on extremist views (Hardy 2018). Several authors have proposed models of radicalization that both resemble and differ in certain respects. Among these, for example, most relevant to the case study seem to be the NYPD Model and Sageman's model. The former elaborates four stages in which an individual goes from the state of pre-radicalization, to self-identification with specifically the Salafist current of the Islamic religion, entering afterwards a stage of indoctrination in which one adopts jihadist ideology, finally entering the stage of jihadization and acceptance to join an extremist militant activity (King and Taylor 2011). On the other hand, Sageman's 'Four Prongs' represent an interweaving of three cognitive and one situational factor. The first stage is a sense of moral outrage caused by a particular event, consequently the development of a specific worldview that then resonates with personal experiences of moral violation. Finally, this cognitive process leads to interaction with a network of like-minded people (King and Taylor 2011). Moreover, Wiktorowicz's theory, which is not directly referred to in terms of radicalization, presents four processes that can lead a person to join an Islamic extremist group. According to

the author, there is an initial cognitive opening as a consequence of a personal crisis that, secondarily, results in a religious quest (Wiktorowicz 2004,7). Third, the individual aligns his or her worldview with the Islamist worldview, then entering the stage of socialization and adherence to members of the movement by adopting a group identity that differs from the mainstream society. More elaborate is the Moghaddam's "Staircase to Terrorism", whereby through six stages an individual undertakes a process that leads him or her to final radicalization, association with a terrorist group, and the willingness to make an extreme gesture such as a terrorist act (Christmann 2012, 17). Throughout the journey, there is a feeling of discontent at the societal level, whereby an individual perceives himself to be deprived of certain possibilities in relation to an outside group, who secondarily become potential targets of his own frustration as perpetrators. In this context of impatience and disappointment, the moral justification for terrorism comes into play. The latter two models leave room for an extremist organization to play an active role in the process of radicalization and ultimately recruitment (King and Taylor 2011). Indeed, the process of recruitment by external facilitators can be directed at radicalized individuals as much as at individuals who are not necessarily radicalized (Borum 2011).

Hence, the phenomenon of foreign fighters is a complex mechanism demonstrated by the fact that it is difficult to come up with a common definition. This applies to the radicalization process as well, for which there are several valid models.

CASE STUDY: SOMALI-AMERICAN COMMUNITY IN MINNESOTA

Context

According to the data provided by the Minnesota Compass, out of a population of 5,563,378, a total of 78,846 people are of Somali origin, including Somali immigrants and Somali-Americans (Minnesota Compass 2022). This exemplifies the largest Somali diaspora outside of East Africa. The first wave of immigration originated from the hardships generated by famine and warfare in the early 1990s. Since the beginning of the Somali civil war, more than a million Somalis have left the country, precisely the U.S. began issuing visas to Somali refugees around 1992. Soon the largest community of Somalis in the Somali diaspora emerged in Minnesota, the majority of which live in the Twin Cities metropolitan

area. Despite this, over the years, it has always been difficult to determine exactly how many people were living in the territory given a certain reticence and fear of presenting themselves to the census and taking part in any governmental initiative, due to the political background from which they were escaping. According to the Security Debrief blog, Cedar-Riverside, also known as Little Mogadishu, is the first landing point for Somali migrants and refugees, who set their goal on moving to other areas of Minnesota, given its reputation as a very impoverished neighborhood with a high crime rate and few job opportunities. In this neighborhood in Minneapolis, the Riverside Plaza is the most iconic landmark, a public housing complex which, according to data dating back to 2013, is populated by more than 10,000 people, compared to the 4,000 for whom there would be room (Hienz 2019). Minnesota, and precisely the Twin Cities, at that time offered economic and social resources and had a quite well-developed system of reception of refugees since the aftermath of the Vietnam War (Hill 2017). In spite of this, with the following waves and the increase of refugees, many governmental and non-governmental institutions began to be overwhelmed and show difficulties in providing proper support and services to youth and families (Hienz 2019). As with any immigration story, arriving in a context so different from one's origin and from a society so different from one's own has created not a few discomfort factors for this community. In analyzing the following critical points, it also emerges what may have been the main footholds for initiating a process of radicalization and recruitment in this specific context.

Radicalization: a complex set of push and pull factors

The vulnerability of young Somali-Americans stems from a multiplicity of factors. What the academy refers to as push and pull factors are a variety of situations that favor bringing a person closer to the radicalization process. In Somali-American youth, there are several aspects that should be taken into consideration. For those who have just arrived in the US for example, the lack of linguistic skills limits the labor opportunity and results in economic and social immobility. This state of social downgrading is considered, for example, in the model we saw in Moghaddam's theory as one of the social factors that characterize the ground floor of the "Staircase to Terrorism". Despite this, scholars have not identified poverty and unemployment as the main push factors of involvement in terrorism, though they still represent a risk factor of approaching radicalization (Weine et al. 2009). In addition, there is a

sense of deep bewilderment in finding oneself catapulted into a Western culture and society. Even more difficult it proves to be for those Somali-Americans born to immigrants who struggle with a profound identity crisis, which bounces them between their roots and the family context and the everyday life around them, in the country in which they are born and raised, the United States. This is the prime example of the identity crisis that Wiktorowicz, for example, tells us about in the cognitive opening phase (Wiktorowicz 2004). Not to be forgotten are those referred to as Generation 1.5, that is, young people who were born in Somalia and came to the United States after a vicissitude of dramatic events, including life in refugee camps (Weine et al. 2009). In the developmental stage, these children have been exposed to war, atrocities, violence and forced migration that exerted an impact on their psychological well-being and their ability to adapt in a new society. In addition, the experience of these traumatic events may be indirectly passed on by young parents who have suffered torture and sexual abuse, who sometimes struggle in exercising that leadership role to reorient their children in their identity crisis. Even more common is the case that the parents are totally absent, whilst 70 percent of them are single parents (Weine et al. 2009). The result of this soul-searching leads Somali youth to approach and create groups in which they can feel better integrated and supported. That often represents an open window for someone else to influence this process of self-discovery.

Typical of Somali society is the division into clans, which makes that sense of belonging to a group even more exclusive and sought after. For example, the most prevalent group in the Somali ancient tradition are the Darod, Dir, Hawiye and Isaaq, which are in turn divided into other sub-clans (Venugopalan 2017, 2). Therefore, in the American context, not only do these divisions by affiliation remain, but more importantly they manifest themselves in the form of another phenomenon, which is that of criminal gangs. Somali youth approach these gangs in their desperate attempt to find acceptance and fraternity in a group that combines their belonging to two such different contexts, Somalia and America. Gangs reflect more of Western life, US social structure and identity, but not in the observance of its laws, and therefore pose a major threat to internal security. Gangs like the 'Somali Hot Boyz' and 'Madhibaan with Attitude' represent a kind of insurance and support for young boys who are socially isolated from the rest of society (Yuen 2009). Not only that, gangs also provide security and protection, albeit illegal, that young people without trust in institutions and government apparatuses seek. Moreover, these groups have been identified as key players in recruitment, as reported by

Waheid Siraach, a sergeant with the Metro Transit Police (Maruf 2015). Other groups of young people searching for themselves may move toward religious groups, developing a more rigid and narrow view of their faith, which is also often exploited by recruiters.

The religion professed by the Somali community is Islam, historically oriented toward the Sufi current. Nevertheless, the country's political and social instability and the deterioration of its clan structures have allowed the infiltration of other Islamic currents, such as Sunni Wahhabism. The spread of a narrower interpretation of Islam, as Salafism, a branch of Sunni Islam, has made its way into Somali society ravaged by violence and conflict. Nowadays, Sunnism is the predominant creed in the Somali community in Minnesota. It is likely that this is mostly derived from the inability of religious leaders to pass on their religious literature interpretation as a result of the civil war (Southers and Hienz 2015). Religious centers are among the first nongovernmental associations to provide aid and welcome to migrants and refugees, and especially the presence of mosques in a predominantly Protestant and Catholic community has grown exponentially with the influx of new waves of migration, precisely in order to accommodate the Somali community. The discussion revolves around how much these places of worship have played a role in recruiting and bringing young Somalis closer to jihad. As evidence of this, the largest mosque in the Twin Cities area, Abu-Bakr al Saddique Islamic Center, has been recognized by most as a focal point for recruiting young boys. Especially with regard to the first wave of foreign fighters, most of the 20 boys who left for Somalia between 2007 and 2008 were regulars at this mosque (Aziza 2016). Unlike this first wave, however, the fighters in the following wave did not have strong religious backgrounds, but rather came to it as a result of the Ethiopian invasion of Somalia. The ideological-nationalistic factor play an even greater role perhaps in this particular case. The complexity of the political and social situation in the country of origin of these young boys lead them to always have one eye on what is happening in the motherland. It is no coincidence that Al-Shaabab terrorist group began its recruitment process around 2006.

Recruitment process: joining Al-Shabaab

The invasion of Somalia by the historic enemy depicted in Ethiopia has been a catalytic event. As a result of Al-Shabaab and ICU¹ takeover of Mogadishu, the neighbor country as well as the US,

1 The Islamic Court Union was at first a social-religious movement formed by local Islamic

feared a spillover of jihadi violence. The Transnational Government of Somalia, established after the collapse of the Siad Barre regime, requested international aid, which led to the intervention of the United States and the African Union. Many experts have traced the radicalization and transformation of Al-Shaabab into a full-fledged insurgency group to this event. At this sensitive moment, this terrorist group was the most in need of men to support its resistance, and thus it started to rely on the involvement of foreign fighters (Klobucista, Masters, and Sergie 2019). The interference of a foreign country invoked those nationalistic sentiments that had a strong hold on young Somali-Americans, and the involvement of the country that was hosting them but which had not turned out to be all in all the so-called 'American dream', animated the spirits even more (Jenkins 2011). Al-Shabaab soon reached the Somali diaspora, promoting nationalistic and anti-American sentiments, using the image of a traitorous America and a devastated country that needed their help to regain balance and stability (Aziza 2016). The complex set of the previously mentioned push and pull factors, together with this development in the Somalian context, have given extremist groups such as Al-Shabaab the opportunity to manipulate the vulnerability of the youth Somali-American community (Speckhard, Shajkovci, and Ahmed 2018). This can be contextualized, for example, in the indoctrination phase of the NYPD model, whereby religiosity is politicized as a result of an event. Thus, the purpose becomes communal rather than individualistic, given that individuals were joining the jihad to support and save brothers and sisters. The process of recruitment is something that can be carried out both online and offline, in a face-to-face interaction. Recruiters thus insinuated themselves into or facilitated the process of radicalization of youth. Investigations have traced the role of the first recruiters, targeting the Somali community in Minnesota, to a European Al-Shabaab fighter, suggesting a bottom-up process of recruitment, as outlined by Sageman (Weine et al. 2009). But it is also true that top-down approaches to recruitment have emerged as well, and thus the former fighters resulted to be the most incisive. Thus, Al-Shabaab's technique has resulted in a mix of face-to-face or otherwise direct albeit online interactions with former foreign fighters, but also through successful use of online propaganda. Especially first-wave fighters have been instrumental in the recruitment process, maintaining an open communication channel with the Minnesota community through *Twitter*, *Facebook*, and other social

courts which eventually converged in 2000 in the ICU organization. In the context of a political vacuum in 2004 the ICU became a militia force which maintained the control of southern Somalia until the Ethiopian invasion of 2006 (Abbink 2009).

media (Speckhard, Shajkovi, and Ahmed 2018). Zakaria Maruf, for example, is one of the best-known names, and many of the boys who left for Somalia can be linked to him. He first played a recruiting role in the field in 2007, attending the aforementioned Abubakar As-Saddique Islamic Center Mosque, and then continued to maintain contact with people he met in Minnesota once he moved to southern Somalia to fight (Hienz 2019). The messages and propaganda reaching Somali-American youth were mainly directed at glorifying and heroizing Somali jihad, showing it as an exciting adventure in which one can even have fun. In doing so, they offered themselves to solve that identity crisis, thus providing an escape route for those lost boys, giving them a purpose and a sense of belonging to a group that welcomes and accepts them. Even more incisive in this purpose is the role of American-born recruiters, such as Troy Kastigar, who have turned their backs on their homeland and invite Somali-Americans to do the same, to abandon that very difficult life in the United States to engage in the liberation of their land from the aggressor (Aziza 2016).

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the example proposed here reiterates that there are numerous factors in diaspora communities that can lead to involvement of nationals in the activities of extremist groups far from their home country. In the specific case of the Somali community in Minnesota, economic, but especially social factors have played quite a significant role. Social exclusion was found to be one of the main starting points toward the radicalization process, along with religious and nationalistic involvement. The latter aspect is what the terrorist group Al-Shabaab have been better able to exploit in order to recruit foreign fighters under the name of an Islamic-nationalist identity.

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* Manuscript was received on September 9, 2022 and the paper was accepted for publishing on September 26, 2022.

*Mareeva Elizaveta**

Charles University – Faculty of Social Sciences

THE REPATRIATION OF FOREIGN FIGHTERS AND THEIR FAMILIES TO HOME COUNTRIES IN EUROPE

Abstract

One of the modern problems of international security has become the phenomenon of foreign fighters who, as inhabitants of European states, go to Syria and Iraq to join terrorist groups. Some of the fighters subsequently decide, for one reason or another, to repatriate back to Europe. This creates a security dilemma for many states that need to be addressed. The goal of this paper is to identify the best strategies for dealing with foreign fighters and their relatives. In order to achieve this, the paper examines how individual countries around the world have dealt with the repatriation of foreign fighters and their families and how they have followed up with their reintegration into society. The study found that few countries choose to let ex-combatants return and not persecute them. However, those countries that do decide to assist or at least let allow them to come back pay little attention to the psychological assistance and social reintegration of these people.

Keywords: Foreign fighters, Middle East, repatriation of foreign fighters, terrorism, Syria, Iraq

* E-mail address: marlisa1210@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of foreign fighters is one of the contemporary security dilemmas facing both the countries to which fighters travel to support insurgent groups and those to which they consider their home and potential return. For insurgent countries such as Syria and Iraq, where fighters are sent to support terrorist groups, foreigners are a source of money, technology, knowledge, weapons, and military power. However, foreigners are not the only influence on the development of insurgent groups and the development of their activities. This symbiosis poses a security problem for European states, as even after voluntary return to their homeland, former fighters can pose a threat to domestic security and the security of citizens, as returnees may still be exposed to radical ideology and the influence of terrorist groups. As a response, many European states are developing strategies to repatriate, deradicalize and reintegrate their citizens, as well as solutions to mitigate the potential consequences of returnee returns. In doing so, measures should take into account the return of not only the fighters themselves but also the families that they had made or brought with them during their stay in a foreign country. This paper examines how European states formulate a response to address this issue - how states deal with the issue of repatriation of foreign fighters and their families, and what measures they develop to deradicalize returnees and their relatives to ensure their safe return to society. This will help clarify what methods are most effective to resolve the dilemma of repatriating foreign fighters while taking into account their subsequent integration into social life.

REPATRIATION OF FOREIGN FIGHTERS

Some European countries have adopted repatriation policies for residents of their countries who took part in hostilities on the side of extremists. One of the most lenient policies toward returning foreign fighters is in Italy. The European Foundation for Democracy tells the story of Samir Bougana, 25, with Moroccan roots and an Italian passport (The European Foundation for Democracy 2021). He went to fight on the side of Islamist organizations in the Middle East in 2013 and surrendered to a Kurdish organization in 2019. A joint effort by Rome and Washington allowed him to be returned to Italy. In 2021 he was sentenced to four years for involvement in a terrorist organization. Such an example illustrates the Italian authorities' approach to dealing with people who left Italy to fight for the Islamists: they were not afraid to bring some of them back,

and although the man will have to spend several years in prison, after that he can become a full member of Italian society again. It is worth noting that one of the reasons why Italy can afford such repatriation is that according to a study by Marone and Vidino, as of 2019 less than 20% of the studied foreign fighters who went to Syria, Iraq, and other Middle Eastern countries were Italian nationals (Marone and Vidino 2019). Moreover, Marone notes that by 2021, of the 29 returned fighters in Europe with ties to Italy, only 10 were in Italy (Marone 2020). However, a minority of them, like Bougana, were convicted of terrorist activities when the majority remained at large.

Another European country that has set itself the task of returning and reintegrating into society its citizens who left to fight on the side of the Islamists is Kosovo¹. The example of this country is unique - with a relatively small population (less than 2 million), the number of those who left is estimated at more than 400. About 100 of them were taken back in 2019. In other words, the ratio of returning Islamists to the population in Kosovo^{*} is one of the highest in Europe. Pristina has taken a multi-faceted approach to deal with returnees. Just as in Italy, some of the returnees have been sentenced to prison, while others have received suspended sentences or have generally remained free. It is also noteworthy that the returnees received financial support from the government upon their return: vouchers for food and clothing, as well as various housing options (Avdimetaj and Coleman 2020).

The example of Italy, Kosovo^{*}, and other European countries, which have taken a relatively lenient approach (return assistance and partial absence of trials) to citizens who have left to fight on the side of ISIS and other Islamist terrorist organizations, is remarkable in that the level of threat to residents of these states has not increased significantly since the application of such measures: there is no data on terrorist acts carried out by people who have returned from ISIS on the territory of these countries. It is not possible to say that Rome, Pristina, and others show a definite trend of greater protection of countries that have applied such an approach, largely because of the need for an individual approach to each such person and the huge variety of reasons for which a person joins the Islamists. However, the experiences of Italy and Kosovo^{*} show that this approach has at least the right to life and at least partial implementation in other countries.

1 Important Resolution on Kosovo and Metohija is: United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244, S/RES/1244 (1999).

REFUSAL TO REPATRIATE FIGHTERS

The issue of repatriating fighters is not only a security dilemma but also a political issue for many politicians. Few countries do not agree to repatriate their citizens from war zones and territories occupied by terrorists, as this represents not only an internal security problem for the state but also a politically unpopular decision.

The reaction of the European Union on this issue has been very mixed, but there is a clear trend toward reducing repatriation opportunities for its citizens. The authorities' reluctance to facilitate the repatriation of foreign fighters is also supported by the fact that many of them burned their own passports and went through the procedure of stripping citizenship when they moved to Iraq and Syria. In 2014 Europol stated that returnees could pose a danger as they are "logistical, financial or recruitment cells and may serve as role models for individuals in extremist communities" (European Police Office 2014). This statement indicates that the European Union views foreign fighters as a threat to the national security of allied countries. It does not matter if an individual has been involved in terrorist activities and violent acts. Politicians are reluctant to discuss laws related to repatriation, in part because taking unpopular decisions could cost them their careers.

Opinion polls in some European countries confirm this. In France, for example, 89% of respondents voted against repatriating adult foreign fighters in 2019 (Odoxa 2019). At the same time, in the same poll, 67% of the French voted not to repatriate children of fighters in Iraq and Syria either. A similar question in the United Kingdom showed that 77% of subjects believed that the state should limit the possibility for foreign fighters to return home from ISIS (Furlan and Hoffman 2020, 15). At the same time, 42% of those surveyed were in favor of stripping combatants of their nationality. This shows that the societies of many European countries as well as their governments are not ready for combatants to return home.

As part of the article, Hoffman and Furlan did a study in which they looked at the laws of 64 countries to see how they deal with foreign fighters and their return (Furlan and Hoffman 2020). For our study, the most valuable information is from European countries. Among the members of the European Union and the UK, most allow but do not facilitate the return of foreign fighters (e.g. the Netherlands). In most of these countries, such as Latvia and Bulgaria, the arrest and trial await the fighters upon return. Some countries, such as Belgium and Germany, only facilitate repatriation for children and women. Only some countries, such

as Italy, allow combatants to return home and facilitate their repatriation. Also, citizens of Luxembourg and Sweden are not subject to prosecution for repatriation, but the government does not facilitate the repatriation of such citizens. There is also a pool of countries that strip combatants of their citizenship (UK) and prohibit even their wives and children from returning (Denmark). Despite the many unifications in European countries, it cannot be claimed that strategies and measures for foreign fighters and their relatives are developed jointly. But even with this autonomy in decision-making on this issue, there is a general trend toward criminalizing wrestlers and being more lenient towards their wives and children.

For this reason, many European states are still reluctant to repatriate nationals from areas controlled by ISIS and other terrorist organizations. Different countries limit the possibilities for return to varying degrees - some feel that it is sufficient not to assist in this matter, others put such citizens on terrorist lists, while others revoke citizenship. It is very difficult to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of these measures, as many fighters have left the country without being forced to do so while being stripped of their citizenship. Also, some states question the disinterestedness of those wishing to return to their homeland, as well as their departure from radical ideologies and willingness to reintegrate into society. That said, each specific case of repatriation of a combatant and his or her family may differ. This is why it is so important to continue further research in this area.

HANDLING THE RELATIVES

The issue of repatriation and assistance to relatives and families of fighters in terrorist camps has become increasingly urgent. Many foreigners come to the war zone with their wives and children or find wives among local women. The situation is particularly difficult for children born in terrorist camps because of their ambiguous citizenship and legal status. At the same time, many states and international organizations have expressed concern about the fate of these women and children. In 2019, for example, the UN issued a statement that the situation of many women and children living in camps of terrorist organizations was unacceptable (The Counter Terrorism Executive Directorate 2019). The following year, the European Council expressed concern about children trapped in terrorist camps and described this as “an acute humanitarian disaster” (Schennach 2020). As seen in the previous section on the refusal to repatriate fighters, their wives and children are treated with more

sympathy by European countries. Even opinion polls show that the public is more willing to help with the return of the women and children, although there is still a fear that they, like their husbands and fathers, may pose a security problem.

It is worth noting that, unlike foreign fighters, their wives and children may both be hostages to the situation and truly believe in the ideology of the terrorist organizations in whose territory they have long been based. This raises the dilemma of how to determine their true intents in each case.

There are various programs that facilitate the return of women from Syria and Iraq to Europe. However, they face a number of challenges when dealing with women, as they need to develop specific procedures to determine the extent to which the woman has been involved in extremist activities. The process is complicated by the fact that the woman herself is often the only source of information and only the professionalism of psychologists and specialists can make a reliable determination of her commitment to extremist ideas. Difficulties are also encountered in dealing with the gender and religious characteristics of women who have lived in a terrorist camp for a considerable period of time. For example, at a UN meeting in 2021, representatives of European Union countries announced the preparation of programs to help women with all the specificities of the issue. There are also challenges in prosecuting women, as opposed to men's trials of female fighters. Often, there is no direct evidence of women's involvement in extremist activities and they are prosecuted for other criminal offenses. This means that they cannot count on support from organizations dedicated to assisting and deradicalizing people who have been in terrorist groups.

The return of children is also a contentious issue for people dealing with the repatriation of foreign fighters' families. The question arises whether children can be considered a threat to the national security of European countries, as there is ample evidence that extremist ideology is often inculcated in terrorist organizations from childhood. Many countries do not take the risk of repatriating children as their rehabilitation process is complicated by their association with radicalized parents. Although many children relay extremist ideas, countries often do not prosecute juveniles. Most often, their custody is transferred to other family members or they are left in the custody of the state and are rehabilitated. Despite the many concerns of European citizens, there have been no reported cases of reintegrated children involved in extremist/terrorist activities in Europe so far (Koller 2020). However, this does not mean that work with children should not take place. Children are in many ways hostages

to the situation and subject to the will of adults, which means they have a long way to go when they return home and have to work on their psychological traumas.

PSYCHOLOGICAL HELP AND REINTEGRATION

Psychology is an important focus of counter-extremism programs. According to many researchers, returnees pose a threat not only because of their involvement with terrorist groups and their initial desire to return to carry out attacks but also because of their unstable emotional background and mental disorders. For example, most women and children who have returned from ISIS to Kosovo* have been diagnosed with a post-traumatic personality disorder (Avdimetaj and Coleman 2020). For this reason, many countries have made various attempts to provide psychological help to such people.

In addition, the emotional instability of such people may arise not only from their experiences of war but also from the social difficulties they encounter on their return home. Social inequalities, feelings of exclusion, and economic problems are major negative factors. This is why countries in Europe look at reintegration not only from a human rights perspective but also from a national security perspective.

The issue of women's rehabilitation is more acute because, due to the culture, traditions, and religious practices instilled in women during their time in the terrorist organization, it is more difficult for them to find employment and therefore to re-integrate into society. On this basis, there is a need to select professionals with whom women can have confidence. Also, most such women look for jobs related to care and assistance for children and the elderly, but because of their backgrounds, in many countries, such women are not allowed to work in these areas because of their close association with people and the chance for recruitment. Therefore, deradicalization and disintegration programs should take into account further assistance to integrate them into society, even in employment issues.

Some countries already facilitate the rehabilitation of children. Belgium and the Netherlands have published their support systems for children who have returned from terrorist camps. However, for the moment some of the participants in these programs point out their imperfections and lack of consideration, as well as the lack of an inclusive approach towards the different problems and situations of children. (Koller 2020). Rehabilitation of children is a more complicated process because, unlike adults, the age and gender of the child are a big factor. Considering these

characteristics and the extent to which adults have engaged the child in extremist activities, organizations develop different methods and advice on the deradicalization and reintegration of children into society. The main methods are considered to work with specialists in psychology as well as education of children in kindergarten and school. The parents' authority, who have long influenced the shaping of the child's worldview, cannot be taken away.

CONCLUSION

From the analysis presented, several conclusions can be drawn about the current situation of returnees from Europe and their families. Developing an attitude toward the repatriation of citizens and their families who have gone to terrorist camps in the Middle East is still a security dilemma and a political issue for many European countries. Politicians have been reluctant to take steps toward helping foreign fighters return to their home countries, partly because of ambivalent public attitudes towards this problem. At the same time, the few countries that are willing to provide the necessary conditions for the families and returnees themselves to reintegrate into society are still not paying enough attention to the subtleties of the work and are not fully aware of the complexity of the work in each individual case. As a result, the deradicalization and reintegration of ex-combatants, as well as the development of measures for dealing with foreign fighters who have independently returned to their homeland or have taken part in repatriation programs, should be one of the priorities of international security specialists as well as for national and international organizations, that focused on counterterrorism.

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* Manuscript was received on September 2, 2022 and the paper was accepted for publishing on September 19, 2022.

*Sindre Langmoen**

*Graduate Student of Security Studies, Institute of Political Studies,
Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University Prague*

THE IDEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE TURKISH MHP AND THE GREY WOLVES

Abstract

The Turkish Idealist movement, encompassing the militant Grey Wolves as well as the current Turkish coalition partner, the Nationalist Action Party, represent the most influential elements of the Turkish (or Turkic) far right, with activities reaching from Western Europe all the way to Xinjiang, China. This paper seeks to map the ideological framework and evolution of the Idealist movement. It argues that, while strongly influenced by fascism, it is not in essence a totalitarian movement. Furthermore, while it evolved out of secular pan-Turkic aspirations with explicit racist components, it has largely abandoned explicit racism, dreams of a pan-Turkic empire, and embraced Islam as an integral component of Idealist ideology and Turkish identity.

Key words: Turkey, MHP, Grey Wolves, Islam, nationalism, ideology.

INTRODUCTION

The current governing alliance in Turkey is composed of Erdogan's own Justice and Development Party (AKP) and a far-right party called the Nationalist Action Party (MHP). The MHP has previously not shied away from opposing or criticizing Erdogan and the AKP, particularly during the period of negotiations and lessening tensions between the government and the Kurdish minority. However, at least since the 2016 coup attempt, the MHP has been cooperating with the AKP, has facilitated Erdogan's grasp on power through the constitutional referendum and

* sindrelangmoen@gmail.com

has formed a coalition government, thereby entrenching and extending their own influence.

The MHP was established as a pan-Turkic and Turkish nationalist party, influenced by Kemalism, fascism and Islam. Inseparable from the MHP is its unofficial militant movement, known as the ‘Grey Wolves’, whose members have engaged in political violence, participated in armed conflict and built a network of organizations in order to engage with youth and communities. The ‘Grey Wolves’ have a strong presence not only in Turkey, but also in the diaspora, such as in Western Europe, where they have a great reach. This paper will seek to explore where the ideological framework of the MHP and the Grey Wolves lies at the intersection between Turkish ethno-nationalism, fascism, Islam, pan-Turkism and Kemalism.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

There is very little academic literature treating the subject of the MHP, in particular relating to its ideological history and framework and various ideological currents (Erken 2014). There is even less academic literature on the closely related ‘Grey Wolves’ movement, though much useful non-academic research has been done in the journalistic field. Furthermore, much of the available academic literature is outdated, with very little treating the recent years in which the MHP has been governing alongside the AKP.

One major contribution has been Landau’s 1982 seminal paper ‘The Nationalist Action Party of Turkey’, written shortly after the movement was banned following the 1980 military coup. Landau examines fifteen years of the MHP’s political history, since its inception in the late 1960s, including its style, structure, propaganda and ideology (Landau 1982). He describes the conflict between Turkish nationalism, which holds the Turkish state above all else, and Pan-Turkic/Turanist ideology, which seeks to look to Turkish kin beyond the borders. He describes a party established upon the ideology of its founder, Alparslan Türkeş, which draws strongly from neo-fascism and opposes the establishment of status quo, while refraining from revolutionary upheaval and condemning totalitarianism. Islam remains a central ideological component and the party has enjoyed considerable clerical support, but it walks the line of political Islam without crossing into Islamism, remaining secular in regards to affairs of the state and the freedom of religion.

Another important contribution has been Erken’s ‘Ideological Construction of the Politics of Nationalism in Turkey: The

Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi (MHP), 1965–1980’, which analyses the ideological evolution of the MHP over the same period and details the competing strands of nationalism within the movement (Erken 2014). Erken argues that shifts in power and influence led to a gradual transformation of the MHP’s discourse from secular nationalism to a more religious-conservative form of nationalism, not least as a consequence of the attitudes of the Turkish post-coup military government.

Cengiz, seeking to explain the ideological inflexibility of the MHP, argues that the synthesis of nationalism and Islam in the party, the MHP’s identification with Turkey’s national security issues (particularly the Kurdish question and separatism) and the personality cult surrounding the founder Alparslan Türkeş are the reasons why the party currently resists ideological change and political pluralism (Cengiz 2021). He further argues that the MHP has benefited from this ideological immoderation and became a key political actor that has long been close to the state structures.

Turanism is a nationalist concept aiming for collaboration and unification between peoples of Central Asian origin. Originally a concept developed by Finnish scholar Matthias Castrén in the 19th Century in response to pan-Slavism or pan-Germanism, the theory bound together peoples as diverse as Finns, Hungarians, Mongols and Turks (Britannica 2022). It was adopted and further developed into pan-Turkism by scholars such as Ziya Gökalp of the ‘Young Turks’ to focus on various Turkic peoples outside Turkey, such as Azerbaijanis, Tatars, Uyghurs, Uzbeks, Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, Turkmen and Tatars (Uzer 2016).

Agaogullan, an important pan-Turkist ideologue, identified five basic tenets of pan-Turkism: Turanism, racism, militarism, anti-communism and ‘other components’, including the need for discipline, hierarchy, obedience, glorification of the leader and self-sacrifice for the state (Poulton 1997). The pan-Turkist currents, therefore, naturally gravitated towards fascism and authoritarianism.

CONTEXTUAL FRAMEWORK

The Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) and its militant arm the ‘Grey Wolves’ (*Bozkurtlar*), also known as ‘the Idealists’, emerged in the late 1960s under the leadership of Turkish Cypriot and former soldier Alparslan Türkeş as a “predominantly Sunni, provincial, and conservative” party (Uzer 2016, 125). It is the second oldest party in Turkish political history and third largest in the polls, obtaining a little bit over 11% (Erken 2014).

Türkeş had been court-martialed in 1945 on charges of attempting a coup and “fascist and racist activities”, and thus spent ten months in prison before charges were dismissed. These trials came to be known as ‘the Racism-Turanism trials’ and specifically targeted Turanists and pan-Turkists, whose militantism was deemed to cause tensions with neighboring countries, particularly the Soviet Union. In 1960, Türkeş was involved in a military coup toppling the government, but was exiled alongside other nationalists out of fear that they would seek to grasp power. He returned from exile some years later and took over the Republican Peasant Nation Party, which they transformed into the MHP and which Türkeş led until his death in 1997 (Erken 2014). It was temporarily banned after the 1980 military coup and Türkeş was imprisoned for some time, but he remained the leader of the MHP until his death in 1997, after which DevletBahçeli took over, pushing the movement in a more conservative and religious direction (Counter Extremism Project 2022).

The MHP has participated in a number of coalition governments since the 1970s and received as many as 18% of votes during the 1999 general elections (Eskisar&Durmuslar 2021). During the early years of the AKP governments, it was very critical towards Erdoğan and his party. However, after the 2016 coup attempt and the MHP’s pivotal importance to the constitutional referendum which turned Turkey from a parliamentarian to a presidential republic, the MHP and the AKP formed a political alliance and have been governing in coalition since (ibid.).

The ‘Grey Wolves’ was one of the main nationalist terrorist organizations between 1976 and 1980, engaging in a great number of killings, particularly against their leftist rivals and Kurds, and even being involved in the failed assassination attempt of Pope John Paul II (Global Security 2022). They had established close ties to the CIA-backed Anti-Bolshevik Bloc of Nations. Banned after the 1980 coup, many of these extremists formed diaspora networks in Europe, before arising again in the 1990s and becoming entrenched in organized crime, particularly the international heroin trade (ibid.). In the following decade, the ‘Grey Wolves’ participated in the 1992 Nagorno-Karabakh War, both Chechen Wars, were involved in a coup attempt in Azerbaijan, as well as in the conflict against the PKK in Turkey. Nowadays, the MHP is a coalition partner of the AKP, and the ruling discourse has taken increasingly ultranationalist tones, while the ‘Grey Wolves’ have taken deep roots among the Turkish diaspora population in Europe.

ANALYSIS

The MHP is an extremist right-wing political party that is uniquely Turkish in its ideological framework and does not fit neatly within classifications such as conservative, ethnonationalist, Islamist or fascist, while drawing from all these influences throughout its history. It has experienced conflicts between Islamists and those emphasizing pre-Islamic Turkic past, civic nationalists and ethnonationalist, those seeking Turkish expansion and those focused on the existing Turkish state, as well as regarding the Kurdish question.

Nationalism and pan-Turanism

The two most prominent figures in the formulation of early 20th century Turkish nationalism are Yusuf Akçura and Ziya Gökalp, both articulating an ideology breaking both from Islamism and Ottomanism (Uzer 2016). While Gökalp and Akçura diverged on many topics, both embraced the idea of a Turkish nation-state as opposed to a multi-national Ottoman state, and actively supported the Kemalist regime of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. They both emphasized a Western model of a Turkish national state, embracing both secularism and women's rights. Akçura attached more importance to ethnicity, while Gökalp underlined the cultural construction of the state and the importance of religion. The dominant strand of Turkish nationalism was the cultural nationalism, represented by Kemal and Gökalp (ibid.).

Ethnic nationalism was confined to a small group of intellectuals. Nihal Atsız was an intellectual who greatly influenced Turkish idealist nationalism and Alparslan Türkeş himself, representing the racist and anti-Islamic strand of nationalism. He opposed intermarriage between Turks and non-Turks, admired the race theories of Nazi Germany, viewed non-Turkic ethnic groups as enemies of the Turkic people and was arrested alongside MHP founder Alparslan Türkeş in the Racism-Turanism trials of 1944 (Counter Extremism Project 2022; Landau 2004, 258). He denounced Islam as an 'Arab religion', and embraced ancient Turkic traditions and folk religions instead, arguing that 'nationalism was superior to religion'. He was the one to popularize the grey wolf as the symbol for the Turks through his novels, whilst he was not the first to use it (Uzer 2016).

However, while there have been strong undercurrents of racism and ethnonationalism within the MHP, it has never been openly embraced by the party: it has rather embraced a republican and patriotic nationalism

and has embraced both Kurds and Alevis in the party, while rejecting the conception of Kurdish or Alevi nations separate from the Turkish nation (Uzer, 2016). It has also been characterized by ideological flexibility due to its multiple sources of its nationalism, which have supported its changing political behavior throughout times and allowed it to take ambivalent or pragmatic positions on topics such as the influx of refugees or policy towards European integration (Esikar&Durmuslar 2021).

Much of the ideology of Türkeş, of the MHP and the ‘Grey Wolves’ originates from the concept of Turanism and pan-Turkism, and there are many pan-Turkic supporters and members. However, pan-Turkism has only been one among many streams within the movement, and the party took a clear departure from pan-Turkism when they adopted the three Islamic crescents as their party flag (Landau 1982).

The influence of pan-Turkic thought is, however, still tangible in the movements’ significant activity abroad and participation in foreign military conflicts on the side of their Turkic brethren. The grey wolf from which the MHP militant wing draws their name is also an important symbol of the ancient Turkic peoples and a recurrent Turkish nationalist motif, representing a legendary female wolf from the Oghuz Turkic foundation myth who nursed a boy injured in battle, by whom she was impregnated and consequently to whom she gave birth to ten boys. These boys would later establish the clan that rule over the Turkic nomadic empires (Amran 2007; Findley 2005, 38; Roxburgh 2005, 20).

Türkeş wrote the foundational ideological book entitled ‘The National Doctrine of Nine Lights’ (*Dokuz Işık*), in which he both amalgamates nationalism and Islamic values while emphasizing the need for secular state structures. The ‘Nine Lights’ he outlines are nationalism, idealism, moralism, societalism, scientism, libertarianism, peasantism (*köycülük*), progressivism and populism, as well as industrialism; he envisages a disciplined and hierarchically organized nationalist society along the modernist lines (Uzer 2016).

Another important ideological father is Fikret Eren, who refined the ‘Nine Lights’ doctrine by imagining a ‘national-societalist order’ different from both capitalism and socialism, which would result in a classless society by dividing society into six segments: workers, employers, peasants, artisans, bureaucrats and professionals, each represented by unions (*ibid.*).

This ideological framework lacked the totalitarianism and ethno-nationalism inherent in fascist thought, but was largely aligned. While Islamic principles were absent from the original formulation of this doctrine, in 1967, Türkeş adopted Islam as an essential component of

Turkish identity, and the importance of Islam gained in prominence in the party ideology (Counter Extremism Project 2022).

Turkish-Islamic Synthesis

In picking moralism as one of the ‘Nine Lights’, Türkeş sought to replace Atatürk’s secularism; the concept of moralism was interpreted through a religious lens, leading to what is referred to as the Turkish-Islamic Synthesis (Areteos 2021; Uzer 2016).

According to Çetinsaya, as cited by Areteos in 1965, ‘the ‘morality’ section of the ‘Nine Lights’ does not mention Islam and refers only to ‘Turkish traditions, spirit and to beliefs of the Turkish nation’. By 1972, ‘Islamic principles’ had been added, and the preamble to the ‘Lights’ stressed the Islamic contribution to world civilization”.

Türkeş himself declared that “in the path of Turkish nationalism, cultural groups were molded in Turkish-Islamic tradition. Islam constitutes an important component of Turkish morality. Islam is a source that keeps the nation together and provides spiritual and moral discipline. Thus, Turkish nationalism is not based on a conflict between Islam and ethnic-nationalism rather it includes an historic synthesis of Islamic and Turkish ethnic values” (ibid). The embrace of Islam as the predominant cultural value is made clear by the choice of the clearly Islamic three crescents on the flag of the MHP, as opposed to the pre-Islamic Turkic grey wolf.

It was in great part as a response to the conflicts pitting nationalists against communists that Islamic values resurged among the MHP and ‘Grey Wolves’, as the struggle took a new dimension: a struggle for the global order, in which the activists became religious warriors on a holy quest, Areteos argues (2021). An ideological ‘father’ of this sacred mission was the intellectual Seyyid Ahmet Arvasi, who developed the concept of the Turkish-Islamic Ideal “as a form of cultural and religious nationalism, framing national and religious identity as indivisible and mutually constitutive” (ibid.). According to him, Turkey should seek to dominate the global order through its religious and historical mission: “Turkishness is our body, Islam is our soul” (ibid.). The Turkish-Islamic Ideal would serve to strengthen and elevate the Turkish nation through Islam, and vice versa. Another father of this Islamic nationalism was the writer İbrahim Kafesoğlu, who argued that the original Islam had a lot in common with the Central Asian Turkic culture, which made it Turkish people’s mission to be the ‘soldiers of Islam’ (Netherlands Scientific Council).

The rejection of Atsız-style exclusionary ethnic nationalism in favor of the ‘Turkish-Islamic Synthesis’ seems to be in large part functional, in accordance with the belief that nationalism without an Islamic component would be rejected by the religious masses. It also added a religious layer to their struggle against enemies such as the Kurdish separatists, who they accused of betraying not only their homeland, but also Islam, while it also enabled them to absorb Kurds or Alevis who ascribed to the ideal (Uzer 2016).

CONCLUSION

This paper sought to explore the position of the Turkish Nationalist Action Party and its militant wing, the ‘Grey Wolves’. These movements grew out, together with Kemalist ideology, of a unique pan-Turkic nationalism that envisioned a union of Turkic peoples stretching from Europe to parts of China and the former USSR. Early forms of the ideology had clear racist elements and borrowed from fascism, notably in the organization of the street movement of the ‘Grey Wolves’. However, pan-Turkic aspirations, as well as explicit racism were marginalized within party doctrine, which in large parts aligned with the republican aspirations of Kemalism, albeit rejecting the multi-ethnic ideal in favor of a generous conception of a nationalist Turkish nation. Fascist elements remain central to the authoritarian movement, but reject totalitarianism as an ideal in favor of labor institutions and the republic as an institution. While it had strong secular and even anti-Islamic leanings in its early stages, these were also gradually moved away from. The movement, while preaching secularism for state institutions, adopted an Islamic view on the cultural sphere of society, and came to embrace the concept of the Turkish-Islamic Synthesis. According to this idea, the Turkish nation and Islam are naturally compatible and mutually reinforcing, and it is the sacred mission of Turks to fight for the empowerment of both. The Idealists thus walk a fine line between secularism and political Islam, embracing both secular values and a political ideology merged with Islam. However, it is argued that the Islamic turn may primarily be instrumental as a form of un-Islamic Turkish nationalism would alienate the masses.

It can thus be seen that the MHP and the ‘Grey Wolves’ are the embodiment of a unique mixture of ideological influences, borrowing both from extremist racist, fascist and Islamist ideas, as well as from secular republicanism and moderate civic nationalism. It is therefore difficult to ascribe them a certain label. The lack of insight into current developments also makes it difficult to ascertain the current ideological

debates within the movement, or to what extent rhetoric truly aligns with ideology. The Idealists have aptly been able to transform through history, borrowing from other ideologies and changing their own stances according to the conditions they found themselves in. Furthermore, there may be important differences within the ideological spectrum of the party, between the MHP and the ‘Grey Wolves’, or between militants in Turkey and those active in the diaspora, which could represent important lines of research.

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* Manuscript was received on September 12, 2022 and the paper was accepted for publishing on September 28, 2022.

*Kateřina Šabatová**

*Graduate Student of Security Studies, Institute of Political Studies,
Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University Prague*

THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM: CASE STUDY OF THE ISLAMIC STATE

Abstract

In 2014, the unstable political environment in the Middle East provided the opportunity for an extremist jihadist group to establish its own state on the territory of Iraq and Syria - the so-called Islamic State with its society based on the ideology of Islamic extremism. This ideology also clearly defined gender roles for men and women. This paper examines the phenomenon of women's roles in religious extremism with the aim to analyse gender roles within Islamic extremism by using a case study of the Islamic State and its society and its roles. The analyse of the case study is based on and informed by the definitions of Islamic and religious extremism. The paper concludes that in the early days of the Islamic State, women only had the supportive roles of wives and mothers to raise the next generation of fighters, but in the final phase of the Islamic State, women could take active roles in its defence and become fighters or suicide bombers.

Keywords: religious extremism, Islamic extremism, the Islamic State, roles of women, gender roles

INTRODUCTION

Although there doesn't exist a coherent, unified definition of extremism, academics agree on the existence of several types of extremism according to its main ideological element. One of these types of extremism is religious extremism, which is connected to the

* Contact: 88835392@fsv.cuni.cz

theological ideas and movements in their radical form. Every religion in the world can have an offshoot that has radicalized and become an extremist fraction that is not afraid to use violence to achieve its goal. This also applies to Islam. The increase in power and influence of the jihadist groups and movements, which by their core ideologies belong to the religious extremism, in the last decades suggests that this phenomenon will remain in the international political environment within its society, and it will pose an increasing threat not only to the stability of the regions but also to the stability of the entire world. This is mainly because in the past Islamic extremist groups used to threaten the territory of individual states within its borders, but nowadays their influence and the scope of their activities are moving beyond the national scene. Therefore, these transnational jihadist movements are becoming an international problem, which threatens global security with their radical ideas and with elaborate networks of supporters and bases around the world (Bin Haji Halimi; Bin Sudiman; 2021). An example of Islamic extremism with international overlap is the establishment of the Islamic state in 2014 on the territory of Syria and Iraq by the jihadi extremist group.

In this paper, the phenomenon of religious extremism will be examined in-depth and in detail with application to the case study of the Islamic State. Subsequently, the case of the Islamic State will be analysed regarding its acts and ideology in terms of gender aspects and the analysis of the roles of women in the Islamic state as the case of religious extremism.

THEORETICAL SECTION

Religious extremism

With an increase in religious extremism in the 21st century, religion is started to be perceived as a threat to global security and as a cause of the subsequent violence and terrorism. One prominent definition of extremism, which is perceived extremism as a motivation for terrorism, claims that extremism comprises ideological beliefs about an obligation to bring back the political system to a form suggested by religious norms through violence (Jetten, Luis, Wibisono; 2019). Because of this perception of extremism, extremist groups or movements are often defined as those who fight for their political program and ideology against the traditional political system, which is favoured by the rest of the political environment. Religious extremism uses religion and its ideology to promote interests that lead to the establishment or maintenance of a

theocratic regime, or to a marked intolerance of persons of other faiths (or atheist), or to an extreme restriction of the rights and suppression of the human dignity of members of one's own religion (Mareš, 2014).

The religious extremist movements or groups aspiring to gain political power aim to force the implementation of their religious ideological approach to the society within the state via laws and violence. To achieve this goal, they are willing to use violence against the entity, which they are perceived as an enemy and use the terrorist strategies. The religious extremist movements or groups are perceiving other religions or other social, and ethnic groups as their enemy, due to their differences, because they don't share the same beliefs and thus do not share the same values. Also, the religious extremist movements or groups are hostile to others because they believe in a conspiracy that they want to weaken the faith in their religion (Jetten, Luis, Wibisono; 2019). In these groups/movements, religion serves as a key, connecting and unifying element of the entire social grouping. The extremist groups share and legitimize their religious values and norms in their society. In the context of social relationships, such group norms may vary in the extent to which they tolerate difference and dissent within the religious group (Jetten, Luis, Wibisono; 2019).

Islamic extremism

Like every religion, Islam has its radical currents, which aren't afraid to use violence as a means to achieve their goals and political agendas. One of the main characteristics of contemporary Islamist extremist groups/movement is that it seeks and promotes the idea of restoring and rebuilding the Caliphate or the Muslim Empire, which existed in various variations from 700 until 1924 when the last Ottoman Caliphate was abolished in Turkey and this period, Islam was associated with a hierarchical, sometimes expansionist, imperial state and a specific system of religious, legal, and cultural practices, which is called Sharia law (Jetten, Luis, Wibisono; 2019). Most of the extremist movements support the idea of the state, where all Muslim nations would be live, and therefore radical political ideology, which aims is to establish the Islamic empire, where the Islamic values and norms would be incorporated into the laws and constitutions.

These extremist movements perceived as one of the main means to rebuild the Islamic State is the use of armed jihad, which means the use of violence to achieve this goal. Specifically, the literal meaning of Jihad according to Islam is "struggle" or "effort" and in those terms, it means

more than just Holy war (BBC, 2009). There are three types of Jihads as a type of struggle according to Quran. The first is a believer's internal struggle to live out the Muslim faith as well as possible; the second is concerning the struggle to build a good Muslim society and the last one is dedicated to the holy war, whose main goal is to wage the struggle to defend Islam, with force and use of violence if necessary (BBC, 2009). But at this time, jihad is most often associated with the meaning of waging holy war to fight for Islam, for its propagation, and thus the spread of Islamic values and norms around the world. The extremist groups are claiming that this means, with the help of which an Islamic state will be rebuilt, is the only legitimate system of government based on Sharia law (Bin Haji Halimi; Bin Sudiman; 2021). According to Sharia law, waging military jihad is justifiable for several reasons. Nowadays, the extremist jihadist group rationalized their violent action and use of violence (e.g. terrorist attacks), because of the Western military operations in the Middle East and invasions of Muslim countries. By that justification, they could apply jihad because according to their point of view they are defending Islam, its faith, and its believers.

By using jihad, these extremist movements automatically create the group of "other", the non-Muslims, who are perceived as the enemies and the main threats to the Islamic faith. The extremist movements and their ideology subsequently transform this Muslim's hate and fear into violence and violent actions, which are permissible in these cases. This has the consequence of drawing distinctions between Muslims and non-Muslims and reinforcing the "us versus them" paradigm (Bin Haji Halimi; Bin Sudiman; 2021).

THE CASE STUDY: THE ISLAMIC STATE

One of the main successes of the religious Islamic extremist movements is the establishment of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS). The Islamic State was never recognised as a state in the international political environment and existed as a form of quasi-state. The group, that was behind the establishment of the Islamic State, was emerged from the remnants of al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI), a local offshoot of al Qaeda founded by Abu Musab al Zarqawi in 2004 (Wilson Center, 2019). In the same year, the group has been designated as a terrorist organisation by the international community. By 2007, when U.S. troops were in Iraqi territory, the group's activities were kept to a minimum, but since 2011 it has become more active as the security environment in the Middle Eastern region has continued to deteriorate leading to open violent conflicts.

In 2013, the extremist, transnational Sunni group took advantage of tense political situations and launched its fights in Iraq and its government while engaging in fighting in the Syrian Civil War against both the rebels and the government of Bashar Assad. In June 2014, after making significant territorial gains in Iraq, the group proclaimed the establishment of a caliphate Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) led by the leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2022). At its largest, the Islamic State occupied 75% of Syrian territory and 40% of Iraqi territory. One of the main aims of the ISIL is to maintain and extend its power over the territories, which were in the past under the rule of Muslim caliphs, and create the Islamic state, where they would rule according to their strict, verbatim form of the Sharia law.

The success of the extremist religious group aroused international fear of the spread of a radical and extremist interpretation of Islam with the increasing threat of international terrorist attacks and the possibility of radicalization of citizens of other states. So, in 2014, the alliance of Western countries with the leadership of the US started to actively fight by launching a military operation against the Islamic State in Iraq and subsequently in Syria territory. More than 8,000 airstrikes were carried out against strategic Islamic State targets in 2015 under the allies' "Operation Inherent Resolve" military campaign (Wilson Center, 2019). Due to this active military as well as political participation of allies by December 2017, ISIS forfeited 95% of the territory it had occupied in previous years, including Mosul and Raqqa. In the same year, Iraq and Syria declared victory over the Islamic State. But small extremist groups belonging to the defeated and collapsed Islamic State were actively operating on their territory until 2019.

In 2015, ISIS spread its influence, international reach, and social network by the establishment of branches of ISIS in foreign countries all around the world. These branches had the main aim to cause fear and panic among the so-called enemies of the Islamic State by the terrorist attacks in the Western countries. Through the radicalization process, the Islamic State recruited more and more members and supporters who left to fight for the Islamic State directly on its territory and to join the newly formed social community of the caliphate. In other words, this ISIS information campaign to support the idea of the Islamic State still attracts a large number of foreigners to Iraq and Syria—including thousands of Westerners—to take part in the group's campaign of violence to help the caliphate grow and defend their faith, which possessed (and still possess in some ways) a threat to the security of the global political system (Counter-Terrorism Guide).

Gender aspects – the roles of women in the Islamic state

In this security environment, the extremist jihadist group the Islamic State progressively implements women to take an active part in the states activity to obtain their ideological or political goals (Spencer, 2016). According to the point of view of the society, which is full of stereotypes about gender roles, the people have tendencies to objectify women as victims of the tools of the patriarch authority, mainly in the term of actively participating in the extremist movements and the perpetration of violence. But in the case of the Islamic state, this point of view is starting to fade, because of the significant role of women in the fight for Islam and the Islamic State. This stereotype about woman's role in the extremist movement is the result of the idea of the dichotomy of the public and private spheres, where the public sphere includes political and militant activities, traditionally considered suitable for men and unsuitable for women and in comparison, women are relegated to private activities, which include managing the household and peripheral social activities that are largely linked to the household (Khelghat-Doost, 2016). But the increasing number of women, who are participating in violent activities, these stereotypes need to be redefined. The push factors for women and for men to join ISIS are similar in many ways. The main motivations of women to participate in ISIS activities are feeling of isolation in the West, the perception that Muslims are attacked and fulfilling the perceived religious duty of helping build the Caliphate, ideals of belonging and romanticisation of life under the ISIS (Eggert, 2015).

One of the most significant roles of women in ISIS is their role as mothers, which have the power to influence and raise the future generation of kids of the extremist jihadi movement. This is also one of the reasons why the Islamic State is actively trying to recruit women - they are a means of increasing the population of the Islamic state. Another reason is that the active participation in the ISIS activity of women arouses the interest of the media. This aspect gives ISIS the attention and gives a space to use the women's role as propaganda to recruit more new members.

The roles of women in jihadist organizations can be categorized into two main types – supportive and active roles. The supportive role means that women take part in logistical and recruitment activities (e.g., delivering messages, intelligence gathering, acting as decoys), on the other hand, the active role means that women participate in executing violent operations (e.g., terrorist attacks, shootings) and are trained in the use of weapons and the making of explosives (Khelghat-Doost, 2016).

Supportive roles

These roles relate to the private sphere with the main aim to take care of the household, husband and children. By assigning this role to women, ISIS sells the honour of performing traditional roles to unwittingly transform women into custodians of cultural, social, and religious values, naturally passing on these concepts to the following generation of the jihadi movement (Spencer, 2016). The Islamic State attaches the significant importance to marriage to as young a girl as possible to keep her immaculate. A role of a wife is expected of a woman that she will ensure the birth of the next generation, which is her divine duty and her main purpose of her existence. The wife is expected she will serve to her husband, to be his mainstay during his jihadi fight and by that become a good, obedient wife. Wives are supposed to remain in the house, hidden, veiled, and understanding and satisfying their husband's need for sexual intimacy (Spencer, 2016). The women play a significant role in terms of recruitment of new members of ISIS and its propaganda on social media. They lure potential members to the prospect of a better life in ISIS, offering escape and salvation from unhappiness. Also, women can represent the state-building roles of ISIS, which includes the work in hospitals or schools.

Active roles

The Islamic State created special roles for women in the field of security and military forces. ISIS misrepresents the Islamic verses in the Quran to justify the participation of women in a violent military operation, deeming that women also have to participate in the fight against nonbelievers and according to this, ISIS released an official statement stating that it is mandatory and necessary for women to perform jihad because the Quran endorses it (Chin et al, 2019).

In 2014 ISIS established a special security force, which is made up of only female fighters, called Al-Khansaa. This force is a de facto women's militia with an authority role, but they are just executors with no right to actively engage in ISIS politics. Al-Khansaa is responsible for keeping Islamic order and morality in the cities of ISIS. Other tasks of this unit include espionage, recruitment supervision and maintaining Sharia law. The members of Al-Khansaa, who are selected mainly from citizens of Middle Eastern states, undergo military and police training for several weeks before starting their missions and they are known for their brutal behaviour towards those who violate the rules and use violent

tactics to stifle dissent (Khelghat-Doost, 2016). In the later stages of ISIS, women from Al-Khansaa were also drafted into the front lines to fight for the Islamic State alongside men and also were tasked with managing camps where kidnapped Yazidis and other so-called enemies of ISIS were imprisoned. Al-Khansaa allegedly hurls verbal abuses and administers physical acts of violence toward the prisoners – often justifying their actions by quoting passages from the Quran (Spencer, 2016). Also, the number of terrorist attacks (mainly suicide bombs) committed by women is on the rise. One of the main reasons why women are such good stealth suicide bombers is that no one suspects them of being capable of such a thing and by that perception of women, they are overlooked as potential assassins.

CONCLUSION

With the emergence of the Islamic State, which was based on the ideology of religious extremism, specifically Islamic extremism, the topic of the role of women in Islamic State society has attracted much attention in academia. Initially, their role in the Islamic State was mainly supportive. They have been portrayed by Islamic ideology as mothers and wives whose only goal from Allah is to ensure the existence of the next generation of the jihadist movement and to take care of their husbands, to be their support in their struggle against the infidels and to satisfy their needs in all aspects.

But over time, as the Islamic State has been pushed into a corner, it has begun to harness the potential of women as active members who are obliged to participate in the struggles for the Islamic State and the defence of Islam. This new role for women has been exploited by ISIS in its promotion and recruitment of new members by attracting media attention. For fighting and maintain Islamic morality, ISIS established a special women's security unit that actively participated in ISIS's violent actions. Furthermore, ISIS exploited the potential of women as suicide bombers, as unexpected and surprising perpetrators of violent acts.

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* Manuscript was received on September 2, 2022 and the paper was accepted for publishing on September 22, 2022.

*Veronica Hambalko**

*Graduate Student of Security Studies, Institute of Political Studies,
Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University Prague*

GENDER BASED VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN THE AGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Abstract

This paper aims to explore possible ways that mainstream social media and alternative media platforms function possibly as catalysators for gender based violent extremism. Based on analysis of already existing research and events, we argue that social media platforms such as Reddit and 4chan function as echo chambers where already radical-thinking individuals and ideologies are validated and encourage further extreme thoughts. We also argue that through trends on mainstream apps such as TikTok, is violence against women made into a joke and entertainment, leading to a desensitization of the issue, making it harder to tackle. We conclude this paper by summing up the points and discussing the importance of more active policy targeting these online communities.

Key words: Misogyny, violence, social media, violent extremism, radicalization

* Email: 10713979@fsv.cuni.cz

INTRODUCTION

“If we can’t solve our problems we must DESTROY our problems... One day incels will realise their true strength and numbers and will overthrow this oppressive feminist system. Start envisioning a world where WOMEN FEAR YOU.” Elliot Rodger (1991-2014), Isla Vista killer (2014).

Misogyny is one of the oldest forms of prejudice, causes and triggers of violence seen through human history, and it is becoming harder to detect through the emergence of sophisticated technology and social media platforms. Elliot Rodger as quoted is just one of many blaming their problems and life situation on women, and the lack of romantic attention from the opposite sex. For some individuals does this hatred run so deep that it triggers atrocious actions such as terror attacks and murder.

We are seeing trends of violent extremism happening towards women all over the world, without any limitations to specific national borders. In the UK and US have some of the most “famous” serial killers and murderers maintained target been female sex workers, where the killers think they are doing society a favour (Collins 2018). While in other countries like India women are targets of blind violence in the form of acid attacks (BBC 2017).

The women’s movement and initiatives to improve women’s security and rights are progressing over the years. However, at the same pace that progressive and positive changes are happening, are also newer more complex ways to share extremist thoughts and ideology evolving. Social media platforms such as 4chan and alternative gaming forums acts as echo chambers where alt-right social outcasts can meet and share their thoughts and manifestos. These platforms get to exist freely on the web with minimal censorship often making it impossible to detect until it is too late.

In this analytical paper will we look into the concept of gendered based violent extremism as a consequence of indirect radicalization through social media platforms. We will in this paper focus on extremism targeted against women based on alt-right ideology in the Western hemisphere. To answer this, we will proceed to answer the following research question: *How does social media platforms and forums lead to more radicalization and violent extremism targeted against women?*

We will first discuss and explain the topics of gendered based extremism and indirect radicalization separately, before we proceed to conduct an analysis of how platforms such as 4chan, Reddit and now

TikTok have triggered a new wave of increased misogyny and gendered based violent extremism.

EXTREMISM IN A GENDER-BASED PERSPECTIVE

Ideology of gender-based extremism

When discussing gender-based violent extremism and its ideology we must see it in relations to larger ideological movements such as the right wing and its alternative right movement. The gender perspective is not necessarily its own ideology but rather a branch and value of the alt-right and is usually connected to other extreme beliefs regarding race and sexuality (Sugiura 2021).

The alt-right movement is a form of far-right fascism, white supremacy, and white nationalism, connected to the ideas of the importance of upholding and the strengthening of the white race in the Western countries, and have been a growing ideology since 1964 (Hoffman et al. 2020). Followers of the alt-right movement are often seen glorifying white nationalists of the past such as Hitler and the Nazi ideology. The movement criticizes and goes against multiculturalism and diversity in the social room, and often condemns the LGBTQ+ community and ethnic minorities (OSCE 2019).

In the context of alt-right, gender is often connected to the biological understanding that it is the sex that individuals are born with and leaves little room for fluidity and self-identification. The gender roles associated with this is often built on the traditional values where men are protectors and the head of the house, while women's main role is as care givers (OSCE 2019). The modern feminist movement is therefore often discussed as a plague and an enemy that stops the fulfilment of these "traditional" values and allows women to act as too independent with too much free will, and that it disturbs the natural order of society. The victims of the consequences of this progression in the eyes of the alt-right is the white heterosexual male. Femininity is considered a weakness and masculinity the superior and most desired. The extreme comes in different forms, but it is often related to women having too many rights and too much sexual freedom and that one of the effective ways of stopping this is punishment through violence and fear (OSCE 2019). These values are found in different sub-cultures and movements that have branched out from the alt-right movement such as incels (involuntarily celibate), manosphere, men's right activism, and violent organizations such as Proud Boys and other hybrid masculine movements (Hoffman, et al. 2020).

Violent extremism through a gender lens

There is no general understanding of what violent extremism is. The Australian National Counter-Terrorism Committee Framework identifies violent extremism as the following: “A willingness to use or support the use of violence to further particular beliefs, including those of a political, social or ideological nature.” (Eddine et al. 2011, 9). Within this understanding we can find several sub-understandings and cases of violent extremism. When discussing violent extremism like gendered based extremism, we usually refer to this as single-issue extremism where the violence is targeted towards one specific goal, target or issue, where these individuals are willing to go to extreme heights to achieve said goals (Australian Government 2015). We can also see it in relations to ideological violence and extremism as many of these attackers believe that the world has betrayed them, and that a change in the world order is needed (Tomkinson et al. 2020)

Depending on the end goal could the carrying out of these attacks differ from each other. Some wish to conduct violence as a way to cause fear due to a feeling of entitlement as seen with Elliot Rodger as quoted in the introduction, an Incel extremist that went on a killing spree in 2014 claiming 6 lives and injuring 14. The victims were both male and female, and his goal was to punish what is described as Stacy’s (attractive women) and Chads (attractive and confident men) in the Incel community (Tomkinson et al. 2020). Another example could be the attacks done by Scott Beierlein Florida in 2018, claiming 2 women’s lives. Beierle was also in the same case of Rodger an active social media user and prone to post extremist ideology on different platforms, even in the form of music (Hoffman et al. 2020).

One common denominator in many cases of gender based violent extremism is that the perpetrator behind the extremist attacks acts alone rather than in groups, nevertheless, they are a part of large radical online communities. This leads us to the next part regarding indirect radicalization through social media.

INDIRECT RADICALIZATION AND SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

The act of violent extremism is never an accident, and to be able to understand how these actions happen there needs to be an understanding of where these radical ideas stem from. We usually differentiate between direct radicalization and indirect radicalization, but in the context of this

paper and to answer the research question on social media platforms as a radicalization pipeline, will we focus on the concept of indirect radicalization.

Indirect radicalization can happen when individuals or groups of people seek, read, and interpret information on different platforms that are targeted towards a specific way of radical thinking, ideology or way of life that changes the reality and perception of the ones reading it. The content is not necessarily produced to convince others of this way of thinking but through several factors will this way of thinking appeal to parts of the recipient's life, which could eventually lead to acceptance of the use of extreme violence to achieve goals (National Institute of Justice 2015). This differs from direct radicalization where radical organizations or close personal contacts will target and approach to convince or even in certain cases forcibly radicalize through torture techniques (National Institute of Justice 2015).

In the context of this paper is this indirect radicalization referred to when individuals interact with specific online platforms and communities such as 4chan and 8chan which both claim to be platforms that advocate for a complete and unfiltered "freedom of speech" (Hoffman et al. 2020). These websites and discord have thousands of visitors on a daily basis, where anyone can make an anonymous user and post anything one may desire. The danger comes from that these platforms have very low levels of censorship and surveillance, especially those found on "the dark web", meaning that radical movements and discords can easily be created and exist freely without disturbance. This is highly problematic as many of the violent attacks, are being announced ahead of time, yet they are still unstoppable (Hoffman et al. 2020).

The unpredictability that comes with this type of radicalization is what makes it the most suitable for this research to understand how social media platforms can lead to more radicalization and violent extremism targeted towards women. In contrast to direct radicalization, functions indirect radicalization as a silent recruiter that is hard to detect unless one targets individual algorithms or conduct more surveillance of online communities. Indirect radicalization is also the most sufficient lens when it comes to this research on increase in violent extremism because as mentioned above and to be discussed further, users of these platforms meet other individuals with similar way of thinking or who have prior experience, which can function as guidance to committing violent extremism in the physical world.

There are several factors that can help us explain why extremist and radical ways of thinking is appealing. In psychological research and

political science, we can separate it between push, pull and individual factors that affects this process (Jacobsen 2017). Push factors could be referred to the feeling of being rejected in society, for instance in the Incel and Manosphere community where these individuals blame their problems on the lack of sexual attention due to women only accepting “attractive men”. The sense of community and respect in a virtual space or chatroom will therefore further act as an attractive pull factor. There are also individual factors such as mental illness and childhood trauma that leads to individuals reaching for radical environments (Jacobsen 2017).

ANALYSIS

The number of misogynistic based violent extremists are still existing in low numbers compared to other forms of violent extremism such as racist and religious based violent extremism. However, there have been a high increase, especially since the rise of social media and the dark web. In this section we will further analyse the reasons and possibilities to why this could be.

Platforms as uncensored echo chambers

The expansion of social media and communication platforms have in general functioned in a way to expand our knowledge; however, this expansion also allows certain communities to seek shelter on platforms that are hard to detect and find for the general public. This allows people with extreme values to find each other and share information, manifestos, entertainment etc. that further fuels their ideological views. On these social platforms you have the possibility to follow specific tags and forums that are dedicated to a specific ideology, topic, movement etc. such as Incel or Manosphere (Salojärvi et al. 2020). These communities are often characterized as lonely men who not necessarily fit in to the majority and have few close contacts. These platforms then act as a way of acknowledging and giving confirmation bias to their way of thinking about society and further radicalize already possible extreme thoughts. This reflection of their personal views is where the effect of indirect violence lies. Individuals see themselves in others with similar life experiences, and further seek more content from other individuals with similar ways of thinking (National Institute of Justice 2015).

These closed groups become very hostile to outsiders that are of the opposite opinion (Salojärvi et al. 2020). For example, there have been several cases of female gamers on specific discords being threatened

with brutal descriptions of murder and sexual assault on platforms that have a lot of misogynistic and extreme behaviour (Ging 2017). These behaviours exist in way larger numbers than the women, making it a hostile, verbally violent, and closed off environment further creating radical echo chambers. These threats have also been brought to life in the offline world in the form of sexual assaults on university campuses in the US, which have several times been claimed by the Manosphere community (Ging 2017).

In the aftermath of violent extremist attacks, are these platforms often flooded with celebrations and positive affirmations dedicated to the perpetrators, and in many cases are they described as heroes and idols where communities take pride in claiming these terrorists and extremists as one of their own (Hoffman 2020). An example could be the violent van attack done by misogynistic extremist Alek Minassain in Toronto in 2018, claiming 10 lives. This attack was heavily influenced by the gruesome acts of Elliot Rodger as mentioned previously. Minassain referred to Rodger as the “Supreme Gentleman” and praised his actions before his own attack 4 years after Rodger (Hoffman 2020). In other words, social media have created digital fan clubs and audiences that work as push factors for further violent extremism. There is a lot of violent language and dark descriptions and advocacy for attacks on women on platforms like 4chan, but for the most parts will it remain as empty threats. But for some will this encouragement be just what particular individuals need to act on these thoughts, which mean that these specific communities act as a potential direct security threat to women.

Memeification of extremism – The desensitisation of violence against women

When discussing extremist content, we often talk about content on platforms that aren't as accessible for the general public, but there are also cases on mainstream social media platforms where violence and extremism is hidden in forms of memes and trends where violent and brutal attacks against women are made into jokes and funny imaginations.

In the last 5 years have the social media platform TikTok quickly become one of the most used social media platforms of all time. This app allows you to share short videos that you can make yourself, usually in the form of funny and entertaining content (Anderson 2020). However, from time-to-time will trends and popular posts show up that raises concerns and create controversy. In March of 2022 there was seen a popular trend between boys and men with the tagline “imagine if we went on a date”

which was then followed by brutal descriptions of how these dates would end up with the woman dead or severely injured. An example of such post is the following: “Imagine we go on a date & I smash your head in with a 2x4 & you f***** die”, this post alone had over 55 000 likes (Tu 2022). Another trend also recently flourished is the so called “super straight” movement. This movement started with a man posting about how he viewed trans women as not being “real” women and created a sexuality that only involves being attracted to biologically born females. This quickly moved to other platforms such as reddit and 4chan and alt-right groups, where Nazi symbols and colours were used to make flags for this new “sexuality” to reach several platforms and encourage people to join the movement, which in reality was used to spread hate speech and threats towards trans women online, becoming more and more extreme as it moved across platforms (Kumar 2021).

When confronted with criticism and concern for these trends and jokes especially if its coming from women, will these men often react with anger and hostile comments. Communities that justify such jokes are often describing it as “dark humour” and “just a joke”, and that women are too sensitive to understand (Thorleifsson 2021). By making radical and extreme content into memes and jokes it makes it more digestible and excusable without having to take any responsibility or feeling of remorse.

Creating memes and trends out of violent and radical thought is a way to desensitize the issue making it attractive to young impressionable boys. This could possibly lead to more radicalization in more extreme communities and platforms, as it mobilises the impact of extreme ideology. Through algorithms furthermore posts with similar content shows up, which could possibly affect the way people unconsciously think about violence against women, as it makes it difficult to detect the underlying tone and seriousness of the content (Askanius 2021).

This desensitisation of violent extremism against women through memes and social media not only leads to possible increased radicalization, but also creates problems for identifying the background of attacks that are performed. There is a huge definitional gap in the assessment of violent extremism against women and we have seen several cases of misogynistic terror where the perpetrator is considered mentally unstable instead of going deeper into the ideology and radical online environments they existed in before the attack. This further allows violent extreme gendered based ideology to develop further without the censorship and policies that is needed to stop this growing wave of misogynistic violent extremism (Zimmerman et al. 2018).

CONCLUSION

Violence against women is not something new, however, through the rise of social media have we seen a new wave of extremist violence with strong radical and ideological views rooted in alt-right and white nationalism. Instead of reflecting on these thoughts alone, they now exist in large scale communities. The purpose of this paper was to gain a thorough understanding on how social media have been and continue to play a central role as a push factor for radicalisation and violent extremism against women.

Platforms such as Reddit and 4chan attract young impressionable men with radical attitudes against women. Here they find comfort in communities such as theIncel and Manospherecommunity painted in alt-right ideology. They view women as the weaker gender, that have through the feminist movement become too independent which threatens the natural order of society, and thereby deserve punishment in the form of morbid violence. These communities exist on both secluded and universal social media platforms. Here echo chambers of one-sided radical information get to float freely and function as push factors for both radicalization and violent extremism such as the gruesome attacks of Elliot Rodger and Alek Minassain both heavily active social media users.

A central issue identified during the research was the way violent extremism targeted against women is not taken seriously enough as an ideology in mainstream media. By hiding it in the form of memes and generic trends, is advocacy for extremist violence against women allowed to exist freely without interference. The perpetrators activity is usually not identified as extremism until after violent attacks and deaths have occurred.

Without the proper securitization of gender based violent extremism by properly tackling the ideological aspect of the growing tolerance of violence against women in mainstream entertainment content, will the movement continue to grow, and radicalisation happen. With a thorough understanding of the issue will it make it easier to identify possible attacks before it happens. Violence against women is not “just a joke”.

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* Manuscript was received on September 10, 2022 and the paper was accepted for publishing on September 26, 2022.

Tomáš Kouba*

*Graduate Student of Security Studies, Institute of Political Studies,
Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University Prague*

ONLINE RADICALIZATION: TWITTER PRIVATIZATION AS A THREAT TO THE MODERN SOCIETY

Abstract

Social media plays a key role in the contemporary world, having indefinite power to influence people by just a single post and click of a button, reaching millions of people in a few seconds. In April 2022, Elon Musk announced his step into the world-famous ‘wall of opinions’ – *Twitter*– with words of creating a better, free-speech-based platform with no limitations. Since online radicalization became the easiest and most powerful recruiting tool for terrorist and extremist organizations, this raised concerns about whether this action is beneficial or not. The aim of the paper was to describe the principle of online radicalization and present it via evidence-based examples, as well as transpose the known aspects of Elon Musk’s purchase of *Twitter*. A comparison study was made between these known examples of radicalization on the Internet, currently used preventive policy principles and possible future steps based on the announcements of Elon Musk himself. Results confirmed that online radicalization is the most effective method for extremists, and that the society and authorities should keep an eye on the development of the platform regarding the real threat of losing control over the content that can be harmful to *Twitter* users. Free speech is a strong argument for freeing the rules of sharing content, but the ‘dark side’ of this move has to be considered as well.

Keywords: online radicalization, *Twitter*, extremism, Elon Musk, the Internet, online violence, terrorism, social media

* Email address: tomas.kouba@fsv.cuni.cz

INTRODUCTION

The new era of the Internet brought about multiple challenges for ordinary life and online security. In these terms, online radicalization became a new phenomenon in violent groups' recruiting techniques and the 'securitization' practice of the social media audience. Since there is an easy and broad access to different platforms where the action can be taken immediately, this approach became very popular with radical groups. This paper aims to describe and present the whole problem of online radicalization with a focus on the platform *Twitter*, which is currently very much discussed due to its privatization and declaration of changing it to the 'free speech' board for all users. This can be a huge threat to the online audience if the policy of *Twitter* changes in favour of relaxing the rules and lessening control over the content, which can bring a new wave of 'unmonitored' radicalization posts. Moreover, this claim can be considered the biggest threat to the young generation addicted to technology of worldwide access to everything just in a few seconds. The lack of critical thinking and strong dissemination of misinformation even multiplies the threat to real contours.

CONCEPTUALISATION OF RADICALIZATION

Radicalization can be defined in many ways. Its connotation became more relevant after the 9/11 attacks in New York City, when the War on Terror was declared. Many authors agree that radicalization contains an adoption of some type of extremist view that is not accepted by the majority of society. Since there is no exact definition, there is a common agreement on what aspects radicalization is made of. According to Hafez and Mullins (2015), it is usually a "(1) gradual "process" that entails socialization into an (2) extremist belief system that sets the stage for (3) violence even if it does not make it inevitable" (Hafez and Mullins 2015).

Radicalization does not inevitably lead to violent behaviour, but it is its natural and most of the time a real threat (Hafez and Mullins 2015). Different authors frame its definition as "the process by which individuals (or groups) change their beliefs, adopt an extremist viewpoint and advocate (or practise) violence to achieve their goals" (Porter and Keibell 2011). It is always essential to highlight the distinction between the necessary conditions for religious or political violence – cognitive and behavioural radicalization dimensions. It is also important to mention that these dimensions do not always produce violence. As being intuitive,

cognitive radicalization contains overtaking the values, worldviews, attitudes and approaches, or political beliefs. These values are usually different from the ‘common ones’ of the mainstream society. It can be said that the cognitive dimension is the passive form of the extremist stream, where no particular act of violence is done. On the other hand, there is a behavioural dimension of radicalization that is about taking action or rather participating in a range of radical activities. This can be also divided into two groups – legal or illegal – where clandestine can finally ‘flow’ into terrorism (Hafez and Mullins 2015).

As Hafez and Mullins mention in their work, it is not usual that inactive individuals would migrate from no action to violent extremism. This is usually done by a series of radicalization steps, when some sort of ideological mediation is accepted. This is also linked to several commitments to radical belief. On the other hand, cognitive radicalization is more widespread since it is not so easily recognizable. Also, its impact is not so visible as in the case of the behavioural one. The threat lies in the terms of further gradation of radicalization and a change from cognitive action to real behavioural radical acts (Hafez and Mullins 2015).

Finally, it is important to amplify that radicalization is something different from violent extremism or terrorism. It can be understood as a process of changing the narrative of an individual’s thinking that can lead to the extremes, such as terrorism (this is not predominantly the inevitable final step of the process). At the same time, it is a process of accepting violence (cognitive radicalization) as a way to achieve political or social goals. The further step involves the action itself that can lead to moving out from the legal way of activism. A combination of passive cognitive and active behavioural radicalization usually leads to violence, but it is not inevitable (Hafez and Mullins 2015).

ONLINE RADICALIZATION

The Internet is a unique tool that enables anyone to get access to anything just in a few seconds. On the other hand, this challenging environment also serves the radicalized individuals or terrorists as a recruitment place with unlimited access to human resources. From the start of the ‘online’ century, the Internet and the prevention of radicalization on it became a priority for individual governments, which are now facing homegrown radicalization since this environment’s invention. Online radicalization is considered to be the most significant innovation used as a radicalizing tool since the 9/11 attacks that affects and enables the extremist groups’ recruitment. As technology continues evolving (and

the Internet as well), there is also a development in methods of using different online platforms for radicalization. These are being misused by those who see the potential in technology usage to incite terror. Moreover, the Internet's rapid development also makes individual governments' counteractions more difficult (Neumann 2013).

It is widely known that the Internet is also used by extremist and terrorist groups. Some might try to imagine how it is being used by such groups, but it is not something difficult. The Internet was designed to be easy for users. Therefore, it is clear that radicalized individuals use the Internet like anybody else – they search for information, disseminate their ideas and promote causes, and mainly communicate with other related people (like-minded). The biggest advantage is that this can be done across great distances. The only difference from the usual users of the Internet is the purpose of being online. These intentions can be understood in two ways: *communicative* and *instrumental*. While the communicative way just tries to get support and public attention, the instrumental way tends to facilitate acts of violence (Neumann 2013).

Firstly, the instrumental part can be invisible to an ordinary Internet user. It is being used for logistics – booking tickets, searching addresses, photos, and information. This can be hardly identified as suspicious behaviour. Furthermore, online platforms also serve as a useful sharing environment, where different training materials can be introduced to the audience, but experts do not see them as such. Since there were not many historical examples of extremists' cyberterrorism, the Internet environment seemed to be less effective in instrumental actions online than other forms at the start of the 2010s. Moreover, communication via emails or direct messages were often used to convict terrorist of incitement to any violent act (Neumann 2013). The situation within the society of understanding cyberterrorism changed through the years and at the end of the 2010s, there was an identified threat of using technologies for violent acts. For instance, the 2019 attack in Christchurch, New Zealand, on two Mosques was something new in terms of using the Internet for streaming the massacre that ended up in 50 deaths online. This makes technology and terrorists (extremists) the most powerful allies with access to a global audience in a minute (Macdonald, Jarvis and Lavis 2019).

Secondly, there is a more powerful part – communicative radicalization. As long as the Internet is present, it is being used for radicalization (by violent extremists, and terrorists) for gaining support, getting public attention, and mainly recruiting new followers and sympathizers. In the past, there were static websites with no access to

the discussion that prevented the media from censorship and allowed the extremists to share unfiltered information. Since the Internet became more focused on security, the type of information shared changed dramatically regarding publishing basic information about ideologies etc. At the same time, such websites are banned in many countries. Another step was to set up forums for discussion – at the beginning, they were dependent on the world's largest Internet companies' providers. Afterwards, they were provided by independent individuals (funded by extremist groups – i.e., Al Ansar or White supremacists' Stormfront). Such forums became online platforms for communication, based on any possible topics with no danger of retribution (Neumann 2013).

The 21st century brought about multiple innovations that supported the extremists' 'online goal' of spreading the ideology, propaganda or just information. This was about switching from text-based publishing to video-based ones. Moreover, the spread of user-based platforms and social networking presented a new level of communication across long distances, directly reaching the final addressees. This enabled extremists to 'step out from the shadow' of the Internet and publish and share the propaganda worldwide easily via *YouTube*, *Facebook*, *Twitter*, etc. This phenomenon of social networking was further deepened by smart devices and the shift of PC-based Internet to portable access that is being completely finalized nowadays (Neumann 2013). Furthermore, the instant need for development leads to improvement of applications' encryption that suits extremist groups. For instance, the application *Telegram* is well-known for being used by the so-called Islamic State terrorist organization for sharing propaganda or direct messaging between individual members all around the world. *Telegram*'s extraordinary features still attract terrorists mainly because of its secrecy benefits and also the provider's non-reliability in taking down violent-related channels (Tan 2017).

The Internet provides a great space for sharing ideas that are followingly being normalized and accepted by the audience. Social media platforms create echo chambers of like-minded people that help to confirm the promoted information. It is easier to convince someone to accept certain information within a group of like-minded people than in a group of many different-based individuals. Extremist groups often rely on social media platforms in the sense of exploiting the feeling of injustice among individuals and encouraging self-radicalization via shared ideological materials etc. The access to the global audience empowers such organizations in recruiting new members in different ways than in traditional in-person radicalization. For instance, this practice of attracting foreign fighters via propaganda on social media is a

well-known method of al-Qaeda or ISIS (Hollewell and Longpré 2021).

According to Mølmen and Ravndal (2021), there are three phases of online radicalization of an individual. The first one is the *pre-radicalization phase*, identifying the impacts of pre-existing circumstances that led to the vulnerability of looking for or accepting different worldviews from the mainstream. Second is the *radicalization phase*, referring to an individual's process of becoming influenced by extremist content online. The last one is the *operational phase*, when an individual translates the new gained beliefs into action (Mølmen and Ravndal 2021).

The six important features indicate the process of radicalization or are at least favourable to supporting it – *compensation, isolation, facilitation, echoing, acceleration, and action triggering*. *Compensation* refers to an individual's dissatisfaction with the offline world and the need for further online presence. It is mainly connected to the pre-radicalization phase. Easily accessible content of different worldviews provides the vulnerable individual with the feeling of easy inclusion into such a group of followers. The vulnerability and different opinions openness are often indicated by some sort of personal crisis or mental health issues. This is also connected to *isolation* when individuals excluded from particular societal groups are prone to online socialization via social media where social absorption is easier. It is often connected with mistrust in society itself, as well as with the political order. *Facilitation* intensifies and facilitates access to extremist-related information that runs further radicalisation. Consequently, *echoing* refers to constant interaction with like-minded people that normalizes the extremist view as common sense and advocates the need for action. Social media are not designed to oppose but rather to bring individuals with similar opinions together. That makes radicalization process the biggest threat, given that it refers to referral objects, because they are not facing opposite ideas but confirming the extreme ones, amplified in the echo chamber. *Acceleration* presents online radicalization as a more advantageous and faster process (in the terms of the timeframe) than offline one, due to instant access to ideas or groups. Finally, *action triggering* refers to an impulse to commit an act of violence or the acceptance of participating in the radical framework (Mølmen and Ravndal 2021).

TWITTER AS A PLATFORM OF RADICALIZATION

Social media plays a key role in using the Internet. There were 3.6 billion users of social media in 2020 and it is estimated that the number of users will increase to 4.4 billion by 2025 (Statista Research Department 2022). One of the best-known platforms is *Twitter*, with about 330 million active users per month. More than 50 % of users use this platform for following the news and about 30 % of all users are there in order to easily share the content with everyone on the site (Jay 2022). This platform was heavily medialized in late April 2022 when Elon Musk, the world's richest man, announced the acquisition of *Twitter*. This brought about several concerns from world security experts regarding the change in *Twitter*'s policy when being privatized (Bove 2022). This platform is known for its simplicity in sharing ideas and was widely used by terrorist organizations (i.e., ISIS) for recruitment and sharing their propaganda. In 2016, *Twitter* reported that about 360 000 terrorist accounts were taken down during the previous year (Tan 2017).

Twitter technology and its uniqueness are based on immediate access to information from anyone connected online. The reactions that allow users to 'like', 'reply' or 're-tweet' help spreading the original message to a wider audience of followers of those who somehow reacted. Accounts recognized as belonging to terrorists were followed by single thousands of people, but they were connected to each other. When an individual account 'tweeted' some sort of information, the other independently re-tweeted and spread the reachable audience by his followers. That move multiplied the effect of the initiation tweet and attracted people not connected to the radical network. These radical organization accounts must be also precisely moderated in order to prevent them from being banned because of sharing disinformation or propaganda (Chatfield, Reddick and Brajawidagda 2015).

Furthermore, *Twitter* presents advantages for extremist groups in a certain level of anonymity because of the difficulty of achieving the source of tweets and their creators. The analysis of the Islamic extremist violent groups proved *Twitter* to be an arena showing a 'clash' with authorities in public. This is caused by the fact that many governments use this platform as the main communication channel with the wider public. This move supports the mobilization of followers and helps recruit new sympathizers that share a worldview that differs from the mainstream one. Moreover, the proliferation of accounts of individuals linked to ISIS raised questions and concerns about 'lone actor' attacks (Alava, Frau-Meigs and Hassan 2017).

The rise in the number of accounts related to violent groups led to a radical change in *Twitter* policy against such behaviour. Between 2015 and 2018, the social network banned 1.2 billion terrorist accounts (Reisinger 2018). Moreover, not just terrorist accounts were banned but accounts attributed with hate speech as well, such as the account of the former U.S. President Donald J. Trump after the incitement to hatred during the Capital Riot in Washington D.C. on January 6th, 2021 (Subramanian 2021). The concerns of the global security community focus on the announcement of Elon Musk that he is going to let all the banned users join the platform again in order to create a place of free speech. It is not known what will come and what control over the content will be imposed by the new owner, but the real threat of a wave of radicalization is being questioned (Stokel-Walker2022). According to Figliuzzi (2022), “the lines between free speech, dangerous speech, and unlawful speech are blurring at the speed of a keystroke”. This claim is linked to the U.S. mass shooting cases, where evidence proved radicalization of individuals through online social networks and sharing of acts of violence. Relaxing the rules in order to post everything is rightly referred to as an initiation for expressing hatred and (as theory claims) creating echo chambers linked to the radicalization of individuals (Figliuzzi 2022).

CONCLUSION

Online radicalization is evidently currently most used and efficient (timeframe) method of recruiting new sympathizers. Moreover, the Internet allowed extremist violent groups to advocate their acts and get access to a wider audience. The innovation of technology and the development of social media empowered propaganda sharing, and some very well-known cases of illegal organizations (al-Qaeda or ISIS) got publicity through these platforms. The process of online radicalization differs from the face-to-face traditional method but also affects the broader scope of recipients of propaganda that making it easier to find new members. Since the rise of violent groups’ online activity, multiple policy changes within the social network companies were made. Questions about *Twitter* security were raised recently because of the announcement of its privatization by Elon Musk, who publicly stated the will to allow anyone to share anything (according to law), with the goal of creating a free speech platform. The threat is hidden in the recognition of law offences in the continuous propaganda that is used by violent groups on *Twitter*. Further development will bring about challenges in the fight against the

spread of disinformation and subsequent radicalization. On the one hand, *Twitter* can possibly become a platform for free speech but at the same time, it can also become the most suitable place for incitement of hatred and violence.

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* Manuscript was received on September 8, 2022 and the paper was accepted for publishing on September 26, 2022.

*Aleksei Teplov**

*Graduate Student of Security Studies, Institute of Political Studies,
Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University Prague*

THE ROLE OF OSCE IN COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM AND RADICALIZATION

Abstract

Numerous terrorist attacks, mass shootings, war crimes and less brutal instances of deviant behaviour such as commitment to radical Islamism or hatred against other nations often tend to be the manifestation of one of the last stages of radicalization. There is no single scenario, according to which radicalization proceeds. Absolutely different reasons can encourage a person to renounce normal values and accept the idea that the world can and should be fundamentally changed, sometimes even by force and violence. This is the main reason why OSCE adopted a “Whole-of-Society” approach to counter radicalization and its brutal results throughout the OSCE area. The adopted strategy is highly comprehensive and tackles not only different aspects of radicalization (e.g. gender, war, post-conflict, etc.) but also numerous institutions (e.g. families, churches, mosques, schools, scholars, etc.) that can detect and prevent radicalization of a person and integrate him or her back into the society. This article provides an analysis of OSCE efforts in this field by studying OSCE reports on extremism and radicalization and evaluating achieved outcomes. It finds out that despite being highly inclusive and all-pervasive with various successful instances in different regions, a bulk of member states do not have a platform that would facilitate communication between all actors involved to provide early warning and rehabilitate radicals. Efforts to develop a comprehensive framework are too costly, leading to limited projects and initiatives. Further research in finding the most efficient ways to implement OSCE ideas in the OSCE member states and beyond is required.

* E-mail address: 64424578@fsv.cuni.cz

Keywords: OSCE, radicalization, de-radicalization, extremism, violence, terrorism, Whole-of-Society approach, PVERLT

INTRODUCTION

The world is going through various crises and abrupt changes. Some of them make the future bright and prosperous, while others make it uncertain and gloomy. People from the second category might be running out of options and resort to violent means not only to prove themselves that they are worth at least something but also to earn money or get a sense of the community. Since people are social beings, any approach to countering radicalization and its violent manifestations should include various aspects, such as social, economic, political, and sometimes even environmental. This automatically implies that different stakeholders at different levels must be engaged to detect violent units (e.g. early-warning mechanism) and reintegrate them into a normal and peaceful way of life. However, this is not always possible because of various structural factors that cannot be resolved overnight. These structural causes also tend to have a transnational character, meaning that cooperation between states might be required to solve them and better prevent extremists from committing illegal actions.

This paper intends to draw attention to one of the most important international organisations known as the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). Although international relations students and practitioners tend to associate it only with one of the reasons that caused the dissolution of the Soviet Union, it is still here today and implements various security policies ranging from conflict prevention and disarmament to human rights and democracy promotion. It implements a comprehensive security framework that is needed to prevent radicalization and spread the best practices of how to do this among countries. These tactics of dialogue and cooperation on various aspects, including extremism and radicalization, are unique to OSCE and more than worth studying. This is especially acute today since various attempts to study and understand “what goes on before the bomb goes off” (Neumann 2008) are still widely present in academic and political debates.

The publication is divided as follows. The first part is going to review the difference between extremism, radicalization, and terrorism since these are sometimes not very clearly defined concepts. It is followed by a short overview of OSCE and its importance on the international

stage. The third section is going to shed a light on OSCE activities and policies by referring to publications and policy briefs. The final part will summarize the findings and find an area for future research.

NECESSITY TO DO THIS AND CROSS THE'S

Before looking at the OSCE policies to address extremism and radicalization, it is needed to clearly define and distinguish them. It is useful to start with radicalization because it is connected to other concepts. To put it simply, radicalization is usually understood as “a process by which a person adopts belief systems which justify the use of violence to effect social change and comes to actively support as well as employ violent means for political purposes” (Maskaliūnaitė 2015). Although many authors vigorously disagree on many aspects and provide different definitions with various components, these debates are beyond this paper because it is more practice-oriented. Overall, radicalization is a process through which people tend to forget normal values and principles and substitute them with different norms which allow them to start considering certain, usually prohibited, actions in society normal and justified. You may immediately start thinking about killing people and committing terrorist attacks. This is not always true, however. For instance, people might be radicals but they might not resort to violent means as was with people who promoted the abolition of slavery or promoted human rights (OSCE 2014).

Speaking of theories of radicalization, Maskaliūnaitė (2015) provides a nice summary of them in the following table [1]:

Table 1. Speaking of theories of radicalization

	Choice	Compulsion
Internal	Rational choice	Psychological traits
External	Grievance	Coercion/motivation

Source: Maskaliūnaitė (2015).

The table demonstrates that some people might be mentally ill (psychological traits) and do not understand what they are doing, while others might simply calculate the costs and benefits of their actions and resort to violence as the most rational choice (rational choice theory). Another row in the table demonstrates that people might be dissatisfied

with their lives and resort to violence to achieve political changes (grievances), while the coercion/motivation approach emphasizes that people might be inspired by some charismatic leaders or a group of friends to follow the lead. This demonstrates that people might have different motivations and this necessitates the creation of a comprehensive and proactive approach to prevent the process of radicalization.

It is also important to briefly mention how radicalization happens. Moghaddam (2005) has developed the so-called “staircase to terrorism” which consists of five stages during which people gradually remove all their internal checks and balances, leading to the perception that committing violent attacks is morally appropriate. Importantly, the final stage is terrorism and this again shows how concepts are closely connected, but before considering terrorism, it is also important to mention a paper written by Doosje et al. (2016). Authors focused on the process of radicalization but with an emphasis on micro, meso, and macro factors which gradually remove psychological barriers to committing violence. This again demonstrates that a comprehensive approach is required to address various factors at different levels.

Returning back to terrorism, it is extremely hard to define it because “one man’s terrorist is another man’s freedom fighter” (Reagan 1986). Another example would be a relatively recently conducted experiment where scholars were asked to provide their definitions of terrorism, resulting in more definitions than scholars, meaning that some scholars could not agree on their own (Schmid 2011). To simplify, this article considers terrorism as a phenomenon which involves violent means and causes casualties among citizens to scare the population and deliver a political message. This might be considered a weapon of the weak because they target innocent people because of ideologies and religions. This allows them to perceive themselves as freedom fighters or altruists who do this due to a holy goal which justifies any means to an end. The process of radicalization precedes a person becoming a terrorist because human principles should be forgotten and the realization that this is the only and legitimate choice should come. It is also important to note that this strategy was not very successful at the end of the day because, after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the war against terror destroyed the whole infrastructure of terrorists in their safe havens, meaning it has become very hard for them to operate. Moreover, this also scared many supporters of radical ideologies away because they did not approve of such brutal tactics. Although the world today has a problem of lone wolves who are inspired by a powerful idea on the Internet, various private sector cooperative arrangements help to make social media and messengers

safe and deny access to terrorist suspects.

Finally, extremism is usually confused with terrorism, but a clear difference should be highlighted. This is also the last stage of the radicalization process and extremists are comparable to radicals. They advocate “extreme measures or views” (Merriam-Webster n.d.) which differ from the rest of society. They might promote their goals but without using violent means as terrorists do. Furthermore, they might be inspired by various causes, such as feminism, LGBT rights, environmental and animal protection, and other similar causes. Roughly speaking, on a scale, they would be just before terrorism because they try to avoid using violent means to kill people, despite being motivated by some idealist perceptions of the reality.

OSCE AS AN INTERNATIONAL ACTOR

OSCE remains a core regional security organisation which fosters peace and cooperation among its members and partner countries. OSCE (2022) also emphasized that one of its core functions is “to improve the lives of individuals and communities” using various offices within the organisation. This was especially useful when the Soviet Union joined because although the Helsinki Accords were not binding in practice, they still allowed to name and shame countries which violated the human rights regime. Now this tactic is used to persuade countries to follow certain rules and procedures, including tactics to tackle radicalization and violent extremism.

Connecting this idea to the theoretical framework, OSCE has managed to create the so-called “security community” (Adler 1998). The idea behind this is that certain norms and principles become so essential and institutionalized that countries perceive them in the same way. This creates a “we-feeling” and allows countries to work together on various security aspects within and beyond the OSCE community. What is more important, is the idea of seminar diplomacy through which a “we-feeling” was partly spread, meaning that the organisation held seminars in different countries to show that “we are the same” to facilitate the working process and demonstrate that certain practices are very similar to each other. This seminar diplomacy includes meetings of diplomats, academics, youth, social activists, IR experts, civil society and community leaders, and all other potential stakeholders. This eventually leads to a consensus on many aspects and allows to work together more efficiently. This approach is also in line with the Paris School of International Security (Bigo 2008) which emphasizes the importance of connected international security

experts who work together under different circumstances.

This brief OSCE overview allows us to argue that OSCE is highly important as a platform which fosters dialogue and cooperation. Its comprehensive approach to security issues traces its origin to the founding principles of the organisation. Radicalization and violent extremism require this approach because the issue is just too complex and diverse, making OSCE an ideal institution to find best practices to tackle these problems and promote them in member states and beyond. These practices and attempts are going to be reviewed in the following section.

OSCE ACTIVITIES AND POLICIES

OSCE focuses on the comprehensive approach to prevent violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism (PVERLT). It is a part of the strategy to prevent terrorism and other illegal activities with an emphasis on protecting human rights and other fundamental freedoms. The comprehensive approach has its name: a “Whole-of-Society” approach which is focused on involving all potential stakeholders within the state, such as police, youth, education specialists, representatives of various ministries, journalists, religious communities, and all others from different spheres of life (OSCE 2020a). The idea to address PVERLT comprehensively appeared for a reason. Initially, the organisation was already busy with many policies in various directions and regions, and it would be costly and pointless to restart already launched projects. This means that, for instance, women empowerment or advancing freedom of the media are goals on their own because they have many positive consequences in related fields. They are not pursued just because they help to counter PVERLT and must not be centred around only one goal. Following this idea, the arguments below imply deductive thinking where just certain aspects related to fighting PVERLT under the “Whole-of-Society” approach are picked and analyzed.

Overall, the approach implies detecting people who might be susceptible to the influence of radical groups or dissatisfied with certain ideas. When such people are found (it might be at schools since many young people try to attract attention or find a new identity or at churches or mosques where such people could be classified by religious mentors), people might start communicating with potential individuals or deliver a message to community leaders or other superiors who would address these concerns (OSCE 2020a). Importantly, it should not be considered a denunciation because this process of communication should be open

and based on consent and respect. These long-term measures are also supported by Bjørgo (2016) who states that a multitude of preventive mechanisms can work more efficiently and remove negative effects which are usually linked to several heavily implemented counter-radicalization measures. The role of OSCE is to foster this holistic approach and develop a dense network of agents and measures to tackle radicalization issues in member states.

Despite many advantages of this strategy, usually, countries do not have platforms which would allow this flow of communication to happen, meaning that certain guidelines, procedures, and rules do not exist. This means that the approach cannot work at full capacity because certain elements from the structure, such as de-radicalization practitioners or social care services, might not receive the information on time. It is also important not to boil down the mission simply to the police because the police officers might not be aware of how to communicate with radicalized individuals. Moreover, in certain countries, there are communities which were oppressed by police for years and that is the reason why they cannot trust each other, meaning that sometimes police might be the last resort. This is mainly because radicals usually have not yet committed terrorist acts and they cannot be preventively arrested until certain evidence is discovered. One of the examples of such a community would be Northern Ireland where the policy was reformed at the beginning of the 2000s to make it more open, inclusive, and responsive to the local needs. The main aim was to recruit more people from the Catholic community and make their working contracts long-term to secure their places there, put an emphasis on the career growth and spread the idea that they will have to work together for a long period, meaning that it is in their interests to solve problems in a responsible way (OSCE 2014). Another programme in Northern Ireland is called “Pizza with a Peeler” and it is designed to foster cooperation between police officers and youth. They have a chance to discuss the acute matter in an informal environment and realize that police officers are friendly people who offer help when needed. This might help to stop the process of radicalization at the beginning and put some “seeds of destruction” into people’s understanding of the reality in case they are already handled by some radicals. Such practices must be promoted by OSCE instruments throughout the region because civil-government cooperation is a prerequisite to detecting radical elements.

The next part of the comprehensive approach is the so-called “referral mechanisms”. These are a part of the intervention programming, namely “secondary prevention” where people at their radicalization pathways are detected and certain authorized bodies must dissuade them

from continuing (OSCE 2019). This requires information sharing and as it has been argued above, usually such platforms do not exist. More than that, participation is purely voluntary, meaning that some people might refuse to participate and this would not harm their de-radicalization track. However, family members and relatives might step in and through a combination of carrots and sticks get a person out of the radicalization cycle. This might also be done through common activities, such as sports competitions or trips (OSCE 2019). This would also require a developed culture which would support people's actions and efforts to talk to radicals because it might be extremely hard to spend time with them because of their short temper or weird views.

It is also important to mention the rehabilitation and reintegration of people who either have already hurt somebody or are about to commit certain violent acts. This is also a part of the "Whole-of-Society" approach which focuses on disengagement and de-radicalization of people. This approach is focused on several pillars: socio-economic support (people should be able to find a flat and a work), psychosocial support (they might not feel a part of society, so at the initial stages they have somebody to talk to), theological or ideological support (it is important to focus on right beliefs, religion, and ideologies, but do not change them completely), family counselling (family has many functions which cannot be performed by other social institutions), recreational and cultural support (people will escape their inner experiences and focus on something positive) (OSCE 2020b). These tactics also automatically imply that various stakeholders are needed to address all these problems.

It is essential to note that it is not a one size fits all programme where all efforts are standardized for everybody and applied everywhere. Rather, special rehabilitation efforts, namely de-radicalization and disengagement, are chosen specifically for the needs of each person. The logic is relatively simple and straightforward: people who decided to abandon a radical organized voluntarily tend to be different from individuals who were radicalized and then detained by the government because of their dangerous intentions and plans. This confirms that one standard approach cannot address all these differences and more tailored made solutions should be considered.

OSCE takes into account these different pathways to radicalization and considers them in its "Whole-of-Society" plan. The thinking is that that different actors should be alliable to step in and facilitate the integration of radicals. It might be former radicals because they know the whole process of radicalization, but it is essential to make sure that they are fully de-radicalized before allowing them to organize meetings

and events. When it comes to Islamic extremism, some scholars can be invited to talk to radicals and provide them with another point of view. This discussion with valid arguments can help to change their minds and become more critical (Islam 2019). It might also be social workers, NGOs, close friends, probation workers, authorities, and all other social actors because people interact at different levels of intensity with all of them. All these actors must be aware of the problem and have points of contact in case their need assistance in talking to these people.

At a first glance, this is an essential component of the counter-PVERLT strategy. However, such efforts might not achieve success because some countries do not have enough resources to reintegrate individuals and develop such policies, while other structural issues, such as economic crises or global pandemics, might make this worse, regardless of the efforts of some institutions. This is where OSCE should step in and highlight levels of priority for countries to focus on because, without some templates or professional guidance, it would be hard to develop beneficial and cost-efficient measures to tackle radicalization. Some might believe that this is a viable solution, but Bakker and Kessels (2012) note that OSCE also has its own resource constraints and this is reflected in OSCE field offices. Many of them have very wide mandates and a long to-do list, while they are running out of experts and other capabilities. It is also important to apply this logic at the country level because some regional governments might not have enough capabilities and professionals to deliver certain policies to citizens. This means that resource constraints must always be taken into account and allocated as efficiently as possible from the top, whether it is OSCEC Secretariat, which sets the general agenda, or central governments, which allocate resources and conduct planning activities.

Remarkably, all reports emphasise the gender aspect of radicalization and de-radicalization because the experience of women and men tend to be different. This also should find its representation in attempts to identify potential radicals because women were usually overlooked from the general discourse because of the gender bias that they cannot be terrorists too. Reports (OSCE 2019, 2020a) also mention that many of them travelled to the Middle East to become wives for soldiers or foreign fighters. However, their expectations usually do not match reality, leading to dissatisfaction and frustration, meaning that their emotions and inner experiences should be also addressed with the help of law-enforcement institutions and international organisations, such as INTERPOL or EUROPOL to detect such people at borders and gradually initiate the processes of de-radicalization. This would also

require specialists who would respect gender differences and find the right activities, words, and values to re-integrate women.

Although the two aforementioned security institutions might help member states to reduce the threat of entering radicals or terrorists to their countries, they cannot be an ideal sieve which would detect everybody and everywhere. Any security organisation implies information sharing and sometimes it might be even intelligence. Once a piece of sensitive document is shared with another country, the number of actors who has access to it increased. This means that the chances of it being leaked to the media are greater. Such risks might compromise some classified projects, agents, and other assets which are always highly valued. Such logic partly explains why INTERPOL and EUROPOL have certain limits and cannot unleash their potential. Since tackling radicalization results is harder and might involve more risks to ordinary people, it is necessary to focus on causes which might ignite PVERLT trends. Although it is also very challenging and time-consuming, OSCE has already achieved substantial benefits and positive side effects which play a vital role in improving the conditions of life and decreasing motivation to become a violent extremists.

CONCLUSION

All in all, this paper demonstrates that OSCE is a vital organisation to counter radicalization and violent extremism because it has various soft power mechanisms to promote the “Whole-of-Society” approach among its member states. Despite it being very efficient on paper, in practice countries usually do not have a platform to engage various actors and share information. All attempts tend to be limited and boil down to only a few initiatives and projects. Nevertheless, they already managed to produce tangible outcomes and allow to promote a culture of tolerance and non-discrimination which is required for the successful reintegration of individuals into society. The research on best practices and projects is also an inherent and vital function of OSCE. More research, however, is required in the field of implementation of such practices and the most efficient ways to do this because countries are not ready to invest big amounts of money in comprehensive projects. This means that strategies or templates for the gradual development of such projects are necessary to further promote a comprehensive and inclusive framework at all levels of governance.

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* Manuscript was received on August 31, 2022 and the paper was accepted for publishing on September 20, 2022.

*Gillian Stark**

*Graduate Student of Security Studies, Institute of Political Studies,
Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University Prague*

ONLINE RADICALIZATION OF AMERICA'S MALE YOUTH

Abstract

The United States has, in recent years, struggled with the rise of the Alt-Right. A wing of political extremism associated with extreme conservatism, racism, anti-Semitism, and sexist ideals, the target demographic is young, white, Christian males. Multiple mass shootings have been attributed to the ideology and, in tracing its roots, one finds the home of such ideologies to be on online forums such as Reddit, 4chan, and 8chan. This paper analyzes the lax rules and lack of moderation on these sites that makes them a safe place for hateful ideologies. In addition, it finds that the sense of community these potential murders find on such sites can urge them to their hateful acts. Through memes, in-jokes, and manifestoes, the Alt-Right has found a long-term home in these forums.

Keywords: Alt-Right, Reddit, 4Chan, 8Chan, Forums, Extremism, America

INTRODUCTION

The United States has a problem. More and more young males are being radicalized online in forums such as Reddit, 4chan, and 8chan. Pulled further and further to the right, a spate of terror attacks in America perpetrated by these radicalized men have cost dozens of lives. Alt-right ideologies held by these extremists are rooted in neo-nazi, ultra conservative, Christian based views. They reject current governance and desire a state built on individual liberties and White supremacy. Part of the identity of these groups is their fringe beliefs, their outlets for these feelings are often online, where the spread of information is much more

* Email: 83936100@fsv.cuni.cz

difficult to control (SPLC 2021, 2-5). Forums are often a safe haven for this speech; young men can gather and freely express their political and social views, but often this devolves into simple hate speech. Within these forums, people start to slowly devolve from political speech into outright White supremacy and hatred. Already a breeding ground for potential terrorism, some sites are eventually shut down, but others remain active, providing a gathering place for the radicalization of America's youth. The three forums outlined below are just a sample of the more mainstream sites dedicated to sharing alt-right beliefs. Reddit operates multiple subreddits dedicated to the issue, as one is shut down, users flock to another to continue sharing opinions. The number of members is staggering at times, thousands of young men posting almost non-stop on the forum. On 4chan and 8chan, similar forums for image sharing, further thousands of young Americans espouse hatred towards minorities, Jews, Muslims, and women. They mingle hatred with political talk and visions of an America where they enjoy even more power. Here it is argued that the loose moderation of these sites and their policies of allowing any speech not outright illegal, allows them to become the breeding ground for these ideas. Research into these forums support this theory, that memes, text posts, and manifestoes posted here are often inclusive of language that would otherwise be censored. An overview of the previous research done on these topics makes it clear that the websites are a haven for hate speech due to their nonexistent moderation and censorship rules.

ORIGINS AND BELIEFS OF THE ALT-RIGHT IN AMERICA

Alternative right, or alt-right is a growing sect of political thought in the United States. Defined as “a set of far-right ideologies, groups and individuals whose core belief is that “white identity” is under attack by multicultural forces using “political correctness” and “social justice” to undermine white people and “their” civilization” by the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC 2021, 1), the growing movement has already been the cause for numerous attacks on American citizens. The term itself was invented by leader Richard Spencer in 2008 to describe a new political ideology based on White, Catholic Christian identity. They espouse “traditional” values rooted in history and reject what they call liberalizing reforms. The pseudo-libertarian values the alt-right holds aim for anarcho-capitalism, that is eschewment of organized state in favor of open markets. Freedom from government is a main tenet, the ability for followers to make their own choices in regards to laws and

norms is of utmost importance, overreaching laws that are deemed to infringe on personal sovereignty are vilified (SPLC 2021, 1-3). It may seem as if an inordinate amount of scrutiny is placed on only a single demographic, young, White males, but this is the core of the alt-right movement. This is the group they pander and appeal to and this is the group most susceptible to their radicalization. Further, in America, White men are the demographic owning the most guns, putting them at highest risk to take violent action in accordance to their beliefs (Parker 2017, 2).

Spencer himself has said the target group is young males, fresh from university, and unhappy with their diminishing White identity. The “hyper-radicalized” world they are surrounded with places their identity at the bottom of the hierarchy, below immigrants, POC, LGBTQ identifiers, and religious minorities. They feel the loss of their supremacy keenly and seek to preserve the values that keep them in power. Therefore, white supremacy and neo-Nazi beliefs form the core of the alt-right. In politics, they staunchly support former president Donald Trump and congressional representatives such as Madison Cawthorn (R-NC11), Lauren Boebert (R-CO3), and Marjorie Taylor-Green (R-GA14), all of whom have espoused radical right wing beliefs in the past. Traditional conservative representatives are mocked as impotent and ineffectual, often referred to using slurs such as “cuckservatives”, a mix between the terms cuckold and conservative used to describe Republicans who support minorities or Jews (SPLC 2021, 2-5) (Anti-Defamation League [ADL] 2019, 1-4). Still, the cause tries to steer away from overtly racist language in an effort to attract new followers who may not fully ascribe yet to the more extreme views, but this is not to say that these are not core beliefs (ADL 2019, 3). The loosely organized and secretive community is hard to trace at times, due to the anonymity that the internet provides. The surface beliefs are rooted in discontent with current politics, yet the deeper one gets, the more is revealed as to the true nature of alt-right beliefs (Hodge & Halgrimsdottir 2020, 6).

As mentioned, the alt-right primarily appeals to young, white, Christian males. They target educated, upper-middle class youth, though draw in quite a few uneducated poor. The use of the internet to draw in these youths is of vital importance. Anonymous forums give future adheres the chance to espouse views without fear of personal backlash (Hodge & Hallgrimsdottir 2020, 4-6). Often, memes are used to convey beliefs, infusing racism and hatred with humor. Women are also a frequent target, memes mock them for either having too much sex or not freely providing it. Many alt-right believers view feminists and women’s expanded rights as a threat to their manhood, and they use these

online communities to harass and dox women they feel infringed upon by. One notable occurrence was 2014's Gamergate, in which alt-right members of various online forums banded together to force women off of videogaming platforms. Viewing these as male only spaces, they used overwhelming hostility and threats of rape and death directed towards female gamers to reclaim spaces for men only. It is one of the first examples of a successful alt-right internet based campaign. This online aggression is a hallmark of the movement, and can be found in almost all of the forums in which alt-right men are active. They often co-opt popular memes and bend them to their will, making them into symbols of hate posted across various forums (ADL 2019, 4).

THE FREEDOM OF REDDIT

Reddit is an online forum in which users can create sub forums called subreddits. Users can post threads, pictures, videos, and links then collect comments on these posts, and are allowed to upvote or downvote these posts and comments, signaling agreement or disagreement with the opinions expressed within. The more upvotes one collects, the higher one's karma, an arbitrary measurement of collective agreement with posted content. The subreddit *r/AltRight* was first formed in 2010 on reddit but only began gathering their first thousand followers six years later in 2016. In the following six months, the subreddit multiplied sixteen fold, having 16,007 followers by the time it was banned in January of 2017 for violating Reddit policy on hate speech and content. In the six months it was significantly active, the subreddit saw an astonishing amount of posts, mostly related to hate targeting minorities. In an analysis of the subreddit's content, Grover and Mark found that the most often targeted group were Jews, with almost one in every 100 meaningful words being Jew or Jewish. The subreddit had an array of slang and perjorative terms used in addition to this, including Ashke-Nazi, kike, hebe, shekels, oy veys, and NaZionists. They found as well that the tone in most posts were anger, hate, anxiety, and sadness. The results of their analysis found that in the six months they studied, the emotions exhibited on the subreddit increased dramatically in intensity. Furthermore, the boundaries pushed in hate speech and concepts presented accelerated at an alarming pace. Anger was a predominant emotion shown in comments, often targeting Blacks or Jews, though not solely restricted to these two groups. Reddit's alt right subreddit rarely touched on political topics that first formed the ideology, but instead seemed to focus on the racial hatred and sexism (Grover & Mark 2019, 196-200).

Reddit's lax rules regarding self-identification allow users to mask their identities and post freely their deepest held beliefs. These thoughts may not be appropriate to be shared publicly due to potential for backlash so Reddit users feel comfortable posting in various subreddits given their anonymity. Another now banned subreddit, *r/The_Donald*, shows serious skewing towards alt-right ideologies. Named after former US president Donald Trump, the subreddit had 688,000 subscribers before being shuttered. Why do some of these subreddits have such enormous amounts of followers and how is Reddit a harbor for them? Reddit began as a niche website for news sharing and fandoms, but has since grown to include an exponential amount of topics from *r/cats* to *r/paleontology*. It acts as a gathering place for "geeky" people around the world, generally young men with some form of higher education interested in STEM, video games, and pop culture. Loose moderation allows niches such as *r/AltRight* and *r/The_Donald* to exist though, and often to gather enormous amounts of followers. Further, because of the policy of not censoring any speech that does not directly violate US law, they allow people to push boundaries. As long as there is not a definitive plan of violence against a certain group, users can theorize about rhetorical violence against minorities as much as they like. This is perhaps the most important contributing factor to its transformation into a safe space for the alt-right. The male dominated environment promotes a "toxic geek masculinity" on the site, where users extol their intelligence and sometimes superiority, making it a perfect breeding ground for far right ideologies, despite the general liberal nature of the site. Unpaid moderators on each subreddit are in charge of removing illegal content, though, due to the fact these moderators belong to the communities they moderate, the more extreme subreddits are often allowed to run unchecked, the moderators agreeing with even the most vile of opinions expressed there. Administrators working for Reddit are often unwilling or unable to curtail this, until outcry from other communities, often those attacked or brigaded by the hate filled ones complain enough to get the extremist subreddits quarantined or deleted. The unrestricted nature of the website makes it one of the foremost spots to disseminate alt-right views today (Massanari 2020, 179-189).

A STEP FURTHER: 3CHAN AND 8CHAN

Announcing itself as the "darkest corners and seediest zones" of the internet, 4chan is an image sharing board with even fewer restrictions than Reddit. Created in 2003 by a fifteen year old in an attempt to create

an anonymous image sharing site to spread anime images and discuss pop culture. It devolved rapidly from there to a place for snapshots of murder victims, child porn, and early memes. It requires no email address or identifying info to create an account, users can remain entirely anonymous while interacting in various subforums related to a bevy of topics (Seidman 2014, 1-2). In 4chan's "Politically Incorrect" board, Rieger found a prevalence of hate speech related to alt-right ideologies. In fact, 12% of posts there related to the far right and included some form of hate speech, a substantially higher amount than in many other politically neutral boards. Similar to Reddit, an analysis of the targets of this hate were mainly Blacks and Jews, though a significant portion also focused on LGBTQ, immigrants, and those with disabilities (Rieger et al. 2021, 13-16). These findings only serve to further highlight the connections between the alt-right, hatred, and online communities. Demonization of government and populist ideologies were widespread, with a strong majority of posts far right leaning, and only a thin margin can be identified as leftist views, despite the site's origin as a haven for the far-left (Colley & Moore 2022, 7-8).

These views and shocking posts are allowed to proliferate due to loose moderation on the site. If the post or image does not violate US law, it's allowed to remain on the sight. Offensive material and extreme political beliefs are not illegal, therefore, they remain. Moderation is scant and condemned, images removed are likely to be reposted within hours across multiple other subforums and exalted due to its "edgy" status. Text posts are rarely removed unless they directly break the law, allowing potential terrorists to post vague texts related to plans and conspiracy theories about the future victims with no fear of backlash (Seidman 2014, 2). Bullying and trolling is also rife within the community, people's private information is often given freely and users band together to make life miserable for the enemies of the group (Colley & Moore 2022, 5-18). Users of 4chan's /pol/ forum, standing for politically incorrect, is the main home of alt-right adheres on 4chan. Colley and Moore found that they stand unified under a feeling of superiority over others, often posting about their intellectual ability and how they can see through the conspiracy theories put forth by the government. A main goal stated within the community is the need to "redpill", or radicalize others, bringing them into the alt-right. They examined the importance of influencers on the site, finding that efforts to radicalize others were not a collective effort but instead a show of individual belief (Colley & Moore 2022, 15). This is a reflection of most alt-right spaces; they are often loosely organized and individualistic. Though leaders do exist,

they do not lead a well organized group, simply serving as a figurehead instead for followers with varied beliefs to rally behind. Followers are well aware of this fact though and use it to their advantage. They hamper chances to study their community and try to sway research by posting certain messages or heading to other subforums to post their messages there, hoping to skew research. Additionally, they are fiercely protective of their own, often lauding terrorist attacks as “wins” or hiding potential perpetrators from authorities. They are loathe to report their own members therefore, when plans for attacks are announced, the potential terrorist is often egged on, or treated as a hero.

On April 27, 2019, as the Passover holidays came to a close, worshipers gathered in Poway Synagogue twenty miles north of San Diego, California and a right wing extremist waited to attack. John Timothy Earnest had been radicalized on the imageboard 8chan, modeled after 4chan. In fact, he’d used 8chan to post his manifesto earlier that day. This was not the first nor the last time 8chan would be accused of radicalizing a young man into committing a terror attack, only a few months later another shooting was linked to the website. In El Paso, Texas, a 21 year old man was accused of opening fire in a Walmart, killing 20 people and injuring numerous others; he too was active on the forum. As a result of these and other international attacks, 8chan was removed from the internet (Rieger et al. 2021, 1). 8chan began as an alternative to 4chan, the creator, Frederick Brennan, saying it would be a haven of free speech. Unimpressed by 4chan’s habit of removing some of the more inflammatory posts, Brennan sought to create a site in which the internet could serve the exact purpose Brennan thought it should, a place where people could say what they wished without fear of backlash or censorship. The 2019 attacks highlighted 8chan’s niche on the internet, a place where extremists could talk openly and freely recruit others to their cause, a potential mass shooter’s cyber home (Roose 2019, 1-2).

After the attacks, Brennan himself called for his website to be removed from the internet. Just one year beforehand he had sold the site to new owners, so had little control over whether it stayed up or not, but he recognized the danger his creation possessed. 8chan is entirely unmoderated, meaning there is no overseeing authority there to remove posts that cross legal lines of free speech and therefore, hatred and its ilk abound. Memes praising mass shooters and codes for crimes targeting minorities are used in excess, often functioning as a way to test who is “in” and who is “out” of certain communities. Literature extolling hate crimes and alt-right beliefs are shared openly. Multiple times 8chan has been accused of providing a haven for hate speech and neo-Nazis, and the

site has ignored multiple complaints of allowing political speech to fester into an alt-right echo-chamber (Roose 2019, 3-4). Images such as those of frogs holding Nazi flags and proclaiming the end of Jews and Muslims in America are rife, with users mingling these with support for Trump and a “new America”. Memes are a significant method of information spread on 8chan, their simplicity is a boon for spread across platforms. In the time a cognizant rebuttal to the racist or sexist material can be written, the image can be shared to Facebook, Twitter, and other sites dozens of times. They are useful specifically because almost anyone can make them, they are easy to share, and even easier to understand. Often the inclusion of humor in 8chan’s memes make skewering minorities a topic of laughter, rather than the serious topic matter that it truly is (Hodge & Hallgrimsdottir 2019, 6-9). Due to its long history with the alt-right, 8chan is considered deeply established in the sect’s ideology. It is intrinsic to the identity of many members, and dozens of hours spent there is a prerequisite to belonging to the group, same as with Reddit and 4chan, the symbiotic relationship between the two means survival for either without the other is questionable (Hodge & Hallgrimsdottir 2019, 13).

CONCLUSION

The alt-right began as a fringe anti-establishment view that gained traction in the United States during the candidacy and presidency of Donald Trump. Its hallmark is White supremacy and Christian views, with hatred towards minorities, Muslims, Jews, women, LGBTQ, and the left. It appeals greatly to young, White men who view expanded rights for the previously mentioned groups as an infringement on theirs; they long for a return to “traditional” values. The radicalization to these beliefs take place almost entirely online, especially on forum sites such as Reddit, 4chan, and 8chan. These message boards serve as a safe haven for alt-right believers, loose moderation and the proliferation of hate speech allow them to pursue the goals of the sect, radicalization of further members, cyber attacks on perceived enemies, and planning violent attacks in the real world. Memes and insider jokes and terminology allow them to perceive who belongs to the in group or not, with outsiders being bullied off the site. Real life terror attacks by those radicalized online have already claimed lives in America, but studying these groups presents insurmountable challenges. Their resistance to outsiders and the free-form nature of the sites they populate only impede their study and stopping. Without proper moderation and censorship of extremist beliefs, these sites will continue to provide a home to the alt-right and radicalize those who use them.

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* Manuscript was received on September 10, 2022 and the paper was accepted for publishing on October 20, 2022.

UDC: 327::911.3(497)(049.3)
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.22182/pnb.specijal2022.12>
Bookreview

Savo Simić*

*Institute for Political Studies,
Belgrade*

GEOPOLITICAL POSITION OF THE BALKANS IN THE MIRROR OF THE GREAT POWERS**



Vanja Glišin. 2019.
*Balkan geopolitical paradigm:
The Balkans in the geopolitical
vision of the great powers.*
Sremski Karlovci: Kairos, 160 p.

* Email address: savo.simic95@gmail.com.

** The paper was created within scientific research activity of the Institute for Political Studies, which is financed by the Serbian Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development.

Vanja Glišin's book *The Balkan Geopolitical Paradigm* is divided into two parts, both of which are divided into four chapters. This title can be defined as a guide through geopolitics for political researchers who are not sufficiently familiar with it as a discipline, for those who want to understand the geographical, political, strategic, and economic position of the Balkans and the interests of other political actors concerning the region and/or for researchers who strive to learn more about geopolitical paradigms and projects of certain regional and world powers. The first part of the book is devoted to the basic understanding of geopolitics, the areas of its theoretical conceptualization, important historical events and their consequences on the Balkans, and geographical and related geopolitical and geo-economics characteristics of the Balkan Peninsula and the Balkans as a knot of different influences and cultures, therefore Balkans of different interests. The second part of the title is marked by the introspection of the *Serbian national issue* in the Balkans, preservation of the entire Serbian identity, and examination of certain political processes such as *balkanization* and *political violence* through the action of the religious factor and reawakening of nationalism on the Peninsula.

Vanja begins with the before-mentioned theoretical breakdown and explanation of geopolitical concepts, but also geopolitics itself as a multidisciplinary science. Book considers not only the interpretations of different authors whose contribution to geopolitics as science is significant but also answers the questions of what geopolitics as science represents, which elements it synthesizes from other scientific disciplines, and what the geopolitical position of a state can be. In simplest terms, geopolitics represents a combination of geography and politics to determine their mutual pervasion on the overall maintenance and functioning of the state and society. Then the presentation of the three largest geopolitical schools has been made: Germanic, Anglo-Saxon, and Russian. This segment represents the most significant review-scientific, strategic key for judging the sources of the many conflicts and disputes currently being waged in the world. The author analyzes concepts such as Living space (*Lebensraum*), Large space (*Grossraum*), and Central Europe (*Mitteleuropa*) as German doctrines. The Heart of the land (*Heartland*), Rimland, the Central Ocean (*Midland Ocean*), the concept of integrated power, anaconda strategy and the relationship between tellurocratic (land dominant) and thalassocratic

(sea dominant) states in Anglo-Saxon geopolitics, and Eurasianism, ideocracy, and centrality regarding the Russian geopolitical school. Most of these doctrines belong to the domain of *realpolitik*, which means that they have been implemented, are currently being implemented, or have been left for later implementation, when more favorable conditions are created. Some of such projects are the Berlin-Baghdad rail, Elba-Euphrates, Elba-Equator, Rhine-Danube, the Sanitary Cordon, access to warm seas, or control of important traffic corridors, ports, and river courses. At the same time, for each important doctrine – which explanation requires additional analysis - an illustrative display has been left for better visual determination of the application of a given geopolitical doctrine.

The second chapter is marked by crucial historical moments for the reconfiguration of the Balkans. The author mentions only the most expressive ones but goes very deep into history, from the division of the Roman Empire, the Crusades, the arrival of the Ottomans in the Balkans, through the Great Eastern Crisis and the Berlin Congress, all the way to the collapse of the Soviet Union and the internal war in Yugoslavia. Historical overview refers to this area as a borderline, politically unstable, confessionally disparate region subject to the constant aspirations

of major conflicting powers. Similarly, it is possible to draw a parallel with the Balkan present state, but in a slightly different form and content. It is necessary to point out that the countries of the Balkans were often not a political goal itself, but rather a way station towards further penetrations to the East or West, depending on direction and angle of observation. Nevertheless, the Balkans have always represented an important crossroads of political paths, a place of connection, but at the same time a place of separation. As the author points out: "Throughout history, the Balkans have been an important transcontinental zone and a geostrategic fortress." In other words, the Balkans is *Catena Mundi*"(53).

In the third chapter, Glišin offers Jovan Cvijić's typology of the Balkan Peninsula features. As the Balkans are on the border of Europe and Asia, they have Eurasian elements and a mixture of cultures. In addition, the Balkan Peninsula is open to the north across the Pannonian Plain, and to Africa on the south, through the Moravian-Vardar valley and Greek islands. These features are the connecting points of the Balkans, as they enable undemanding communication. On the other hand, the mountain ranges in the Balkans in the direction east-west and northwest-southeast create features of separation, that is, hinder the

movement of civilization flows. At the end of the chapter, the author raises the question of the origins of a relatively new term "Western Balkans", clearly noting two discursive components. The first presents that the adjective "western" is a construct of the East as a European periphery or a political periphery in general. The second, related to the first, emphasizes belonging to the Western political sphere of interest and attachment of the Western Balkan states to the same political and cultural values.

In the last chapter of the book's first part, the geopolitical goals of the United States and Russia in the Balkans have been examined, mainly through the Cold War prism and the principles of Atlanticism and Neo-Eurasianism. Finally, the author has included in the analysis Germany with an indirect interest in the Balkans through Central Europe and Turkey with the reborn ideology and doctrine of Neo-Ottomanism. The expansion of the NATO alliance to the area of Eastern Europe and the Balkans—Montenegro joining NATO in 2017 was used as the last example are at least declaratively committed to European integration, prevents the return of Russia to Southeastern Europe. This is how the battle is being fought on Brzezinski's chessboard, aiming to isolate or surround the Central area or Russian Federation. Turkey

and Germany as allies of the United States, mainly use the occasionally given and limited field of action on the Balkan Peninsula, primarily through economic and cultural means for political influence. For its ambitions, Turkey supports Albanians and Bosniaks in the Balkans, intending to form a continuous green transversal from Bulgaria, Macedonia, and Kosovo through south-west parts of Serbia and Montenegro Bosnia and Herzegovina. Germany wants to control the Danube with reliable allies Slovenia and Croatia. Germany with The Balkans, ensures potential energy security, regulates large migrations like the one in 2015 and making a progress toward economic expansion to the distant markets of the Middle East.

In the second part, Glišin deals with political processes, primarily defining balkanization in public discourse as a pejorative and generated phrase. Born out of instability or loss of balance in favor of fear and maintenance of fostered chaos in the Balkans, balkanization is the result of the geopolitical redundancy of Yugoslavia in the post-Cold War era. The embodiment of balkanization is not the sole merit of the animosity between the Balkan states and nations, but the result of the pressure and aggression of foreign powers. Glišin exhaustively enumerates the consequences of

NATO bombing Serbia, despite international law and the Security Council's disapproval of such a procedure.

The rise of confessional radicalization in the Balkans, he sees in the intensive Islamization, primarily due to the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the arrival of the Mujahideen from Islamic countries. A similar situation can be found in Kosovo, where Albanians 2015 made up the largest number of Europeans in terrorist organizations in Iraq and Syria. The author explains that Islam and law form an inseparable system and that the temporary state of the Muslim minority (*dar al sulh*) is always only temporary until the conditions for the creation of a state based on Islam (*dar al Islam*) are met. It also points to the danger of taking neo-Ottomanism lightly as a moderate Turkish-Islamic synthesis, behind which works supremacy of Islam to the detriment of nationalism. As a last, but also the most important question, Glišin takes the position of Serbia and the Serbian people on the territory of the Balkan Peninsula. Here, not only the geographical characteristics of our country are determined, but the elements of national identity are also explained, what distinguishes true sovereign nations from synthetic or newly created, aided nations with the intention of geopolitical redistribution of power. For sovereign nations, a temporally

continuous and differentiated national identity is needed, in contrast to the rapidly formed, historical, ethnic, and cultural amalgam of synthetic nations. Unfortunately, according to the author, even sovereign nations like Serbia can be a fertile ground for the emergence of synthetic nations, because, in the previous historical segment, Serbia opted for a strictly exclusivist confessional model of nation emergence. Such a model did not accept the integration of Serbs of other religious affiliations into the national body, which had the effect of creating other national identities. Externally, Serbia suffers from the label of a western Russian governorate, while internally, autochauvinism (national self-hate) has been systematically implemented under the influence of the comprador political elite.

In the end, Vanja Glišin offers us a simple and proven method for political difficulties, “Svetosavlje” (based on the Christian orthodox teachings of Saint Sava) as spiritual guide and geopolitics of Serbian unity for successful multi-century duration.

AUTHOR GUIDELINES

Academic journal *Politika nacionalne bezbednosti* publishes articles that are the result of the latest theoretical and empirical research in the field of political science. Authors should refer mainly the results of scientific research published in academic journals, primarily in political science journals.

The papers are published in Serbian, English, French, or Russian.

The journal is published two times a year. The deadlines for submitting the manuscripts are: April 1st and October 1st.

Two consecutive issues cannot contain articles written by the same author, whether single- authored or co-authored.

Manuscripts should be sent to the following e-mail address: pnb@ips.ac.rs.

Research article can have up to 40,000 characters with spaces, including footnotes. When counting the characters leave out the reference list.

Review can have up to 15,000 characters with spaces.

Book review can have up to 10,000 characters with spaces.

When counting the characters, use the option Review/Word Count/Character (with spaces) and check the box Include textboxes, footnotes and endnotes.

CITING AND REFERENCING

Academic journal *Politika nacionalne bezbednosti* adopts a modified version of Chicago citation style (17th edition of the *Chicago Manual of Style*), the author–date system of in-text parenthetical citation, with the list of references with full bibliographic information being placed at the end of the paper.

The bibliographic data in both the parenthetical citation and reference list should be cited in the original language of the source. The English translation of the reference title should be enclosed in square brackets after the original title. The references originally written in Cyrillic script should be transliterated into Latin script.

Below are the rules and examples of citing the bibliographic information in the reference list and in the text. For each type of source, a citation rule is given first, followed by an example of citation in the reference list and bibliographic parenthesis.

The bibliographic parenthesis, as a rule, is set off at the end of the sentence, before the punctuation mark. It contains the author’s surname,

the year of publication and page numbers pointing to a specifically contextual page or range of pages, as in the following example: (Mearsheimer 2001, 15–17).

Books

Books with one author

Surname, Name. Year of publication. *Title*. Place of publication: Publisher.

Mearsheimer, John J. 2001. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company. (Mearsheimer 2001)

Books with two or three authors

Surname, Name, and Name Surname. Year of publication. *Title*. Place of publication: Publisher.

Brady, Henry E., and David Collier. 2010. *Rethinking Social Inquiry: Diverse Tools, Shared Standards*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

(Brady and Collier 2010)

Pollitt, Christopher, Johnston Birchall, and Keith Putman. 1998. *Decentralising Public Service Management*. London: Macmillan Press.

(Pollitt, Birchall and Putman 1998)

Books with four or more authors

Surname, Name, Name and Surname, Name and Surname, and Name and Surname. Year of publication. *Title*. Place of publication: Publisher.

Pollitt, Christopher, Colin Talbot, Janice Caulfield, and Amanda Smullen. 2005. *Agencies: How Governments do Things Through Semi-Autonomous Organizations*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

(Pollitt et al. 2005)

Editor(s) or translator(s) in place of the author(s)

Surname, Name, Name and Surname, ed. Year of publication. *Title*. Place of publication: Publisher.

Kaltwasser, Cristobal Rovira, Paul Taggart, Paulina Ochoa Espejo, and Pierre Ostigoy, eds. 2017. *The Oxford Handbook of Populism*. New York: Oxford University Press.

(Kaltwasser et al. 2017)

Chapter in an edited book

Surname, Name. Year of publication. "Title of the chapter." In *Title*, ed. Name Surname, pages range. Place of publication: Publisher.

Lošonc, Alpar. 2019. "Discursive dependence of politics with the confrontation between republicanism and neoliberalism." In *Discourse and Politics*, eds. Dejana M. Vukasović and Petar Matić, 23–46. Belgrade: Institute for Political Studies.

(Lošonc 2019)

Journal Articles

Regular issue

Surname, Name. Year of publication. "Title of the article." *Journal* Volume, if available (issue): page range. DOI.

Ellwood, David W. 2018. "Will Brexit Make or Break Great Britain?" *Serbian Political Thought* 18 (2): 5–14. doi: 10.22182/spt.18212018.1.

(Ellwood 2018)

Special issue

Surname, Name. Year of publication. "Title of the article." In "Title of the special issue", ed. Name Surname, Special issue, *Journal*: page range. DOI.

Chin, Warren. 2019. "Technology, war and the state: past, present and future." In "Re-visioning war and the state in the twenty-first century." Special issue, *International Affairs* 95 (4): 765–783. doi: 10.1093/ia/iiz106.

(Chin 2019)

Encyclopedias and dictionaries *When the author/editor is known*

Surname, Name, Name Surname, ed. Year of publication. *Title*. Vol. Place of publication: Publisher.

Badie, Bertrand, Dirk Berg-Schlosser, and Leonardo Morlino, eds. 2011. *International Encyclopedia of Political Science*. Vol. 1. Los Angeles: Sage Publications.

(Badie, Berg-Schlosser and Morlino 2011)

When the author/editor is unknown

Title. Year of publication. Place of publication: Publisher.

Webster's Dictionary of English Usage. 1989. Springfield, Massachusetts: Merriam-Webster Inc. (*Webster's Dictionary of English Usage* 1989)

PhD dissertation

Surname, Name. Year of publication. "Title of the dissertation."
PhD diss. University.

Munger, Frank J. 1955. "Two-Party Politics in the State of Indiana."
PhD diss. Harvard University. (Munger 1955, 17–19)

Newspapers and magazines

Signed articles

Surname, Name. Year of publication. "Title of the article."
Newspaper/Magazine Date: page range.

Clark, Phil. 2018. "Rwanda's Recovery: When Remembrance is
Official Policy." *Foreign Affairs*, January/February 2018: 35–41.
(Clark 2018)

Unsigned articles

Title of the newspaper/magazine. Year of publication. "Title of
the article." Date: page range.

New York Times. 2002. "In Texas, Ad Heats Up
Race for Governor." July 30, 2002. (*New York Times*
2002)

Corporate author

Name of the corporate author [acronym if needed]. Year of
publication. *Title of the publication*. Place of publication:
Publisher.

International Organization for Standardization [ISO]. 2019. *Moving
from ISO 9001:2008 to ISO 9001:2015*. Geneva: International
Organization for Standardization.

(International Organization for Standardization
[ISO] 2019) – *The first in-text citation* (ISO 2019) –
Second and all subsequent citations

Special cases of referencing

Citing edition other than the first

Surname, Name. Year of publication. *Title*, edition number. Place
of publication: Publisher.

Bull, Hedley. 2012. *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in*

World Politics, 4th edition. New York: Columbia University Press.
(Bull 2012)

Multiple sources of the same author

1) *Multiple sources by the same author* should be arranged chronologically by year of publication in ascending order.

Mearsheimer, John J. 2001. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.

Mearsheimer, John J. 2010. "The Gathering Storm: China's Challenge to US Power in Asia." *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 3 (4): 381–396. doi:10.1093/cjip/poq016.

2) *Multiple sources by the same author from the same year* should be alphabetized by title, with lowercase letters attached to the year. Those letters should be used in parenthetical citation as well.

Walt, Stephen M. 2018a. *The Hell of Good Intentions: America's Foreign Policy Elite and the Decline of U.S. Primacy*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux. (Walt 2018a)

Walt, Stephen M. 2018b. "Rising Powers and the Risk of War: A Realist View of Sino-American Relations." In *Will China's Rise be Peaceful: Security, Stability and Legitimacy*, ed. Asle Toje. 13–32. New York: Oxford University Press.

(Walt 2018b)

3) *Single-authored sources precede multiauthored sources beginning with the same surname* or written by the same person.

Pollitt, Christopher. 2001. "Clarifying convergence. Striking similarities and durable differences in public management reform." *Public Management Review* 3 (4): 471–492. doi: 10.1080/14616670110071847.

Pollit Christopher, Johnston Birchall, and Keith Putman. 1998. *Decentralising Public Service Management*. London: Macmillan Press.

4) *Multiauthored sources with the same name and surname* of the first author should continue to be alphabetized by the second author's surname.

Pollitt Christopher, Johnston Birchall, and Keith Putman. 1998.

Decentralising Public Service Management. London: Macmillan Press.

Pollitt Christopher, Colin Talbot, Janice Caulfield, and Amanda Smullen. 2005. *Agencies: How Governments do Things Through Semi-Autonomous Organizations*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Special cases of parenthetical citation

Exceptions to the rule of placing the parenthetical citation at the end of a sentence

1) If the *author is mentioned in the text*, even if used in a possessive form, the year must follow in parenthesis, and page numbers should be put in the brackets at the end of the sentence.

For the assessment, see
Kaltwasser *et al.* (2017)
... (112). According to
Ellwood (2018) ... (7).

2) When *quoting directly*, if the name of the author precedes the quotation, the year and page numbers must follow in parenthesis.

Mearsheimer (2001, 28) claims that: "..."

3) When *using the same source multiple times in one paragraph*, the parenthetical citation should be placed either after the last reference (or at the end of the paragraph, preceding the final period) if the same page (or page range) is cited more than once, or at the first reference, while the subsequent citations should only include page numbers.

Do not use *ibid* or *op. cit.* with repeated citations.

Using brief phrases such as “see”, “compare” etc.

Those phrases should be enclosed within the parenthesis.

(see Ellwood 2018)

Using secondary source

When using a secondary source, the original source should be cited in parenthesis, followed by “quoted in” and the secondary source. The reference list should only include the secondary source.

“Its authority was greatly expanded by the constitutional revision of 1988, and the Court of Arbitration can now be regarded as a ‘genuine constitutional court’” (De Winter and Dumont 2009, 109 cited in: Lijphart 2012, 39–40).

Lijphart, Arend. 2012. *Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six Countries*, 2nd edition. New Haven & London: Yale University Press.

Multiple sources within the same parentheses

1) When *multiple sources* are cited, they should be separated by semicolons.

(Mearsheimer 2001, 34; Ellwood 2018, 7)

2) When *multiple sources by the same author*, but published in different years are cited, the name of the author is cited only the first time. The different years are separated by commas or by semicolon where page numbers are cited.

(Mearsheimer 2001, 2010) or (Mearsheimer 2001, 15–17; 2010, 390)

3) When *different authors share the same surname*, include the first initial in the parenthesis.

(M. Chiti 2004, 40), (E. Chiti 2004, 223)

Chiti, Edoardo. 2004. “Administrative Proceedings Involving European Agencies.” *Law and Contemporary Problems* 68 (1): 219–236.

Chiti, Mario. 2004. “Forms of European Administrative Action.” *Law and Contemporary Problems* 68 (1): 37–57.

Legal and Public Documents

Sections, articles or paragraphs can be cited in the parentheses. They should be appropriately abbreviated.

Constitutions and laws

The title of the legislative act [acronym if needed], “Official Gazette of the state” and the number of the official gazette, or the webpage and the date of last access.

The Constitution of the Republic of Serbia, “Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia”, No. 98/06. (The Constitution of the Republic of Serbia, Art. 33)

The Law on Foreign Affairs [LFA], “Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia”, No. 116/2007, 126/2007, and 41/2009.

(LFA 2009, Art. 17)

Succession Act [SA], “Official Gazette of the Republic of Croatia”,

No. 48/03, 163/03, 35/05, 127/13, and 33/15 and 14/19.

(SA 2019, Art. 3)

An Act to make provision for and in connection with offences relating to offensive weapons [Offensive Weapons Act], 16th May 2019, www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2019/17/pdfs/ukpga_20190017_en.pdf, last accessed 20 December 2019.

(Offensive Weapons Act 2019)

Government decisions and decisions of the institutions

The name of the government body or institution [acronym or abbreviation], the title and number of the decision, date of the decision passing, or the webpage and the date of the last access.

Protector of Citizens of the Republic of Serbia [Protector of Citizens], Opinion No. 19–3635/11, 11 January 2012, https://www.ombudsman.org.rs/attachments/064_2104_Opinion%20HJC.pdf, last accessed 20 December 2019.

(Protector of Citizens, 19–3635/11)

U.S. Department of the Treasury [USDT], Treasury Directive No. 13–02, July 20, 1988, <https://www.treasury.gov/about/role-of-treasury/orders-directives/Pages/td13-02.aspx>, last assessed 20 December 2019.

(USDT, 13–02)

Legislative acts of the European Union

The title of the legislative act, the number of the official gazette, the publication date and the number of the page in the same format as on the *EUR-lex* website: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/homepage.html>.

Regulation (EU) No 182/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 February 2011 laying down the rules and general principles concerning mechanisms for control by Member States of the Commission’s exercise of implementing powers, OJ L 55, 28.2.2011, p. 13–18.

(Regulation 182/2011, Art. 3)

Treaties

European Union founding treaties

Title of the treaty or title of the consolidated version of the treaty [acronym], information on the treaty retrieved from the official gazette in the same format as on the *EUR-lex* website: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/homepage.html>.

Treaty on European Union [TEU],

OJ C 191, 29.7.1992, p. 1–112.

(TEU 1992, Art. J.1)

Consolidated version of the Treaty on European Union [TEU], OJ C 115, 9.5.2008, p. 13–45. (TEU 2008, Art. 11)

Consolidated version of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union [TFEU], OJ C 202, 7.6.2016, p. 1–388.

(TFEU 2016, Art. 144)

Other treaties

Title of the treaty [acronym or abbreviation], date of conclusion, UNTS volume number and registration number on the *United Nations Treaty Collection* website: <https://treaties.un.org>.

Marrakesh Agreement Establishing the World Trade Organization [Marrakesh Agreement], 15 April 1994, UNTS 1867, I-31874.

(Marrakesh Agreement 1994)

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights [ICCPR], 16 December 1966, UNTS 999, I-14668. (ICCPR 1966)

Treaty of Peace between the State of Israel and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan [Israel Jordan Peace Treaty], 26 October 1994, UNTS 2042, I-35325.

(Israel Jordan Peace Treaty 1994)

Decisions of international organizations

The name of the international organization and its body [acronym], the decision number, the title of the decision, the date of the decision passing.

United Nations Security Council [UNSC], S/RES/1244 (1999), Resolution 1244 (1999) Adopted by the Security Council at its 4011th meeting, on 10 June 1999.

(UNSC, S/RES/1244)

Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe [PACE], Doc. 14326, Observation of the presidential election in Serbia (2 April 2017), 29 May 2017.

(PACE, Doc. 14326, para. 12)

Case law *Case law of the courts in the Republic of Serbia*

The type of the act and the name of the court [acronym of the court], the case number with the date of the decision passing, the name and number of the official gazette where the decision is published – if available.

Decision of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Serbia [CCRS], IUa-2/2009 of 13 June 2012, “Official gazette of the

Republic of Serbia”, No. 68/2012.
(Decision of CCRS, IUa-2/2009)

Decision of the Appellate Court in Novi Sad
[ACNS], Rzr–1/16 of 27 April 2016. (Decision of
ACNS, Rzr–1/16)

Case law of the International Court of Justice

The name of the court [acronym], *the case title*, type of the decision with the date of the decision passing, the name and number of I.C.J. Reports issue where the decision is published, page number.

International Court of Justice [ICJ], *Application of the Interim Accord of 13 September 1995 (the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia v. Greece)*, Judgment of 5 December 2011, I.C.J. Reports 2011, p. 644.
(ICJ Judgment 2011)

International Court of Justice [ICJ], *Accordance with the International Law of the Unilateral Declaration of Independence in Respect of Kosovo*, Advisory Opinion of 22 July 2010, I.C.J. Reports, p. 403.
(ICJ Advisory Opinion 2010)

Case law of the Court of Justice of the European Union

The case title, the case number, type of the case with the date of the decision passing, ECLI.

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland v. European Parliament and Council of the European Union, Case C-270/12, Judgment of the Court (Grand Chamber) of 22 January 2014, ECLI:EU:C:2014:18.

(United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland v. European Parliament and Council of the European Union, C-270/12) or
(CJEU, C-270/12)

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland v. European Parliament and Council of the European Union, Case C-270/12, Opinion of Advocate General Jääskinen delivered on 12 September 2013, ECLI:EU:C:2013:562.

(Opinion of AG Jääskinen, C-270/12)

Case law of the European Court of Human Rights

The case title, number of the application, type of the case with the date of the judgment passing, ECLI.

Pronina v. Ukraine, No. 63566/00, Judgment of the Court

(Second Section) on Merits and Just Satisfaction of 18 July 2006,
ECLI:CE:ECHR:2006:0718JUD006356600.

*(Pronina
v. Ukraine
63566/00,
par. 20) or
(ECHR,
63566/00,
par. 20)*

Case law of other international courts and tribunals

The name of the court [acronym], the case number, *the case title*, type of the decision with the date passing.

International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991 [ICTY], Case No. IT-94-1-A-AR77, *Prosecutor v. Dusko Tadic*. Appeal Judgement on Allegations of Contempt Against Prior Counsel, Milan Vujin. Judgment of 27 February 2001.

(Prosecutor v. Dusko Tadic, IT-94-1-A-AR77) or (ICTY, IT-94-1-A-AR77)

Archive sources

Name of the repository [acronym], title or number of the fond [acronym], box number, folder number – if available, reference code, “title of the document” – or, if it is not available, provide a short description by answering the questions who? whom? what?, place and date – or n.d. if no date is provided.

Arhiv Srbije [AS], MID, K-T, f. 2, r93/1894, “Izveštaj Ministarstva inostranih dela o postavljanju konzula”, Beograd, 19. april 1888.

(AS, MID, K-T, f. 2)

(AS, MID, f. 2) – *When the folder number is known only*

Dalhousie University Archives [DUA], Philip Girard fonds [PG], B-11, f. 3, MS-2-757.2006-024, “List of written judgements by Laskin,” n.d.

(DUA, PG, B-11, f. 3)

Web sources

Surname, Name or name of the corporate author [acronym]. Year of publication or n.d. – if the year of publication cannot be determined. “The name of the web page.” *The name of the web site*. Date of creation, modification or the last access to the web page, if the date cannot be determined from the source. URL.

Bilefsky, Dan, and Ian Austen. 2019. "Trudeau Re-election Reveals Intensified Divisions in Canada." *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/22/world/canada/trudeau-re-elected.html>.

(Bilefsky and Austen 2019)

Institute for Political Studies [IPS], n.d. "The 5th International Economic Forum on Reform, Transition and Growth." *Institute for Political Studies*. Last accessed 7 December 2019. <http://www.ips.ac.rs/en/news/the-5th-international-economic-forum-on-reform-transition-and-growth/>.

(Institute for Political Studies [IPS] n.d.) – *First in-text citation* (IPS n.d.) – *Second and every subsequent citation*

Associated Press [AP]. 2019. "AP to present VoteCast results at AAPOR pooling conference." May 14, 2019. <https://www.ap.org/press-releases/2019/ap-to-present-votecast-results-at-aapor-polling-conference>.

(AP 2019)

TEXT FORMATTING

General guidelines in writing the manuscript

The manuscript should be written in Word, in the following manner:

- Paper size: A4;
- Margins: Normal 2.54 cm;
- Use roman font (plain letters) to write the text, unless specified otherwise;
- Line spacing: 1.5;
- Footnote line spacing: 1;
- Title font size: 14 pt;
- Subtitles font size: 12 pt;
- Text font size: 12 pt;
- Footnote font size: 10 pt;
- Tables, charts and figures font size: 10 pt;
- Use Paragraph/Special/First line at 1.27 cm;
- Text alignment: Justify;
- Font color: Automatic;
- Page numbering: Arabian numerals in lower right corner;
- Do not break the words manually by inserting hyphens to continue the word in the next line;
- Save the manuscript in the .doc format.

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The manuscript should be prepared in the following manner:

Name and surname of the first author*

* In the footnote: E-mail address: The institutional e-mail address is strongly recommended.

Affiliation

Name and surname of the second author

Affiliation

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** In the footnote: Optionally, include one of the following (or similar) information: 1) name and number of the project on which the paper was written:

2) the previous presentation of the paper on a scientific conference as an oral presentation under the same or similar name; or 3) the research presented in the paper was conducted while writing the PhD dissertation of the author.

Abstract

Abstract, within 100–250 words range, contains the subject, aim, theoretical and methodological approach, results and conclusions of the paper.

Keywords: Below the abstract, five to ten **key words** should be written. Key words should be written in roman font and separated by commas.

The paper can have maximum of three levels of subtitles.

Subtitles should not be numbered. They should be used in the following manner:

FIRST LEVEL SUBTITLE

Second level subtitle

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Tables, charts and figures should be inserted in the following manner:

- Above the table/chart/figure, center the name of Table, Chart or Figure, an Arabic numeral, and the title in roman font;
- Below the table/chart/figure, the source should be cited in the following manner: 1) if

the table/chart/figure is taken from another source, write down *Source*: and include the parenthetical citation information of the source; or 2) if the table/chart/figure is not taken from another source, write down *Source*: Processed by the author.

Use in-text references according to *Citing and referencing*.

Use the footnotes solely to provide remarks or broader explanations.

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References should be listed after the text of the paper, prior to the Resume in the following manner:

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* Фуснога: Имејл-адреса аутора: Препоручује се навођење институционалне имејл-адресе аутора.

Име и презиме другог аутора

НАСЛОВ

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Keywords (Кључне речи): Key words should be written in roman font and separated by commas.

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A review should be prepared in the same manner as the research article, but leaving out abstract, keywords and resume.

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Book review should be prepared in the following manner:

Split the text into **two columns**.

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Affiliation

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Title of the book. Place of publication: Publisher, total number of pages.

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351.862/.863(497.11)

ПОЛИТИКА националне безбедности = The Policy of National Security / главни и одговорни уредник Марија Ђорић. - Год. XIII, специјал (2022)- . - Београд : Институт за политичке студије, 2013- (Житиште: Ситопринт). - 24 cm

Полугодишње. - Преузима нумерацију зборника "Србија".

ISSN 2334-959X = Политика националне безбедности
COBISS.SR-ID 203583500