DeRadicalisation

in Europe and Beyond: Detect, Resolve, Reintegrate

Trends of Radicalisation

Kosovo/3.2 Research Report

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Teuta Avdimetaj

Kosovar Centre for Security Studies

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About the Project

D.Rad is a comparative study of radicalization and polarization in Europe and beyond. It aims to identify the actors, networks, and wider social contexts driving radicalization, particularly among young people in urban and peri-urban areas. D.Rad conceptualizes this through the I-GAP spectrum (injustice-grievance-alienation-polarization) with the goal of moving towards measurable evaluations of de-radicalization programmes. Our intention is to identify the building blocks of radicalization, which include a sense of being victimized; a sense of being thwarted or lacking agency in established legal and political structures; and coming under the influence of "us vs them" identity formulations.

D.Rad benefits from an exceptional breadth of backgrounds. The project spans national contexts including the UK, France, Italy, Germany, Poland, Hungary, Finland, Slovenia, Bosnia, Serbia, Kosovo, Israel, Iraq, Jordan, Turkey, Georgia, Austria, and several minority nationalisms. It bridges academic disciplines ranging from political science and cultural studies to social psychology and artificial intelligence. Dissemination methods include D.Rad labs, D.Rad hubs, policy papers, academic workshops, visual outputs and digital galleries. As such, D.Rad establishes a rigorous foundation to test practical interventions geared to prevention, inclusion and de-radicalization.

With the possibility of capturing the trajectories of seventeen nations and several minority nations, the project will provide a unique evidence base for the comparative analysis of law and policy as nation states adapt to new security challenges. The process of mapping these varieties and their link to national contexts will be crucial in uncovering strengths and weaknesses in existing interventions. Furthermore, D.Rad accounts for the problem that processes of radicalization often occur in circumstances that escape the control and scrutiny of traditional national frameworks of justice. The participation of AI professionals in modelling, analysing and devising solutions to online radicalization will be central to the project's aims.

Executive Summary

This report explores the most impactful manifestations of radicalization in Kosovo while identifying specific "hotspot" areas that provide insights into how specific incidents of premeditated extremist violence can indicate general radicalization trends within the country. The selection of these 'hotspot' areas is done based on the prevalence of violent extremist incidents, the type of radicalization, and the potential of these zones to speak to larger radicalization trends across the country. As such, the selected 'hotspot' areas should not be viewed as compact zones of radicalization since the radical acts of a fringe group of individuals are not endorsed by the broader community. In selecting Prishtina, Mitrovica, and Kacanik as 'hotspots' of radicalization, it should be made clear that the intention is not to single out these communities as spaces of impending danger given that overwhelmingly they are considered as safe. Instead, the aim is to take these municipalities as units of analysis for exploring certain elements of radicalization that can be applicable across the country.

The analysis of these 'hotspot' areas or case studies is based on a correlation with macro, meso, and micro conditions in the backdrop of the violent acts, while positioning these acts on the injustice-grievance-alienation-polarization (IGAP) spectrum. The report finds that among the main micro-level factors influencing radicalization across case studies include marginalization, humiliation, moral outrage and revenge, identity-seeking, and redemption. These factors are particularly relevant in cases when there are available records about how these themes tie to the traumatic experience of the Kosovo War, the still unmet expectations in Kosovo's democratized society, and the social isolation that certain actors experience in their communities as part of their identity or socio-economic background. For meso-level factors, the report finds that the role of social networks (both in the virtual and offline space), charismatic (religious) leaders, and external radical influences which made their way into local communities as key factors in driving radicalization, both in terms of islamist extremism and ethno-nationalism. This report finds that fragile and poor socio-economic living environments characterised by a lack of life opportunities, a legacy of conflict and unresolved disputes as well as weak institutional reach in peripheral areas of Kosovo as influencing factors at the systematic or macro-level.

Lack of timely government action to prevent radicalization, lax rule of law enforcement mechanisms and limited institutional reach, well-organized recruitment networks into violent extremism, prevalence of online tools as sources of information and communication, and influence of external radical social networks acted as facilitating conditions. In coding for motivational factors through the I-GAP spectrum, themes of perceived injustice, alienation and polarisation are prevalent across the case studies, however, given the availability of data – the disproportionate research and policy focus

towards islamist extremism stands out. This calls for greater attention towards radicalization trends such as ethno-nationalism, both in terms of understanding how it is being manifested in Kosovo as well as in findings ways to how to best address it.

Introduction

This report explores the most consequential manifestations of radicalization in Kosovo as part of the Work Package "Trends of Radicalization" of the D.Rad project. For the purposes of this report, the process of radicalization is understood in the context of broader socio-historical factors, accounting for distinct political, economic, cultural developments and tensions within the country. Drawing from these factors, this report identifies specific "hotspot" areas that provide insights into how specific incidents of premeditated extremist violence can indicate general radicalization patterns in Kosovo. In doing so, the report seeks to correlate the selected hotspots with macro, meso, and micro conditions in the backdrop of the violent acts, while positioning these acts on the injustice-grievance-alienation-polarization (IGAP) spectrum.

Kosovo is one of the youngest countries in Europe, both in terms of its statehood and its population as it is estimated that 53 percent of Kosovo's population are under the age of 25 (Sassi and Amighetti, 2018). Today's socio-political context continues to be influenced by its legacy of conflict as a result of the experienced war in 1998-1999 when the former Yugoslav President, Slobodan Milosevic, unleashed an ethnic cleansing campaign targeting the majority-Albanian population in Kosovo. The war ended with NATO's humanitarian intervention which paved the way for the post-conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding efforts that followed. In 2008, Kosovo declared its independence from Serbia and since then it has been working to consolidate its international standing and implement internal development reforms, while pursuing membership into the European Union and NATO as overarching strategic goals. However, advances into these international bodies continue to be closely linked to the ongoing political dialogue that seeks to normalize relations between Kosovo and Serbia. Hence, lack of concrete results in the process of normalization between these two countries continues to hamstring progress while negatively influencing national and regional peace and stability. Although the relations between Kosovo and Serbia are viewed as critical to peace and security, other threats have also emerged in Kosovo's security landscape. In line with emerging trends at the global level, Kosovo has not been immune to the threat of radicalization.

This report aims to provide a more nuanced understanding of how radicalization is manifesting in Kosovo while delineating the role of specific contributing factors. Nevertheless, a number of challenges should be recognized at the outset. In Kosovo, there is no unified or consistent national dataset that keeps track of extremist violence or other politically-motivated incidents which would enable a more comprehensive analysis of the type and scale of extremist violence across the country. Moreover, because of political sensitivities around acts such as inter-ethnic violence, incidents of this nature have not always been counted or represented as extremist acts. Additionally, there is a lack of publicly available government sources detailing acts of violent extremism in Kosovo, consequently requiring this report to rely more on open sources such as media and civil society reports. Given the nature of the Kosovo War and the complexities surrounding the integration of the Serbian minority population in Kosovo, ethno-

national radicalization presents a challenge, although it has been largely overshadowed by the threat of global extremist influences such as jihadi radicalization.

The following parts of this report include a detailed description of the hotspots of radicalization in Kosovo, including a) an overview of chosen hotspots, b) method and reasons for the choice of hotspots, c) micro, meso and macro factors, d) facilitating factors, and e) motivational factors as quantified in the IGAP Coding.

Hotspots of radicalisation

Overview of chosen hotspots

Throughout this report, specific events that qualify as *hotspots* include premeditated and potentially scalable acts of extremist violence within a larger series or pattern of similar acts that are committed by radicalized individuals clearly linked to or influenced by a radicalized group, network, or organization. Based on this D.Rad working definition, this report identifies Prishtina, Mitrovica, and Kacanik as "hotspots" of radicalization in Kosovo. Although the "hotspot" definition clarifies the key criteria used for selecting these areas, a number of additional factors should be taken into consideration to better understand the context and reasoning behind their selection.

A key task of this report is to identify specific events as they appear in certain localities within the country but which can speak to broader trends that can be observed at national level. However, when singling out specific municipalities or communities within the country we have to also be aware of the unintended consequences of such characterization, whether for the municipality as a whole of specific referenced communities.

To begin with, in choosing these "hotspot" municipal areas, it should be noted that these municipalities do not represent compact units or zones of radicalization. The identified events characterised by violence or radical influences are mainly associated with a set of individuals originating from certain communities or with external ties to extremist networks. Thus, at a broader level, local communities do not support the violent acts of radical individuals in their midst. Further, although the term "hotspot" may be associated with an elevated level of danger or impending crisis, the selected municipalities are broadly considered as safe.

A final important factor that needs to be taken into account is how local communities may respond to their municipality being characterised as a "hotspot" or them being members of such communities. Based on previous experience when certain areas around Kosovo had experienced manifestations or radicalization and were labelled as "hotspots" - especially by local or international media - there was a backlash by local communities who felt that the entire community/municipality was being associated with the violent acts of certain individuals or a fringe group of people. As a result, they faced a greater level of stigma, damage to their personal and community reputation, an image that becomes hard to change - influencing their life opportunities, access, and even the type of donor funds reaching their communities.

Method and reasons for choice of hotspots

The selected sites as "hotspots" of radicalization in Kosovo have been chosen following a careful analysis of publicly available government documents, media reports/commentary, academic papers, and civil society research reports on main violent acts around the country. Moreover, KCSS has compiled an internal database of key incidents across the extremist ideological spectrum in Kosovo spanning two decades to obtain a more structured understanding on where, how often, and by whom key extremist acts have been perpetrated in Kosovo. In selecting the hotspot areas of radicalization in Kosovo special attention has been paid to identify diverse patterns that include a broader range of trends of radicalization. These various patterns encompass religious, political, and ethno-national radicalization with extremist acts perpetrated against members of a vulnerable group as well as dominant majority, and mobilized through online and offline means. As such, Prishtina, Mitrovica, and Kacanik present useful case studies in better understanding various radicalization manifestations across the country.

Prishtina is the capital city of Kosovo and an area that is influenced by events of radicalization for several reasons. First of all, it is the most populated municipality in Kosovo and it houses the various government institutions at the central level - which are often primary targets of violent extremist groups aiming to shift the political course of action. It is also quite diverse in terms of its population. Although many of the individuals who have manifested radical tendencies or plotted violent acts in Prishtina originate from more remote areas around Kosovo, their social and political activity has been centered around Prishtina - therefore contributing to the presence of radical networks within certain parts of the city. In terms of islamist violent extremism, by the numbers, most Kosovo male foreign fighters who travelled to the foreign conflict in Syria and Iraq originated from Prishtina, or 33 of them (Xharra and Gojani, 2017, p.19). Prishtina has also been the target of various ethnically-motivated as well as politically-motivated violent incidents, most of which were successfully foiled by Kosovo's security authorities. In numerous extremist media products and propaganda materials, various sites around Prishtina figure prominently - contributing to their framing as "suitable" targets for violent acts.

The municipality of Mitrovica is a city in Kosovo that has been divided along ethnic lines for more than two decades. The river Ibar running through the city essentially separates the municipality into North Mitrovica, which is populated predominantly by the Kosovo Serb community who subscribe to the Christian Orthodox religion, and South Mitrovica which is predominantly populated by Kosovo Albanians, the majority of whom are Muslim. The municipality remains a politically contested area between Kosovo and Serbia, an epitome of the political impasse and the entrenched ethnic animosities that fuel radical ideologies seeking to present a territorial dispute as a civilizational clash between the East and the West, or Christianity and Islam (qtd. in Kraja and Jakupi, 2018, p.20). In addition to serving as a ground for ethnic tensions throughout various stages in Kosovo's state building efforts, Mitrovica remains a stark reminder of the unsuccessful international reconciliation and peacebuilding programmes (Ibid.p.20). Several extremist violent acts occurred in the years preceding the

settlement of Kosovo's final political status, notably the March 2004 unrest when Kosovo-Albanians rose in protest following the drowning of three ethnic Albanian boys in Mitrovica and speculations that they had been chased into the river by Serbs. These protests quickly turned into riots primarily targeting the Serbian minority, leaving 19 people dead (eight Kosovo Serbs and 11 Kosovo Albanians), and several properties torched or damaged, including places of worship. This particular event continues to challenge efforts aimed at integrating the Serbian minority into Kosovo's society by fuelling extremist narratives.

Other ethnically motivated incidents, perpetrated primarily by Serbs targeted various international missions such as United Nations offices in Mitrovica and NATO members as well as national government institutions such as district courts, border posts - which also resulted in the death of Kosovo Albanians – including of members of Kosovo Police (KCSS internal database on violent extremism, 2021). In the more recent years, Mitrovica has also served as a recruiting ground not only for islamist extremist groups such as IS, but also for far right Serbian groups such as the Kosovo Front whose foreign fighters joined the fight alongside pro - Russian forces in eastern Ukraine (Qtd in Kraja and Jakupi, 2018, p.20). Data on foreign fighters continue to be hard to confirm, especially when it comes to the Kosovo Serb foreign fighters. Nevertheless, it is estimated that at least a dozen Serb foreign fighters originating from Mitrovica joined the conflict in Ukraine (Ibid. p.20) and around 15 citizens from Mitrovica joined IS (Qtd. Kraja and Jakupi, p.20). Mitrovica is increasingly being viewed as a place giving way to the phenomenon of reciprocal extremism whereby on type of extremism feeds off the other, or interethnic divisions and tensions contribute to religious-based radicalization and vice versa.

Kacanik is a municipality in the southeastern part of Kosovo close to the border with North Macedonia. It is primarily chosen as a case study based on the disproportionately high number of foreign fighters to Syria and Iraq originating from this area relative to the municipality's population. Although Kacanik does not have a history of religious-based extremism, in recent years, as the country was faced with the foreign fighter phenomenon, Kacanik has drawn some of the main public and media attention. Contributing to this is also the fact that one main recruiters and influencers of islamist extremism in Kosovo - Lavdrim Muhaxhiri - originated from Kaçanik. Indeed, Kacanik served as an important space for the spread of radical influences and recruitment into islamist extremist groups such as IS based on several factors that made this locality more vulnerable to extremism. These factors will be explained in more detail in the next sections.

In sum, Mitrovica, Prishtina, and Kacanik have been chosen as case studies to provide a nuanced understanding of trends in radicalization in Kosovo since they point out to various radical influences, share a considerable number of differences to produce nuance between cases but enough similarities to enable a comparative approach in terms of socio-economic and characteristics and national policy. Although this report notes the selected sites as "hotspots" of radicalization, it is important to keep in mind that these sites should be examined

within the carefully defined terms of the concept to avoid equating the specific acts of a narrow group of individuals with entire communities.

Micro-Meso-Macro Levels of Radicalization

In order to explore main radicalization trends in Kosovo, the analysis as part of this report is carried out through a three-level conceptualization of radicalization: micro level, meso level, and macro level.

Micro Level: Personal Factors (Background of Individual Actors)

The micro level of conceptualizing radicalization is focused on the personal background of individuals responsible for planning, organizing or executing violent acts. As such, it presents the smallest unit of analysis in the attempts to understand factors that push or pull an individual towards radicalization and violent extremism. Although personal details of an individual may provide valuable insights into the motivations for radicalization, such information is often among the most difficult to obtain for a number of reasons. Individuals involved in acts of planning, organizing, or carrying out violent acts may often be hesitant to express their true motivations for their extremist behaviour/attitudes. Many times such accounts are obtained through materials produced as part of extremist propaganda, interviews that those affiliated with extremism provide to the media, or statements provided by alleged extremists as part of court trials. Sifting through these data, the challenge is to not only find information that is relevant to the personal background of radical individuals but also to try to determine if and to what extent such information is likely to be distorted. For instance, while information on individual backgrounds deriving from court transcripts is valuable and often not easily accessible, it should be interpreted with caution as those charged with acts such as supporting or organizing terrorist acts - which tend to be more punishable than ordinary criminal offences - have a strong incentive to misrepresent their real motivations in order to secure a lower level sentencing by the judges.

In Kosovo's context, looking into the micro level aspects that drove individuals from Prishtina, Mitrovica, and Kacanik towards radicalization a number of factors stand out. Although micro level factors are inherently tied to the personal circumstances of the individuals, in some instances similar drivers are apparent in more than one individual.

In the case of Prishtina, selected as a case study particularly due to its relevance as a logistical hub or a common destination for planned attacks, individuals tend to be driven by factors such as marginalization, humiliation, and moral outrage and revenge. For instance, in the propagandistic video produced by Naman Demolli, an individual who went on to become one of the first foreign fighters from Kosovo to Syria and Iraq, feelings of moral outrage and revenge are evident (Kraja, 2017, p.1). Based on his direct accounts in this particular video, moral outrage and revenge are expressed in the sentiment against the perceived way how Muslims are treated in Kosovo. His narrative is that of an Islam under threat in Kosovo and in his claims he goes as far as to even challenge the ethnic/national nature of Kosovo's War - portraying it as a war fought on religious terms, that is a war fought against Muslims in Kosovo (Ibid., p.1). By doing so, it misrepresents the historical record, including by omitting the crucial

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role of NATO, a western military alliance, in helping to put an end to the ethnic-cleansing campaign by the Serbian forces that was taking place in Kosovo(Ibid.). Another individual turned foreign fighter for Islamism extremist organizations such as IS, Fitim Lladrovci, in an interview for an international media outlet recounts feelings of humiliation at the hands of Serbian paramilitary forces during the Kosovo War (Confessions of an Islamic State fighter, 2021). Specifically, he talks about the violence that he witnessed being committed to his family members and - being only a child at that time- his helplessness in light of such a situation. In addition to these personal experiences dating back to the Kosovo War, Lladrovci's living circumstances characterized by relative deprivation, lack of education, and poor socio-economic status should also be taken into account (Ibid.).

In the context of Kacanik, among the key micro-level factors of radicalization include identity-seeking, thrill-seeking, marginalization, moral outrage/revenge and need for redemption. Focusing on individual foreign fighters from Kacanik, the case of Lavdrim Muhaxheri figures prominently as he became one of the reasons for Kacanik being portrayed as a "breeding ground" of extremism. Muhaxheri was one of the most infamous foreign fighters from Kosovo who rose through the ranks of IS as senior commander (Lister, 2014) and a self-declared leader of the Albanian-speaking contingent within IS. Although there are still questions about his actual role within IS, most accounts speak to the fact that he became one of the key persons in charge of recruiting foreign fighters from Kosovo. Muhaxheri was a mouthpiece of IS propaganda, which was one of the key tools through which he sought to gain supporters. His extremist narrative was characterized by misinterpretations of religious teachings that he used to justify his gruesome acts, such as when he posted photos of himself on Facebook beheading a prisoner in Syria and a video showing him executing a Syrian man with a rocket propelled grenade (Bezhan, 2016). Gruesome images that shocked the institutions and the public alike.

Muhaxheri is also considered as the main plotter behind the attempted large-scale attack targeting the Israeli national soccer team during a World Cup qualifying match in Albania, which was foiled by the security forces (Times of Israel 2017). Muhaxheri was killed by an airstrike in Syria in 2017 (Coalition removes ISIS terrorists from battlefield, 2017) and he never had the chance to stand trial for his crimes or shed more light into factors that drove him towards violent extremism. Although he was less vocal regarding his personal motivations for joining IS, available data show that he had seven criminal records before leaving to Syria, and based on a KCSS study he subscribed to *Takfir* radical ideology which in addition to overemphasizing 'punishment' and ignoring references to 'mercy' and 'rewards" in religious teachings, it includes the belief that god will forgive previous criminal records and deeds, while "they can still continue with their former criminal lifestyles, but now on behalf of religion, which they believe gives them the right to do so" (Kursani, 2015, p.9). Other accounts emphasise that being part of IS gave Muhaxheri a strong boost in ego while he also expressed a need for external validation as illustrated by his obsession with social media and the amount of attention

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or "likes" his videos were getting online.[1] What makes his radicalization puzzling is that until 2010 he used to work for NATO's Kosovo force KFOR at Camp Bondsteel and later at a NATO training camp in Afghanistan (Mejdini, 2017.). It remains unclear exactly how this experience may have influenced his radicalization process.

In the case of Mitrovica, both islamist extremist radicalization and ethno-nationalism are present as witnessed through foreign fighter mobilization as well as inter-ethnic incidents throughout the years. However, for cases of ethno-nationalism it is more challenging to find personal accounts of drivers of radicalization as the issue remains disproportionately less researched and addressed. Moreover, existing accounts tend to gloss over individual level factors, opting instead for broader level generalizations of what fuels such extremism in this particular area.

Meso Level: Social Setting Factors (Groups, Networks, Communities)

The meso level of conceptualizing drivers of radicalization includes an analysis of the "radical milieu" (Malthaner and Waldmann, p.979) or the community in which radicalization takes place. This includes the supportive or even complicit social surround – which serves as a rallying point and may be the "missing link" with wider radicalized networks (Schmid, 2013, p.4). In the context of Kosovo, across the case studies, research looking into community level factors emphasises the role of social networks (both in the online and offline sphere), charismatic religious leaders, and external radical influences which penetrated local communities as having played a key role in driving radicalization. Increased focus on meso level factors is particularly relevant in understanding trends of radicalization in Kosovo's society, which tends to be family oriented where individuals seek and maintain close relationships with friends, family, and relatives - thereby creating a strong network effect.

In the case of Kacanik, multiple studies have pointed out that the work of a number of faith-based non-governmental organizations - often functioning with suspicious sources of financing or external support - have been instrumental in serving as radicalization hubs. For many foreign fighters originating from Kacanik with no previous experience in religious militancy the first contact with more radical religious views came through their socialization with organizations such as Rinia Islame (Islamic Youth) - an Islamic charity which was operating in Kacanik and was one of the dozens of secretive organizations funded by sources within Saudi Arabia and other Persian Gulf states to promote a more conservative strain of Islam in Kosovo (Bezhan, 2016). According to available research, organizations such as "Islamic Youth" were never registered as NGOs with the relevant state institutions and their funding came from a number of sources, including petty cash provided by individuals who together collect money in support of potential victim foreign fighters (Kursani, 2015, p.91).

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[1] For instance, A.A., former foreign fighter in Syria describes how Muhaxheri was very anxious to see the attention he was getting in social media, i.e. the number of YouTube views, Facebook 'likes' and 'shares' and other social media activities that would boost his ego (Kursani, 2015).

Apart from operating in the form of non-governmental organizations, individuals with ties to radical elements coupled with some form of religious training - usually attained in Middle Eastern countries such as Saudi Arabia, operated also in 'makeshift mosques' that were functioning outside of the authority of the Islamic Community of Kosovo. As Qehaja notes, the conservative ideology that was spreading across Kacanik through these informal settings could be observed also in municipalities such as Mitrovica, but the difference is that in Kacanik its proponents were better organized and more vocal (Qehaja, 2016, p.86).

Another important factor making the social environment in Kacanik more conducive to radicalization can be considered its proximity with North Macedonia. In a short-drive between border towns, hard-line Albanian preachers had easy access to deliver their sermons to local communities in Kacanik (Bezhan, 2016). The influence of these hard-line preachers in introducing a more radical interpretation of religion underscores the important role of individual, charismatic imams, in the radicalization process of locals. For instance, Shukri Aliu, a Skopje based imam is considered a key influencing figure in the radicalization process of Lavdrim Muhaxheri who came in contact with him through his sermons in Kacanik. A KCSS study notes that a direct ideological influence from Shukri Aliu to Lavdrim Muhaxheri can be observed if one carefully listens to one of Muhaxheri's recruitment videos from Syria (Kursani, 2015, p.52). The parallels in Muhaxheri's radical narrative with that of Aliu's are unmistakable. By saying "Muslims cannot achieve the implementation of the Sharia without spilling their blood, and that the ship of a Muslim does not sail on water; it sails on sea, on a bloody sea, and by spilling our Muslim blood the victory can be close", Muhaxheri was paraphrasing a quote of Aliu that was initially shared in the online platform of Rinia Islame (Islamic Youth)" in Kaçanik (Ibid, p.54).

Another individual with religious training, Zekerija Qazimi, managed to exert its influence beyond his place of origin of Gjilan to nearby Kacanik and beyond through its sermons shared online. Qazimi is considered to have been directly responsible for the recruitment of at least 11 foreign fighters and in Kacanik he was regularly giving speeches that talked about jihad, usually in its more narrow interpretation within military terms. Qazimi was notorious for his propaganda videos and quotes such as the "blood of infidels is the best drink for us" which he used to galvanize support among the few radicals while also sparking outrage among the wider public (Bezhan, 2016). Overall, as Metodieva notes, the various forms of radical activism have been shaped by two distinct types of local leadership or identity producers: local influencers and messengers from the battlefield, with these categories not being mutually exclusive (Metodieva, 2018, p.9). The charismatic local radical preachers served also as recruiters on the "supply side" of the recruitment channel while leading discussions about injustices against Muslims and the virtue of jihad, carefully threading a "back to the roots" Islam with a rejection of the state and official religious institutions in Kosovo (Ibid. p.9). Through their sermons, the goal was to strengthen an identity-based link between their local followers and a global religious community while creating a sense of belonging, loyalty and religious duty (Ibid. p.9).

Similar meso-level factors with an emphasis on social networks can have influenced trends in ethno-nationalism. Ethno-nationalism in Kosovo among the Kosovo-albanians is consistently understood as being reactive primarily to the actions of Serbia's political leadership (Avdimetaj, 2021, p.22). The more radical and ultranationalist they are in their discourse and actions - the more reactive the Kosovo Albanian side becomes.

Yet, when it comes to ethno-nationalism as manifested by Kosovo Serbs - the role of external factors such as Serbia's political leadership, far-right groups in Serbia and international links with far right groups across Western Europe are appearing as relevant factors in creating an environment prone to radicalization. Far right groups that are based in Serbia and Western Europe have managed to extend their influence in Kosovo, and although they may slightly differ in terms of their exact aims, they share similar principles such as "ethnically based politics, references to the 1990s wars, glorification of war criminals and ethnic cleansing from the 1990s, a belief in victimisation, a desire to redraw boundaries on ethnic lines, anti-NATO and anti-EU politics, pro-Russian attitudes and links, as well as links with organised crime" (Kelly, 2019, p.2). They also share some similarities with islamist extremist organizations in the way they operate and seek to garner support. As Lazetic notes, "radical far right movements disguised as humanitarian and human rights organisations helping Serbs in Kosovo have started multiplying" and nationalists from across Europe - including from the members of the Identitarian movement in France and Austria - "have started arriving in Serbia to support what they consider as one of the few strongholds of white European civilisation in resistance against Muslims and Western aggressors" (Vio, 2019).

Organizations such as neo-fascist Srbska akcija (Serbian Action) or Kosovo Solidarité based in France have sought to exert their influence under the guise of charity work for Kosovo Serbs (Ibid.). Yet, these acts are interpreted as a "long-haul strategy of effecting political change by shifting opinion and culture" or far-right 'metapolitics' in action (Ibid.). Another far-right group, the Order of the Dragon based in Serbia, which used to regularly provide charity services to Kosovo Serbs, shifted its focus to making calls to equip Kosovo Serbs with drones and other protective equipment for a supposedly impending attack by the Albanian-majority in Kosovo - promoting an alarmist approach, sowing divisions, and further fuelling radicalization among the Kosovo Serbs (Cosic et al., 2017). In shaping up the radical social environment, external actors such as the British far-right activist Jim Dowson have also played a role. Downson facilitated by the Knights Templar International (KTI), visited Kosovo and provided bullet-proof vests to Serbs in Northern Mitrovica (Kelly, 2019). Such actions demonstrate existing linkages and coordination between far right ethno-national elements in places like North Mitrovica and their ties to radical networks in Serbia and beyond. They point to rising far-right trends in radicalization in Kosovo and call for greater scrutiny between local drivers and international influences.

Macro Level: Institutional, Systemic and Structural Factors

The macro level of conceptualizing radicalization looks into the role of the government and society (at home and abroad) in the process of radicalization, focusing primarily on systematic and structural factors. In the context of Kosovo, across the case studies, macro-level factors include fragile and poor socio-economic living environment characterised by lack of life

opportunities, unmet expectations in Kosovo's newly democratized society, a legacy of conflict and the unresolved dispute between Kosovo and Serbia as illustrated by challenges in fully integrating the Kosovo Serbian minority in Kosovo's society and institutional life, as well as weak institutional reach in peripheral areas of Kosovo. Although there is no direct correlation between poverty, unemployment and radicalization, perceptions of limited opportunities coupled with weak institutions and may have made Kosovars more vulnerable to propaganda by extremist groups (Xharra and Gojani, 2017, p.29). Moreover, the perception of widespread Islamophobia in Kosovo appears to have added to the narrative of Islam under threat, a narrative that seems to have been tapped into by recruiters in Kosovo, causing some individuals and groups to feel more alienated from the larger society, thus becoming more vulnerable to radicalization (Ibid., p.29).

Kaçanik, which is situated in the southeastern region, is one of the poorest municipalities of Kosovo. Members of the community of Kacanik often describe their daily lives as mundane and lacking leisure or social activities, with high levels of unemployment (IRI, 2017, p.12). This situation is considerably aggravated given the fact that many of the citizens in Kacanik who have received university degrees and are unemployed are faced with unmet expectations and discontent(Ibid.). Available data suggest that there is widespread belief that recruiters of extremist organizations "capitalize on impoverished areas by promising a better life and financial opportunities for joining extremist groups"(Ibid.).

Similarly, community members of Kacanik consider that "unemployment and poverty make people feel devalued and depressed, and that this leads them to seek validation through religion" imploying that when people become disillusioned with a system that cannot serve their needs they may turn toward extremism to give them a sense of self-worth (Ibid., p.17). Another important systematic factor that characterizes the context of Kacanik is the lack of recreational activities for young people which is tied to a lack of proper infrastructure such as educational facilities, parks and playgrounds, theatres and other extracurricular options (Ibid., p.17). This dearth of spaces dedicated particularly for youth is considered a direct result of lack of investment by the central government in this municipality. The Middle Eastern-funded charities - regarded as one of the main pathways to being introduced to radical ideology and extremist networks - have penetrated poor, rural communities like Kacanik that have been neglected by the government and where unemployment is around 40 percent (Bezhan, 2017). These Islamic charities used to run schools, dormitories, and welfare programs seeking to fill in the gaps in institutional public services while also pushing a hard-line agenda which gained at least a minor foothold in Kacanik (Ibid.).

In MItrovica, citizens are also faced with similar socio-economic hardships and lack of life opportunities, especially in terms of youth unemployment and lack of recreational or leisure activities. What is more, being a divided city across ethnic lines, Mitrovica remains a symbol of ethnic strife and the political deadlock that has characterised the frozen relations between Kosovo and Serbia in the past two decades after the conflict. As a study by Berghof Foundation notes, it is this political impasse which is largely to blame for the general stagnation

in Mitrovica which has acted as an enabling factor for extremist ideologies to take root in their community(Kraja and Jakupi, 2018, p.21). According to religious leaders from Mitrovica, violent extremism is not considered as a direct consequence of ethnic tensions but as "an attempt to incorporate religious elements in this conflict," and link some of the distrust between Albanians and Serbs to the destruction of religious monuments during the war, such as in the case of the destruction of an ancient mosque on the Ibar River that now divides the city along ethnic lines (Ibid., p.21). Another religious leader from Mitrovica notes that political tensions have fuelled religious extremism, feeding political extremism and nationalistic rhetoric on both sides of the divide (Ibid.). Further, he blamed "the increased Islamophobia" in Kosovo as giving rise to radicalisation among the Muslim community in the country (Ibid.). On the other hand, members of the community in Mitrovica list weak state institutions, lack of citizen's trust in state institutions as contributing factors, including misinformation running rampant through the media (Ibid., p.22). Overall, a confluence of macro level-factors such as poor socio-economic opportunities, fragile inter-ethnic relations, weak institutions, perceived islamophobia, and unmet expectations combine to create an environment that makes certain individuals across the case studies more vulnerable to radicalization, both in terms of islamist extremism and ethno-nationalism.

Facilitating Factors

In addition to micro, meso, and macro level factors influencing radicalization trends in Kosovo, a number of facilitating factors should also be taken into account. These include specific elements in the political and socio-cultural environment of the individuals responsible for the hotspots that facilitated violent acts. Across the three case studies selected as 'hotspots' of radicalization in Kosovo the following facilitating factors stand out: lack of timely government action to prevent radicalization, relative ease of travel to foreign conflict zones, widening rifts within the Islamic Community in Kosovo, lax rule of law enforcement mechanisms and limited institutional reach in Serb-majority communities, well-organized recruitment networks into violent extremism, prevalence of online tools as sources of information and communication, and influence of external social networks such as those based in Serbia and Russia that are tied to radical ethno-nationalism.

Looking into facilitating factors of radicalization it is important to highlight that there are major differences in terms of how the government has sought to address the challenge of islamist extremism as compared to the threat of ethno-nationalism, especially as it is being manifested in Northern Mitrovica. While the Kosovo government has not acted to effectively prevent radicalization into islamist violent extremism from taking place, it nevertheless acted swiftly in its response. It undertook a series of security, legal, and political measures in countering the threat which contributed to stem the flow of foreign fighters traveling from Kosovo to the foreign conflict zones in Syria and Iraq, increased public awareness about the perils of radicalization, and a strengthening of international partnerships in the joint efforts to fight IS. However, when it comes to ethno-nationalism, the government of Kosovo has not only been unable to act to prevent the threat, but it continues to leave this type of radicalization largely unaddressed - arguably due to lack of political will, sensitivities around inter-ethnic relations, or due to a donor-driven agenda that affects even domestic political agendas. Nonetheless, whether the

government decides to take action in a timely manner to prevent radicalization remains a critical factor.

Across the case studies that experienced the flow of foreign fighters, there is widespread criticism of how the government did not pay closer attention to external radical influences as they were taking root within the country, notably through the foreign faith-based organizations. The work of middle-eastern funded charities contributed to a great extent to an increasing level of religionalization of society. In this regard, such influences acted also as enabling factors to the rifts that emerged within and between Kosovo's Islamic community (BIK) and practitioners. The schism within BIK came as a result of a few imams who were trained in Middle Eastern countries such as Saudi Arabia and Egypt and subscribed to more conservative interpretations of religion began to challenge the long-held approach of practicing Islam in Kosovo. Namely, on the one hand there were those who thought that Kosovo should continue to promote its own brand of Islam based on the five-century old Hanefi legacy of the Ottoman Empire and those that wanted Kosovo to open up to various external influences beyond national boundaries(Kraja and Jakupi, 2018, p.8).

Although religious associations such as BIK function independent from government authority, there is criticism among the religious community that the government was negligent in heeding their warnings as early as 2003-2004 on the infiltration of various radical imams who challenged BIK's authority and created a crisis of legitimacy within the ranks of Muslim followers (Ibid.). In BIK's view this presented a rule of law issue as due to the potential ideological danger that this challenge to their authority posed (Ibid.). As a result, a number of illegal mosques and breakaway preachers, who would disregard BIK's authority, began appearing in parts of Kosovo, making use of alternative means, such as online media and summer camps, which led their influence to grow in parallel with increasing incidents between these two currents within BIK (Ibid.). As the head of the local branch of the Islamic Community of Kosovo in Kacanik argued, the government neglected the problem of radicalization and the radicals were allowed to operate freely for too long (Bezhan, 2016). Kosovo has been always known by its inter-religious harmony, a traditionally secular state with a liberal Muslim populations, but gradually less tolerant voices have been introduced, including among the radical Islamic charities, which flourished after Kosovo war ended in 1999. (Ibid.) Neziraj purports, many such charities came under the guise of "humanitarian organizations," often building schools and hospitals; though these charities were often bent on indoctrinating the youth (Ibid.)."

Kursani notes that the government response since the outset of the Syrian Civil war as a critical juncture in the foreign fighter phenomenon can be defined over this period by two phases of stark contradiction; the first from 2011 to 2013 and the second encompassing 2014 and 2015 (Kursani and Fetiu, 2017, p.84)). From 2011 to 2013 there was ambivalence from the government side which supported the "Syrian opposition" at the time and viewed it as a single actor on the ground, while the emergence of foreign fighters from Kosovo was not at all on the discursive radar of Kosovo's official state institutions (Ibid.). During the second phase

from 2014-2015 changes in government stance were evident, largely due to the shocking effect that propaganda videos showcasing gruesome violent acts and direct calls to action in the Albanian language played a role in galvanizing government actions (Ibid.).

In addition to leaving the work of several NGOs with suspicions ties to external radical networks or dubious sources of financing run unabated, government authorities did neither act to prosecute certain individuals who were increasingly spreading radical messages, often calling for use of violence against what they called 'enemies of islam.' For instance, the Skopje-based imam Shukri Aliu was facing charges for committing a criminal offense of "violence", in accordance with the Macedonian Criminal Code, as a result of which he fled to Kosovo (Kursani, 2015). Not only did he stay in Kosovo for around seven years uninterrupted by any state authority, but he was also quite active in propagating his radical views among local populations across the country (Ibid.).

Lax rule of law mechanisms and relative ease of travel to foreign conflict zones were instrumental in the early foreign fighter mobilization. Most foreign fighters from Kosovo reached their destination in Syria or Iraq through Turkey, who at the time was doing little to stop the flow of foreign fighters across its borders (Branco, 2015). Moreover, the widespread use of online technological tools and social media were critical in facilitating information and communication for logistical arrangements to make the travel to the foreign conflict zones possible. For example, despite poor economic development, the Internet is very popular and highly accessible in Kosovo, where some 76% of people claim to use it (Kursani and Fetahu, 2017). A well-organized network of charismatic imams, grassroots-level coordinators, and foreign fighters in Syria and Iraq played its part in the process of radicalization while facilitating travel to Syria, organizing military training and consolidating an active community of ethnic Albanians in the conflict area (Xharra and Gojani, 2-17, p.32). Similar enabling factors hold true for trends in ethno-nationalism in the case of Mitrovica with a number of differences. Notably, limited governing reach of Kosovo's authorities in the Northern part of Mitrovica presents a challenge as it allows radical individuals to make use of criminal networks and organized crime to support their activities (Ilazi et al, 2021).

Motivational Factors: I-GAP Coding

The I-GAP spectrum is a method of multifaceted assessment which makes it possible to trace motivations driving radicalization. Importantly, these motives are identified from the perspective of the individuals involved in the hotspot, reflecting their personal sentiments rather than interpretations by others. The sources of accounts in which actors of radicalization express or reflect what drove their engagement in violent extremism range from interviews provided to the media or researchers, court affidavits, social media posts, extremist materials disseminated online etc. Although tracing motivations across a range of identified factors presents a valuable approach in understanding the weight of each potential driver, one of the main challenges relates to the availability and quality of data at hand.

In the context of Kosovo, there are accounts available containing information on personal motivations of individuals affiliated with islamist extremist groups, however, they are not always comprehensive enough to provide a clear picture across the range of factors. Instead, they are presented as brief fragments as part of a broader narrative or piece of content. Availability of data is particularly challenging when looking into motivational factors for persons engaged in ethno-national extremism. That is primarily a result of a dearth of research in exploring this type of extremism. Other challenges in coding for motivational factors are linked with the complex interplay of drivers, often making it hard to clearly distinguish or rank one as more relevant than the other. Moreover, based on the available statements of radical actors across the case studies, some motivational factors such as those related to perceived injustice or alienation are at times easier to identify than motivational factors such as grievances or polarization. For instance, in coding for the element of injustice, the factors that are perceived by the radicalized individual as wrong and motivated them to act are often in line with the broader extremist narratives that can usually be extracted from various propaganda materials. However, these perceived injustices that certain radical individuals or groups have rationalized as justifications for violence are not experiences that are directly linked to the actor. Alienation is another motivational factor that is relatively more easy to code as feelings of powerlessness with respect to wider, apparently hostile forces can at times be inferred by the actor's background, expressed experiences, or living circumstances that make the actor significantly more isolated from the wider community or social circles.

There are similarities in coding for grievances as in many cases the actors tend to provide a target for their frustration whom they assign direct blame. The challenge here is determining how specific the grievances are or identify the entire list of grievances. That is because sometimes actors are more reluctant to share grievances that are specific to their experience or identify and instead choose to talk more in general "us vs. them", reducing complex issues in binary terms and making it easier to vilify the other side. Coding for polarization presents also a number of challenges. At times it is difficult to assess from statements alone whether they actually see themselves acting as part of a socio-cultural group or as marginal figures since their claims are often misplaced, distorted, or misleading. Moreover, it is unclear who can we refer as the 'establishment'? For instance, in coding for ethno-nationalist actors in Mitrovica, attitudes towards the political establishment consisting of Kosovo Albanians can be different from the Kosovo Serb political establishment-thereby making it more challenging the level of polarisation between the actor and what they consider the establishment.

Across the 'hotspots' of radicalization in Kosovo, a number of similarities and a few differences in motivational factors become apparent from the I-GAP coding process. In the case of Prishtina, the main motivational factors include alienation from the wider community based on the actors' particular socio-economic circumstances or other background characteristics, perceived injustices and grievances related to personal experiences for which the actors assign blame to a certain other (e.g. government, western powers etc.). In the case of Kacanik, what can be noted from available data is that the narrative of the different actors tends to follow a similar line, hinting to the social dynamics of radicalization and the powerful role that certain radical individuals who acted as recruiters have had. That is apparent especially in the

way in which actors tend to provide similar reasoning for their acts. In Kacanik, actors or radicalization are motivated by a set of grievances, perceived injustices, and polarisation that are presented in quite general terms – arguably because the radicalization narrative was largely externally driven. These are tied to a need for greater recognition, for establishing a sense of purpose and attaining a greater role to affect policy, which goes beyond their local context. Thus, in this case it is worth looking into individual actors that may be influential in shaping public opinion in remote areas such as Kacanik and make sure that there is an ongoing awareness of how the threat of radicalization may be evolving.

In the case of Mitrovica, the coded motivations relate to ethno-nationalism trends and include perceived injustices around the political status quo, particularly the perceived unfavourable position of Kosovo Serbs within the country, and the polarisation that exists between Kosovo's political establishment and the actors of radicalization. What is different in the case of Mitrovica is that there appears to be a growing role of external influences such as from far right groups in Serbia or in parts of Western Europe. Whereas for Prishtina and Kacanik that have been largely focused on dealing with Islamist extremism some of the direct radicalization challenges have been addressed, in the case of Mitrovica – the full extent of the threat remains unexplored. Thus, it is important for further research in exploring the full extent of the motivational factors that may be driving ethno-national radicalization in Mitrovica, with focus on specifying the individual actors, their domestic ties, sources of financing, and international ties.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this report sought to explore the most consequential manifestations of radicalization in Kosovo by identifying specific "hotspot" areas that provide insights into how specific incidents of premeditated extremist violence can indicate general radicalization patterns in Kosovo. In doing so, the report attempted to correlate the selected hotspots with macro, meso, and micro conditions leading up to the violent acts, while positioning these acts on the injustice-grievance-alienation-polarization (IGAP) spectrum. For the purposes of this report, Prishtina, Kacanik, and Mitrovica were selected as 'hotspot' areas of radicalization in Kosovo. However, in making this selection, it was made clear that although the term 'hotspot' can have specific connotations related to impending crisis – these areas are considered relatively safe and the actions of a few individuals do not represent the attitudes of the wider community which does not support violent extremism. Instead, they only signal trends that should be observed and analysed further.

Since the structure of analysis for this report includes a categorization of factors through several levels, it is important to note that the findings for each section directly hinge upon the availability and quality of data on the topic. In general, the report finds that some of the main micro-level factors influencing radicalization across case studies include marginalization, humiliation, moral outrage and revenge, identity-seeking, and redemption. These factors are particularly relevant in cases when there are available records about how these themes tie to the traumatic experience of the Kosovo War, the still unmet expectations in Kosovo's democratized society, and the social isolation that certain actors experience in their

communities as part of their identity or socio-economic background. For meso-level factors, the report finds that the role of social networks (both in the online and offline sphere), charismatic religious leaders, and external radical influences which penetrated local communities as key factors in driving radicalization, both in terms of islamist extremism and ethno-nationalism and across the case studies. There are differences for instance when in certain communities, such as in Kacanik, the role of charismatic religious leaders acting also as recruiters has been significantly more expressed.

When it comes to macro-level factors, this report finds that fragile and poor socio-economic living environments marked by a lack of life opportunities, a legacy of conflict and the unresolved disputes as well as weak institutional reach in peripheral areas of Kosovo as influencing factors at the systematic level. This report also takes stock of a number of facilitating factors such as lack of timely government action to prevent radicalization, lax rule of law enforcement mechanisms and limited institutional reach, well-organized recruitment networks into violent extremism, prevalence of online tools as sources of information and communication, and influence of external radical social networks.

In coding for motivational factors through the I-GAP spectrum, a few elements stand out. Some of the macro-level factors are not directly identified through the personal perspectives of the actors of radicalization. For example, issues of enforcing rule of law or perceived weak institutions are not mentioned by the actors explicitly and neither inferred by the researcher, rather their motivations are expressed as a set of legitimate grievances that 'justify' their involvement in violent extremism. The motivational factors traced through the I-GAP spectrum thus are inherently more subjective. Another key element that is worth mentioning is the disproportionate lack of studies devoted in understanding the threat of ethno-national extremism – which makes it harder not only to code the motivational factors for the purposes of this report, but more importantly to take any measures to try to address it.

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Annex: I-GAP Coding

Mitrovica

Injustice Coding

Q1. To what extent the hotspot is a response to injustice?	5
Comments to Q1	Members of far right groups in Mitrovica, especially in the North, are driven by a perceived strong sense of injustice that they consider is being done to orthodox Christians in Kosovo, who are a minority within the country. As such, they easily propagate and are vulnerable to narratives that present the situation in Mitrovica or Kosovo more generally as a clash between Christianity and Islam - or persecution of orthodox christian by what they call "islamic terrorists".
Q2. To what extent was the actor motivated by a real or perceived systemic bias or prejudice which leads to consistently unfair treatment?	4
Comments to Q2	This sense of injustice is fueled by a number of sources - local influential orthodox leaders, Serbia's political leadership, and the broader far right discourse that uses the (misinterpreted) historical record Kosovo as a backbone of their radical rhetoric.
Q3. To what extent the injustice is linked to issues of redistribution?	5
Comments to Q3	Issues of redistribution are linked with motivations to not stop "fighting" until eventually the 'territory of Kosovo' becomes part of Serbia.
Q4. To what extent the injustice is linked to issues of recognition?	3
Comments to Q4	
Q5. To what extent the injustice is linked to issues of representation?	5
Comments to Q5	Representation is also a motivating factor because such individuals who are influenced by far right groups and their radical narratives are also lacking political representation. Instead, they are mainly

	instrumentalized by Serbia's political leadership and caught between Serbia and Kosovo without being fully integrated on neither side.

Grievance Coding

Q1. How specific is the experienced grievance?	3
Comments to Q1	
Q2. How extensive and diverse is the list of grievances?	3
Comments to Q2	
Q3. How personal is the grievance?	4
Comments to Q3	
Q4. How formalized is the demand to address the grievance?	4
Comments to Q4	
Q5. How realistic are the prospects to address the grievance?	2
Comments to Q5	

Alienation Coding

Q1. How specific and central is the sense of alienation?	4
Comments to Q1	
Q2. How voluntary is the process of alienation?	3
Comments to Q2	
Q3. How complete is the alienation?	3
Comments to Q3	
Q4. How entrenched is the alienation?	4
Comments to Q4	
Q5. How reversible is the sense of alienation?	3
Comments to Q5	

Polarisation Coding

Q1. To what extent does the actor consider the political field to be polarized?	4
Comments to Q1	If the actor is compared to the establishment in Serbia - from where they often recieve instructions formally or informally - the association of the hotspot with the will of the broader political field is not too polarized.

Q2. How high is the perceived level of the polarization?	
Comments to Q2	
Q3. To what extent do the actor's opinions radically contrast with the institutions (political, religious, cultural) and policies that are currently in place?	
Comments to Q3	The level of polarization is high if Kosovo's institutions serve as the point of reference for the political establishment.
Q4. To what extent does the actor consider the political field to be polarized as compared with the social sphere?	4
Comments to Q4	
Q5. Did the actor consider their radical positions to have a clear outlet on the institutional, cultural, or political spectrum prior to the hotspot?	4
Comments to Q5	They are able to vote representatives which share similar radical views, although the political representatives at simultaneously perceived as being rather out of touch with the needs of the average citizens, especially in Northern Mitrovica and instead serve at the will of Serbia's political leadership.

Prishtina

Actor 1: Source B, ex-Takfir follower

Injustice Coding

Q1. To what extent the hotspot is a response to injustice?	2
Comments to Q1	In the particular case of the individual coded as Source B, radicalization does not seem as a strong response to injustice.
Q2. To what extent was the actor motivated by a real or perceived systemic bias or prejudice which leads to consistently unfair treatment?	2
Comments to Q2	It is difficult in the case of Source B to make a strong claim that the actor is motivated by a real or perceived systemic bias or prejudice.
Q3. To what extent the injustice is linked to issues of redistribution?	2

Comments to Q3	It is difficult in the case of Source B to make a strong claim that the actor is motivated by injustice linked to issues of redistribution.
Q4. To what extent the injustice is linked to issues of recognition?	1
Comments to Q4	
Q5. To what extent the injustice is linked to issues of representation?	1
Comments to Q5	

Grievance Coding

Q1. How specific is the experienced grievance?	3
Comments to Q1	The experienced grievance based on the statements provided by Source B is relatively specific as it makes a clear distinction between the quality of life before the period of Kosovo War and after.
Q2. How extensive and diverse is the list of grievances?	2
Comments to Q2	
Q3. How personal is the grievance?	3
Comments to Q3	
Q4. How formalized is the demand to address the grievance?	5
Comments to Q4	
Q5. How realistic are the prospects to address the grievance?	3
Comments to Q5	

Alienation Coding

Q1. How specific and central is the sense of alienation?	4
Comments to Q1	The actor expresses feelings of isolation due to personal family problems which influence him to seek outside support at a nearby mosque.
Q2. How voluntary is the process of alienation?	5
Comments to Q2	
Q3. How complete is the alienation?	3
Comments to Q3	
Q4. How entrenched is the alienation?	4
Comments to Q4	The alienation began after the war in Kosovo as the actor experienced aggravated personal circumstances.

Q5. How reversible is the sense of alienation?	4
Comments to Q5	

Q1. To what extent does the actor consider the political field to be polarized?	3
Comments to Q1	N/A
Q2. How high is the perceived level of the polarization?	3
Comments to Q2	N/A
Q3. To what extent do the actor's opinions radically contrast with the institutions (political, religious, cultural) and policies that are currently in place?	3
Comments to Q3	N/A
Q4. To what extent does the actor consider the political field to be polarized as compared with the social sphere?	
Comments to Q4	N/A
Q5. Did the actor consider their radical positions to have a clear outlet on the institutional, cultural, or political spectrum prior to the hotspot?	
Comments to Q5	N/A

Actor 2: Fitim Lladrovci

Injustice Coding

Q1. To what extent the hotspot is a response to injustice?	4
Comments to Q1	Based on an interview for the Economist, "Lladrovci's sense of justice had been forged at a young age when, in the 1990s, ethnic Albanians had risen up against the Serbs and, with help from America, fought for an independent state. Lladrovci believed that his role in Syria was akin to that of the Americans in Kosovo: saving an oppressed people."
Q2. To what extent was the actor motivated by a real or perceived systemic bias or prejudice which leads to consistently unfair treatment?	5

Comments to Q2	His sense of unfair treatment was largely a result of what he and his family experienced during the war in Kosovo at the hands of the Serbian forces. He saw his involvement with IS as an opportunity to act to make up for the time when he was unable to do so.
Q3. To what extent the injustice is linked to issues of redistribution?	2
Comments to Q3	
Q4. To what extent the injustice is linked to issues of recognition?	4
Comments to Q4	By getting involved with IS, Lladrovci may have sought to obtain a greater level of self-worth.
Q5. To what extent the injustice is linked to issues of representation?	3
Comments to Q5	

Grievance Coding

Q1. How specific is the experienced grievance?	4
Comments to Q1	
Q2. How extensive and diverse is the list of grievances?	3
Comments to Q2	
Q3. How personal is the grievance?	1
Comments to Q3	Lladrovci links the experience of the Syrian people under the oppression of Assad with his personal experience under Serbian occupation. Moreover, in line with the extremist narrative propagated by IS, Lladrovci expresses frustration with the secular state and their approach towards Muslim practitioners.
Q4. How formalized is the demand to address the grievance?	3
Comments to Q4	Lladrovci makes direct calls for violent and for violent terrorist acts to be committed in Kosovo, although he does not specify which the identity of the persons to address his grievences.
Q5. How realistic are the prospects to address the grievance?	3
Comments to Q5	In the case of Lladrovci, who sought to address grievances2 through the use of

	violence, his demands do not appear pragmatic.
Q1. How specific is the experienced grievance?	4

Alienation Coding

Q1. How specific and central is the sense of alienation?	5
Comments to Q1	Alienation in this case can be attributed to the feelings that Lladrovci harbors towards the Serbian forces due to their harsh treatment during the war, as well as towards Kosovo's institutions/society which appear to discriminate against his family or not provide enough support to their difficult socio-economic circumstances.
Q2. How voluntary is the process of alienation?	3
Comments to Q2	
Q3. How complete is the alienation?	3
Comments to Q3	
Q4. How entrenched is the alienation?	5
Comments to Q4	His alienation dates back to the Kosovo War while he was a child.
Q5. How reversible is the sense of alienation?	3
Comments to Q5	Lladrovci at certain points cooperated with state authorities with the purpose of negotiating a lesser sentence or complete freedom for his actions. Thus, his attitude could signal that he perceives alienation as a rather escapable condition.

Polarisation Coding

Q1. To what extent does the actor consider the political field to be polarized?	3
Comments to Q1	Lladrovci may consider the political field as relatively polarized and still tied to influences by his group, with enough courage to do what the group thinks - as illustrated by the fact that he was rearrested for posting menacing threats and calling for violent acts to take place in Prishtina.
Q2. How high is the perceived level of the polarization?	3

Comments to Q2	
Q3. To what extent do the actor's opinions radically contrast with the institutions (political, religious, cultural) and policies that are currently in place?	5
Comments to Q3	
Q4. To what extent does the actor consider the political field to be polarized as compared with the social sphere?	3
Comments to Q4	
Q5. Did the actor consider their radical positions to have a clear outlet on the institutional, cultural, or political spectrum prior to the hotspot?	3
Comments to Q5	

Actor 3: Naman Demolli

Injustice Coding

Q1. To what extent the hotspot is a response to injustice?	5
Comments to Q1	Demolli held strong feelings towards the individuals/groups that he perceived as others. It is these strong convictions that led him to become one of the first foreign fighters from Kosovo.
Q2. To what extent was the actor motivated by a real or perceived systemic bias or prejudice which leads to consistently unfair treatment?	5
Comments to Q2	
Q3. To what extent the injustice is linked to issues of redistribution?	5
Comments to Q3	
Q4. To what extent the injustice is linked to issues of recognition?	5
Comments to Q4	
Q5. To what extent the injustice is linked to issues of representation?	4
Comments to Q5	

Grievance Coding

Q1. How specific is the experienced grievance?	4
Comments to Q1	

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Q2. How extensive and diverse is the list of grievances?	3
Comments to Q2	
Q3. How personal is the grievance?	4
Comments to Q3	
Q4. How formalized is the demand to address the grievance?	4
Comments to Q4	
Q5. How realistic are the prospects to address the grievance?	3
Comments to Q5	

Alienation Coding

Q1. How specific and central is the sense of alienation?	3
Comments to Q1	
Q2. How voluntary is the process of alienation?	3
Comments to Q2	
Q3. How complete is the alienation?	4
Comments to Q3	
Q4. How entrenched is the alienation?	3
Comments to Q4	
Q5. How reversible is the sense of alienation?	3
Comments to Q5	

Polarisation Coding

Q1. To what extent does the actor consider the political field to be polarized?	4
Comments to Q1	
Q2. How high is the perceived level of the polarization?	4
Comments to Q2	
Q3. To what extent do the actor's opinions radically contrast with the institutions (political, religious, cultural) and policies that are currently in place?	5
Comments to Q3	
Q4. To what extent does the actor consider the political field to be polarized as compared with the social sphere?	3
Comments to Q4	

Q5. Did the actor consider their radical positions to have a clear outlet on the institutional, cultural, or political spectrum prior to the hotspot?	3
Comments to Q5	

Kacanik

Injustice Coding

Q1. To what extent the hotspot is a response to injustice?	4
Comments to Q1	Although Muhaxheri has been behind some of the most prolific p
Q2. To what extent was the actor motivated by a real or perceived systemic bias or prejudice which leads to consistently unfair treatment?	
Comments to Q2	
Q3. To what extent the injustice is linked to issues of redistribution?	
Comments to Q3	
Q4. To what extent the injustice is linked to issues of recognition?	
Comments to Q4	
Q5. To what extent the injustice is linked to issues of representation?	5
Comments to Q5	Muhaxheri expressed a strong sense of radical ideology, even it is were solely for propaganda efforts. As such, he viewed violence as a legitimate way of changing the power structures in favor of radical religious groups such as securing the gains of the so called IS and undermining secular, western-oriented forces elsewhere, including in Kosovo - with the eventual goal of substituting the it with a Sharia based system.

Grievance Coding

Q1. How specific is the experienced grievance?	2
Comments to Q1	
Q2. How extensive and diverse is the list of grievances?	4

Comments to Q2	Muhaxheri in his statements listed numerous grievances, perhaps also as an attempt to cast a wider net of potential recruits.
Q3. How personal is the grievance?	3
Comments to Q3	He did not make his grievances as personal but sought to keep them more on a general level, such as on behalf of Muslims versus non-Muslims, or true practicing (devoted) Muslims and those alleged Muslims whom he regarded as 'traitors".
Q4. How formalized is the demand to address the grievance?	3
Comments to Q4	
Q5. How realistic are the prospects to address the grievance?	5
Comments to Q5	Muhaxheri was quite extreme in his views and did not hesitate to call for complete annihilation of groups that he and the extremist organization he associated with deemed as not worthy of living.

Alienation Coding

Q1. How specific and central is the sense of alienation?	3
Comments to Q1	There is not enough information to determine the role that alienation may have played in the case of Muhaxheri's radicalization process.
Q2. How voluntary is the process of alienation?	3
Comments to Q2	N.A
Q3. How complete is the alienation?	
Comments to Q3	N/a
Q4. How entrenched is the alienation?	4
Comments to Q4	
Q5. How reversible is the sense of alienation?	4
Comments to Q5	

Polarisation Coding

Q1. To what extent does the actor consider the political field to be polarized?	2
Comments to Q1	Muhaxheri was quite aligned with the radical views of other extremists operating in

	Kacanik although he is known as one of the more violent ones.
Q2. How high is the perceived level of the polarization?	3
Comments to Q2	
Q3. To what extent do the actor's opinions radically contrast with the institutions (political, religious, cultural) and policies that are currently in place?	5
Comments to Q3	The views of Muhaxheri were diametrically different from those of the political establishment in Kosovo.
Q4. To what extent does the actor consider the political field to be polarized as compared with the social sphere?	4
Comments to Q4	Muhaxheri also had a strong sense of ego which may have influenced his way of thinking and acting across the social divide in Kosovo.
Q5. Did the actor consider their radical positions to have a clear outlet on the institutional, cultural, or political spectrum prior to the hotspot?	3
Comments to Q5	N.a