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1 Introduction

Transregional dynamics is the fourth research cluster of the PAVE project. This cluster is based on the empirical study on transnational dynamics fueling cross-border manifestations of violent extremism between Europe, the Balkans and the MENA region, with a special emphasis to the role of Diaspora communities.

Islamist extremism has important transnational and transregional dynamics. Violent non state organizations, social movements and foreign states are among the main transregional actors that could affect the trends and factors of radicalisation. The main forms of transregional and transnational involvement are the preparation and implementation of attacks and the recruitment of radicalised persons from terrorist organisations outside of the above mentioned regions, the promotion of conservative and radical interpretations' of Islam and Islamism from Islamist activists movements, the involvement of foreign states in order to promote specific doctrines of Islam and to influence religious institutions and actors and the role of transnational actors as foreign terrorist fighters or terrorist cells and hit squads. The main consequence of this transregional process is the differentiation of radicalisation trends and the development of new push factors of the dynamic of violent extremism. One important variable is Diaspora communities' involvement in the radicalisation process. Although this is not a new phenomenon, new trends have begun to emerge in the modus operandi of the global jihadist movement. In recent years the radicalisation of Diaspora communities in Europe is one of the most vivid and conflicting research and public debates in the field of violent extremism. Within this framework, the external influence of Salafist- jihadist variant of militant Islamism is the main point of discussion as source of radicalisation.

While the external influence of the Salafist- jihadist variant of militant Islamism is the main point of discussion with Diaspora communities when it comes to identifying sources of radicalisation, it is not the only framework used in Diasporas analysis within the PAVE project. Other issues, such as failures of integration, marginalisation and the perception of discrimination, are among the possible factors that may contribute to Diasporas radicalisation (Zimmermann and Rosenau 2009). One important dimension to consider when researching Diasporas radicalisation is the mutual influence between external forces and autonomous militancy (Waldman 2010). To that end, the research on the radicalisation of Diaspora communities and the transregional linkages is based on three levels of analysis: micro (individual identity and community), meso (dynamics and environment) and macro (host and home countries) (Haider 2015).

The research on the transregional and transnational dynamics of violent extremism relies on network analysis. There is a need for better understanding of the complex and diverse dynamics of transnational and transregional radicalisation and development of violent extremism between the MENA region and the Western Balkans, as well as between those regions and the EU Member States. Networks are important not only for the planning of the attacks but also for the recruitment of foreign fighters and the spread of radical interpretations of Islam.

Literature shows that enhancing positive factors is easier than mitigating negative conditions in effective prevention of radicalisation. The strength-based approach highlights the importance of developing individual and societal resilience against radicalisation and violent extremism. Integration was from the beginning one very important factor in order to counter radicalisation and terrorism. For example, the United States and to some extent Canada have, post-9/11, aimed to devise interconnected integration and security measures to prevention and de- radicalisation interventions (Zimmermann and Rosenau, 2009). Schmid (2013) outlines that the primary focus of many counter-radicalisation efforts is not the terrorists themselves but strengthening and empowering the communities from which they might emerge. The premise is that local Diaspora communities in the West should be as interested as the host government in keeping their neighbourhoods free of violent

extremists. Community outreach is thus a key component of many de-radicalisation and counter-radicalisation initiatives.

Utilising this literature and the knowledge on vulnerability/ risk factors and resilience/ protective factors the PAVE project developed a framework to analyse the risk and resilience of Muslim Diaspora communities in Europe based on six risk and five resilience factors:

Risk Factor 1: Identity crisis, disintegration, discrimination.

Risk Factor 2: International geopolitics and military interventions/ perceptions of a negative role for Western foreign policy.

Risk Factor 3: Linkages with the home country and engagement with state and non-state organizations.

Risk Factor 4: Role of internet/ social media and dissemination of radical propaganda.

Risk Factor 5: External Influence from State and non-state actors.

Risk Factor 6: Linkages with Foreign Terrorist Fighters or other radicalised persons.

Resilience Factor 1: Successful integration- engagement and cooperation between the host country and the communities.

Resilience Factor 2: Community Cohesion Programs linked with prevention of radicalisation initiatives.

Resilience Factor 3: Pluralistic inter- religion dialogue and initiatives to avoid the stigmatization and separation of Islam from other religions.

Resilience Factor 4: Cooperation with the communities and engagement of credible and moderate voices.

Resilience Factor 5: Counter narratives, use of social media.

The empirical research conducted with semi-flex interviews and focus groups with members of Diaspora communities in EU countries, key Informants, practitioners and researchers working with Diaspora communities.

Diaspora Communities: Greece (Pakistani and Afghani, Ireland (Pakistani, Iraqi, Sikhs, Nigerian and Kosovo), Germany (Bosnian and Palestinian), Spain (Amazigh), Denmark (Palestinian) and France (Palestinian).

2 Risk factors

This section provides the analytical overview concerning the six risk factors about the vulnerability of the members of Diaspora communities to radicalisation leading to violent extremism.

2.1 Identity crisis, (dis-)integration, discrimination

Identity crisis has been identified as one of the most important risk factors that could lead to violent extremism. In the last years, we observed the engagement of young second or third generation of immigrants as perpetrators in many of the terrorist attacks in different EU countries. Among the different stories and backgrounds of those individuals we can emphasise the issue of identity crisis and mainly the non- belonging phenomenon. Usually the perception of non-belonging has the form of flatulence between two worlds- the country of origin and the current country. An individual with an identity confusion is feeling detached from both countries.

Studies on radicalisation find that the search for identity is a key influence in radicalisation processes (Al Raffie, 2013; Vidino, 2011). This particularly is the case for second and third generation immigrants/refugees, who have fewer ties to their country of origin than their parents or

grandparents. Events in the homeland, while more important to first generation immigrants, are less likely to be an important influence in radicalisation processes of later generations (Vidino, 2011).

A very important parameter that could lead to identity crisis is the cultural marginalisation, to feel alienated from the culture of origin and not integrated into the culture of the host country (Abbas & Siddique, 2012; Parent & Ellis, 2011; Sirseloudi, 2012; Taarnby & Hallundbaek, 2010). Another important issue is the separation of religion from culture of origin that could lead Muslim Diaspora communities to identify themselves as members of the global Islamic community (Ummah). A crucial stage to this direction is solidarity to Muslim victims of war worldwide (Sirseloudi, 2012). Adhering to religion among second and third generations of immigrant and Diaspora groups is seen more as an individual decision, rather than shaped by loyalty to the home country, as has been the case for the first generation (Sirseloudi, 2012).

In direct contrast to many scholars, Roy does not adopt the vertical and linear approach that goes from the Qur'an to the Islamic State with the constant Islamic violence that manifests itself in various phases. On the contrary, he proposes a "transversal approach that attempts to interpret modern Islamic violence in parallel with related forms of violence and radicalism (youth uprising, radical rupture with society, aesthetics of violence, integration of the cut-off individual into a globalised narrative."

Finally, discrimination (whether real or perceived) can be a source of frustration that can contribute to identity crises. Victoroff et al. (2012). Victoroff et al. (2012) suggest that some victims of perceived discrimination (particularly religious minorities) may react with aggression, including political violence.

Some members of the Amazigh Diaspora community in Spain considered themselves Amazigh and Arab at the same time, although they claimed to have an identity crisis for not knowing how to identify themselves in different spaces such as in the international Spanish school, in Morocco and in Spain, because of the language and culture:

"I have always considered myself to have an identity crisis, because I have studied at a Spanish school in Morocco and from what you can imagine, I went to school and it was all in Spanish. Then I would go out into the street, they were Berber, then I would go to my house and we would speak in Darija because my father does not speak Berber. So there were like three languages and it was like an identity crisis, because right now I'm going to Morocco and I don't consider myself Moroccan, but then I come to Spain and I'm not Spanish. So it's like a loop there that basically I don't know where I'm from".

The case of Ireland differs to the range of the identity crisis phenomenon. Identity crisis of youngsters plays a role as a risk factor that could lead to radicalisation.

"With young people most of the time. And because young people are often confused, and they're all looking for their own identity. So, they're going through identity crisis, and some of them, they want belonging, they want a sense of belonging. You see that in Ireland. I have noticed it but not a lot, a few individuals".

But it is a minority of the youth that goes through identity crises and those who do are from the most deprived areas and cannot find a job.

Perceived 'lack of belonging' can be a factor when there is 'dual identity' and peer pressure can push it both ways.

"I think a lot of the time when there's dual identity, and sometimes even multiple identities, you feel like you don't belong with any community. So, like, within Irish society, you're visibly different, whether that be skin colour, or the way you dress, your accent, the way you behave. But then within the Muslim

community, or even just like within family dynamics, the way you are behaving might be considered against the religion and the image of the parents”.

Also, references made to the new generation of migrants and refugees in Ireland is crucial, since many new people arrived from war-torn places with deep sectarian divisions. These backgrounds represent a factor that could influence integration.

“We've invited priests and we've invited other faith leaders, and there is always a small segment of the community that would question this and the reason they do that is because where they have come from, and they have lived their life, they have never experienced this. And for them, it's completely new. It's like, how can you? They have come from societies where there are so many obstacles and so much division, they have sectarianism. So, for example, in a Sunni mosque, they would not accept to have a Shia in the mosque. And they see that here in a mosque in Ireland. There is a Christian, there is a Jew, and all of them are sitting together.”

The issue of religious leaders is also important for the Muslim communities in Ireland. Lack of engagement with the issue led to inactivity on the part of the Irish state to either recognise already existing religious leaders or appoint new ones. Generally, there needs to be more expertise on the side of the Irish state in relation to Islam, Imams and Muslims.

Pathways of identity formation differ between the generations of Bosniaks in Germany. The early generations of labour migrants who came as temporary workers maintain(ed) a strong emotional connection to their country of origin, while later generations who were born – and grew up in Germany are socialised there and their identity formation is more influenced by their German environment. The older generations often carried their religious traditions into their new home. Younger generations on the other hand, have not experienced the practice of Islam before the war in BiH and therefore are influenced by what their environment in Germany teaches them regarding Islamic practice.

Reasons for migration are relevant for the analysis of vulnerability towards radicalisation. Bosniak labour migrants as well as war refugees migrated to Germany. The different types of migration influence the integration process of these individuals. While individuals who left their country involuntarily as refugees and carry the trauma of war and flight are generally more vulnerable mentally, economically and with regards to their legal status, labour migrants found a more comfortable situation upon their arrival in Germany. Labour migrants were given a temporary residency permit and they were allowed to work and send remittances to their families at home. During the 1990s, refugees from the Bosnian war only received a *Duldung*, a temporary residency status that did not contain a work permit. Refugees consequently were in need of financial and spiritual assistance. This renders them more vulnerable to be influenced by recruiters who promise support and stability when adhering to certain ideologies and practises.

From another point of view, the second and third generations of Palestinians in France have not experienced life as refugees in camps. Language and identity are insufficient to bring them into the Palestinian mainstream. Palestinian fragmentation, individual allegiances and divergent interests have had a negative impact on the community. However, these factors still allow for a high degree of social connection and sense of belonging. Some of them do not see themselves as an integral part of the host country and distance themselves from the assimilation programmes. They continue to live in the host country without fully assimilating, a situation that causes them some psychological trauma.

While both, the first generation and second generation of immigrants legally have the same opportunities as ethnic Danes, in practice it is a different matter. They usually have to provide twice as much as Danes to ensure the same opportunities, e.g. apprenticeships. Most immigrants never find an apprenticeship to get the maximum out of education, or find it later in the course of their lives. That is

one of the reasons why some immigrants deselected education. Community-level groups and networks can play a role for identity formation and can have a possible contribution to vulnerability for radicalisation. The essence of non-belonging is a very important factor for the Palestinian Diaspora community in Denmark. Many Palestinians feel that they don't belong to Denmark. The role of media was referred to as important, because it usually creates the concept of "otherness" that is feeding the alienation of immigrants.

For Muslim communities in Greece the most important risks are the poor levels of integration among second and third generation migrants which is also linked with the absence of a legitimate and credible representative body for the Muslim community and the numerous unofficial mosques. Youngsters' identity crisis is another important risk factor for radicalisation of Diaspora communities in Greece. The environment surrounded by friends and family can definitely influence a youngster's life. Tensions between children and their families could lead to search of alternative environments of belonging, such as peers that in some times are related with activists' organisations or radicalised people.

"During adolescence, young people may cross a period of uncertainty and confusion in which their sense of identity becomes insecure".

In Greece, an important dimension was the economic crisis and the marginalisation of an important part of the population.

"Economic crisis in Greece has enhanced social exclusion, social and political marginalisation, the sense of despair and injustice contribute to radicalisation".

Vulnerability is also crucial for identity crisis and exploitation to radicalisation. Psychical traumas of war violence that young refugees have suffered, while a state of "being on hold" for taking your life in your hands could create resentment feelings that could lead to radicalisation. This is mostly the case for unaccompanied minors in Greece.

The separation of religion from culture of origin that could lead Muslim Diaspora communities to identify themselves as members of the global Islamic community (Ummah) it was also a very important evidence in the research with different Diaspora communities.

The role of religion is an important dynamic of identity crisis of the Amazigh community in Spain. From the one hand, the general identity crisis has caused some to attach themselves to the clearest identity element they possess: Islam. This, despite the fact that in many Amazigh environments Islam has traditionally had a cultural role, rather than a religious one. In fact, for many members of the community, the Islamisation of the Amazigh in Europe has come along with the Arabisation and the emergence of media channels from the Gulf.

Another important dimension is the identification of what is Islam in the eyes of Spaniards. A young female respondent remarked how she had to refrain to make her Muslim faith too obvious in order to avoid incessant questions and discrimination. Therefore, she chose not wear the hijab, although this meant she could not feel her spiritual life to the full in Spain. The hijab is an element that makes a difference in the girls (something that does not happen with boys) and that can be recognised from a distance. She therefore felt she would not fit in her social circles if she wanted to wear it.

Finally, some members of the community noted how their Arabic/Muslim identity had been key in enhancing their employment prospects, since they worked in something related to their linguistic skills or cultural sensitivity (intercultural mediators, researchers on Moroccan politics or Amazigh culture, etc.). However, they also remarked how this meant they were pigeonholed in the role of "Arab" or "Muslim" in the work environment, without having the chance to compete with their colleagues for

management job opportunities. For example, an intercultural mediator stated how she would like to be promoted within her office but this will never happen, since she is covering a position that is difficult to be covered by a Spanish person, whereas any other position can be filled by any other Spanish person. She felt this as a frustration in terms of her career development.

After the disintegration of Yugoslavia and the collapse of socialism, new freedoms with regards to religious practise emerged. In Socialist Yugoslavia, most Bosniaks only had formalist knowledge about Islam. They were “cultural Muslims”, practicing their religion according to behavioural traditions, but their overall lifestyle was very secular. People identified less as Muslims but rather as proud Yugoslavs. After the eruption of the war, foreign Shiite as well as Sunnite forces supported the Muslims in their struggle. While Shiite Islam could never gain a foothold in Bosnia and Herzegovina, ideological influence from the Gulf, especially Saudi Arabia grew. In the midst of the war, these foreign actors not only delivered humanitarian and financial aid, but also exerted an ideological influence with regards to the interpretation of religion. Existing structures of Islam in Bosnia and Herzegovina were denounced as un-Islamic, not the original way of Islam, diluted with non-Islamic traditions. This caused a fundamental questioning of current religious behaviour. Especially the younger generations were susceptible to these new influences, causing an intergenerational conflict. This crisis of identity affected the Diaspora as well as the population in the homeland and was prevalent in the 1990s and 2000.

One interviewee experienced the radicalisation trajectory of a previously moderate religious individual who traversed to become extremely religious in a very short period of time since the start of the Syrian war, taking up an Islamic ideology that condemned the way that Islam was practiced in the community as un-Islamic and suddenly rejected the community. The main feature of the newly adopted ideology of this radicalised individual is described as *excludability* of beliefs and world views that differ from the own. Community actors saw this individual rarely during this period due to the dismissive attitude the concerned individual expressed against the community. When paths crossed, the community was accused of conveying the wrong values. In a timespan of up to ten years, trips to BiH and Syria were conducted by this radicalised individual. Most recently, a normalisation of ideology in this individual could be observed and he even apologised to the community and the Imam.

The final element that is very important for the identity crisis is discrimination (whether real or perceived), is the feeling of stigmatisation and marginalisation. This perception can be a source of frustration that can contribute to identity crises. Some victims of perceived discrimination (particularly religious minorities) may react with aggression, including political violence.

Discrimination against the Amazigh community and a perception of what is Arab as superior, contributes to identity crisis. Furthermore, for those having grown up in Morocco, their contact with Amazigh culture, language and history has been reduced to the family and friends’ environment. On the one hand, it made them question their identity. In the eyes of most Spaniards, Moroccans are Arabs or Muslims (most people do not know about Amazigh culture). This caused that, depending on the context, they had to refer to themselves as Arabs, although none of them identify with the Arab culture. On the other hand, some have made an effort to enhance their *Amazighness* by researching about their cultural roots, learning the language properly and joining organisations that promote a sort of renaissance of the Amazigh culture. They remark how this lack of knowledge about the own culture and identity has become a big vulnerability factor, since it leaves a void that can easily be filled by extremist ideologies.

Most members of the Amazigh community in Spain remarked how racism and Islamophobia are present in Spain and Europe. Those who migrated explained how through their trip from Morocco they suffered from exclusion and blatant discrimination. This made some respondents question their decision to come to Spain or their ability to integrate economically and socially in the country. In most cases, it was just because they found local associations, NGOs or other members of the

Amazigh/Moroccan community that they found the will to keep trying. In fact, some respondents remarked stigmatising and discriminatory measures against Muslims, which also represent another kind of Western radicalisation. However, this does not receive the same attention and is embraced by the media and the political institutions.

It was also remarked that Diasporas are concentrated in the suburbs, which are generally poor and neglected areas, which makes their communication with other communities difficult. In this sense, only those who have the chance to go to university or to afford certain activities in the city center, abandon these areas. All respondents remarked how this kind of social exclusion is definitely a risk factor.

Instances of Islamophobia are present in the poor areas such as Tallaght (Dublin) and social deprivation is a risk factor for Muslim Diaspora communities in Ireland. The perception of discrimination and the feeling of injustice is also a risk factor for the Palestinian communities in Denmark (i.e. they perceive some legislations as one about the niqab as discrimination and unjust action from the Government).

Experienced discrimination of Bosniak individuals in Germany is more related to a generalised Islamophobia than to their country of origin. Members of the communities have experienced instances of rejection in the job market, in search for apartments and other fields of life as soon as they reveal that they are Muslims. According to the interviewees, Islamophobia in Germany has increased since 2015, leading to a reluctance to become visible as a Muslim in public. Especially women are often exposed to discrimination when they wear a headscarf. Interviewees report assaults against female community members who wear a headscarf.

Women are exposed to push factors for religious radicalisation. When living in conservative and extremely patriarchal family contexts, this can lead them to seek self-expression elsewhere.

“It seems like women have less to lose and more to win through breaking out of patriarchal family structures. Nevertheless, more research needs to be done to prove this connection as to-date more anecdotal evidence exists.”

Previous research shows that for men, push factors are more relevant: Concepts of masculinity that are propagated in radical ideologies lead men to feel inclined to join extremists' networks. Missing fathers play an important role for feeling attached to hierarchical structures and radical milieus, as the structure can replace the missing father figure. But men also have a lot to win by breaking out of violent and patriarchal family structures and an emancipation of women and the emancipation of men are always interconnected.

2.2 International geopolitics and military interventions/perceptions of a negative role for Western foreign policy

Another source of Diaspora communities' radicalisation is Western foreign policy, especially Western interventions in predominantly Muslim countries. Central to the ideology of violent Jihad is the fact that Islam is under mortal threat, so every good Muslim should fight in this battle between good and evil, a myth that reproduced in the form of intensive propaganda among young people who have the desire to act and seek the "solution" to the injustices and threats that Islam is experiencing. A radical belief is that there is a structural conflict between Islam and the West. In the latter stages, when the ideological lever of pressure acquires political characteristics, the feeling that the Western powers have conspired against Islam is formed, resulting in the birth of their desire and will to restore the Caliphate in order to unite all Muslims into one governance under the law of Islam. This is the main argument of ISIS which significantly caused the massive wave of European "foreign fighters".

The transition from the pre-radicalisation phase to that of substantial radicalisation is influenced by some key parameters, the most common of which are:

- The foreign policy of western countries and the deliberate isolation of actions
- The glory of Jihad and violent activism and the direction of anger against the actions of western countries

Their perception of Western foreign policy in conjunction with its propagandistic exploitation by fanatics played a major role in cultivating anger in the younger Muslim generations. The military interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan, the images from Abu Ghraib prison and Guantanamo Bay base, as well as broadcasts from war zones such as Chechnya, Gaza, Somalia and Sudan creates the image of ill-treatment and persecution of Muslims.

The West is perceived as a monolithic supporter of Israel and non-democratic regimes in the Middle East and North Africa, including those of Saudi Arabia and Egypt, but also Pakistan in the past. Additionally, the West was also blamed for not taking action in Kashmir and Chechnya.

A typical example is the London suicide bomber Mohammad Sidique Khan, who in his expressed motivation emphasises his belief in the crimes committed by the West against Muslims in all over the world. Khan's partner, Shehzad Tanweer, videotaped a message, released a year after the London attack, where he blamed British foreign policy for their actions and argued that the attacks would continue until the British forces withdraw from Afghanistan and Iraq (Bergen- Reynolds, 2005).

Koinova (2011) focuses on events in the homeland and finds that an emotional response among conflict-generated Diasporas who view it as a solution to address past injustices could play an important role to Diasporas radicalisation. Once Diasporas are mobilised, the perpetration of grave violations of human rights in the homeland are likely to have a strong radicalising impact on Diaspora politics (Haider, 2015). The identity of conflict-generated Diasporas is often tied to collective trauma – and grave violations can trigger fear, anger and threat to their collective identity. The Israeli bombing of Gaza, for example, triggered a large-scale mobilisation of the Palestinian Diaspora (Haider, 2015).

The negative effects of global events have the potential to attract young people to extremist organisations (Abbas & Siddique, 2012). Whine (2009) finds, for example, that political and foreign events (e.g. events in Kashmir and Palestine, the Iraq War, genocide of Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina) have been a driving force in activating Muslim political engagement and recruitment by Islamist groups. Abbas & Siddique (2012) highlight that the frustrations of those perpetrating violent acts can be exacerbated when blame is placed solely on religion, neglecting these political issues. Menkhaus (2009) notes that while issues and events in the Middle East have been critical in radicalising Muslim Diasporas of Middle Eastern and South Asian descent, they may not resonate as much with African Muslim Diaspora groups. Instead, these groups are more likely to share grievances related to treatment of Muslims in the West generally post 9/11 (Haider, 2015).

A two-factor model in which seeing the war on terrorism as a war on Islam is predicted by both perceived discrimination and grievance related to Western foreign policy (McCauley, 2018). Consistent with this model, UK practitioners in counter-radicalisation programmes find it useful to recognise Muslim grievances related to Western foreign policy in order to argue that violence does not reduce Muslim suffering (McCauley, 2018). These observations indicate that Muslim grievances relating to Western foreign policy are important for understanding and countering support for jihadist violence in Western countries (McCauley, 2018).

Furthermore, David Betz (2008) summarized the jihadist narrative developed by from a review of jihadist texts.

- (1) Islam is under general unjust attack by Western crusaders led by the United States;
- (2) Jihadis, whom the West refers to as “terrorists,” are defending against this attack;
- (3) The actions they take in defense of Islam are proportionally just and religiously sanctified; and, therefore
- (4) It is the duty of good Muslims to support these actions.

As Mueller (2018) notes, religion enters the narrative only insofar as caring about what happens to Muslims, caring about Muslims as victims of Western attack, justifies defensive or revenge violence.

For Bosniak Diaspora communities in Germany the role of the West in the war is an important parameter. During the Bosnian war, it was perceived as unjust by the Bosniak population and the Diaspora that the UN issued an arms embargo while the Serbian side disposed over the Yugoslav armoury, leading to a deliberate disadvantage from the perspective of the Bosnian side.

“Muslims in BiH needed any kind of help during the war in order to safeguard their bare survival.”

In this context, Muslim countries, the Gulf States and Saudi Arabia in particular, felt inclined to send support to the Muslim population in the Western Balkans. This support was implemented through humanitarian and financial aid and it also disseminated a religious ideology that was very different and much more radical than the Ottoman-coloured Islam that was predominant among the Muslim population at the time.

Extremist propaganda displays the war in Bosnia as an attack by the West on the Islamic world, thereby establishing a direct connection to Islamist ideology in the interpretation of the conflict (cf. Hantscher 2014).

Most members of the Amazigh community in Spain are critical towards the situation in their homeland (Morocco). Many even stated how the Kingdom of Morocco did not represent anything but oppression for them and how being linked to it makes them feel rejection and shame. In fact, most respondents remarked that they have a positive image of Spain, since here they enjoy more rights than in Morocco. However, they are also very critical towards Western policies towards Morocco, starting with the lack of freedom of movement of people between their country of origin and the European Union. Lack of freedom of movement and bureaucracy was listed as the main issue this community faces in Spain. For one respondent, the whole issue of visas (which are mostly rejected) has turned into a lucrative business for the EU. All respondents remarked how in relations between the EU and Morocco, European economic and security interests prevail and a lack of attention to human rights in Morocco stands out. Some respondents considered that Morocco's international agreements with the United States or Israel, concerning Western Sahara or Palestine may be a source of conflict with Europe and Algeria.

For the Palestinian Diaspora communities in France and Denmark, Western support of Israel is a very important factor that could produce radicalisation.

“From the events of September, the gap began. At the same time, the Intifada took place. Sympathy was given to the victims of America, not Palestine. Negative thinking began to show extremism against Islam and Islamophobia spread.”

Also, they refer to Western policies, especially in the case of Syria, as an attempt to divide the Arab world and also as a military intervention leading to the killing of thousands of Muslims in their own countries.

“A conspiracy against the Arab world to divide it, and they succeeded in some areas. With regard to Syria, the West shipped armies in the thousands and killed us in our country.”

2.3 Linkages with the home country and engagement with state and non-state actors

Engagement by state and non-state organisations in the home country can play a role in the position of Diaspora groups. In some countries, political Islam has tended to operate through non-violent political channels and to veer away from intolerant extremism (Sirseldudi, 2012).

From the point of view of the Bosniak Diaspora Community in Germany, two types of networks (physical and war veteran networks) are the main important non-state actors in terms of linkages and engagement with the home country. The official Islamic authority in BiH excludes more radical ideologies which leads to the fact that enclaves and congregations with Salafi-Jihadi ideology came about that are not supervised by the official Islamic authority. Located in BiH and Sandzak, predominantly Salafi-Jihadist villages and enclaves exist that are not overseen by the Bosnian Islamic authority and are insulated from the rest of society. This leads to severe knowledge gaps about the individuals who are involved in violent extremist networks, who recruiters are, and connections to individuals from the Diaspora and abroad. The regions where these congregations are located are mostly socially and economically marginalised. As these congregations are excluded from public state funding, private organisations, such as charity foundations from the Gulf (rather than state actors) come in as donors. This solidifies the influence exerted by external actors and increases the rift with the mainstream Islamic community in the country.

Here, even Jihadist training camps are offered. These training camps are important places for indoctrination of Salafi-Jihadist ideology and for learning the practical skill set needed for violent struggle, such as handling weapons and explosives. Nevertheless, spending time in a training camp cannot be seen as a direct causal factor for joining a violent extremists' network or organisation. There are examples of individuals who did shooting trainings during vacation in the country of origin in their youth and came back to Germany with a latent network that they did not activate at first. Only after several trips to the camp, they joined the violent extremist organisation. This is an example how regions where Salafi-Jihadist congregations have factual territorial control pose a latent danger for radicalisation as this can have an influence on individuals in Germany.

German Salafi-Jihadist organisations like “The True Religion” (*Die wahre Religion*) and successor organisations are well connected with their counterparts in BiH and there is a lot of exchange between these German-based organisations and Jihadi networks located in the Western Balkans. A large population with Bosnian roots lives in Austria and radical individuals with Bosnian background in Germany often are connected with Austrian counterparts. For example, it is known that individuals based in Germany travelled to Austria to visit the well-known Salafi-Jihadist preacher Ebu Tejma, and were radicalised there under the influence of Jihadist networks from the Balkans.

Individuals who were previously involved in fighting in a conflict that is interpreted as Jihad are respected for their experience and credibility and can exert influence on radicalised individuals in Germany. One example is Egyptian-German Reda Seyam. He came to Germany as a refugee and moved to BiH in 1994 where he joined Mujaheddin forces and produced propaganda videos glorifying their cause. He was accused to have been involved in an attack in Bali in 2002 leading to 202 victims. The German Federal Criminal Police Office returned him to Germany where he continued to be involved in Salafi-Jihadist circles and produced propaganda before travelling to Syria to join ISIS in 2013. He was killed in Iraq in 2014. During his time back in Germany, he was never charged for his previous violent extremist activities abroad.

For Muslim Diaspora communities in Ireland the issue of imams and mosques is the most important domain where we can identify engagement with state and non-state actors from home countries. Some communities (such as Bosnian) bring their religious interpretations/practices/worldview and have their own mosques/places of prayer. This is connected to the tradition that one goes to the same Imam the family goes to, there is a vulnerability element of needing to remain faithful to the family/home country Imam. In addition, there is no official body in Ireland that guarantees Imams have qualifications needed from relevant bodies to be able to hold prayers and not to teach radical versions of Islam/this means that some are inclined to radical versions, and this is a vulnerability.

“This is a challenge. Absolutely. So, what happens is people that come to these Mosques to pray, they also get their religious education there, but mostly the people that are there in the position of giving them the education are not qualified themselves. And people often get religious teachings that are not authentic. And they would assume since they heard it in the masjid [Arabic word for mosque] that it must be true. But it happens that the person that is teaching them doesn't even have qualifications in that field. And this is, this is how most people get radicalised.”

Another perception is coming from the Amazigh community in Spain. All respondents remarked that they have no commitment to the Kingdom of Morocco since they see it as an oppressor over the Amazigh community. Therefore, they rarely find state or non-state organisations that can represent their interests and values. Some of them mentioned cultural entities, local Amazigh associations and the Herak movement, which led the revolt against the Moroccan government in the Riff area. Another example is a NGO that commits to causes that affect women in Morocco and supports single mothers.

For the Palestinian Diaspora communities in France and Denmark the linkages with the home country is part of their identity and something really important for their high level of politicisation. Palestinians have a deep sense of nostalgia and pain for the injustices they have suffered. The implementation of the long overdue right of return is a constant and daily reminder. They tenaciously preserve and hold on to their culture and identity. Members of the Palestinian community share common interests such as a sense of national belonging, history, culture, traditions and a common language. A considerable number of Palestinians see themselves and the Diaspora as part of a resistance strategy against Israel.

2.4 Role of the internet/social media and dissemination of radical propaganda

In the 1990s and 2000s, the younger generation of Bosniaks in Germany was very skilled in disseminating emerging conservative religious narratives through relevant media back then (CDs, MP3, newly emerging internet messaging services). The older generation in the Diaspora is rather reached through conservative channels, such as through the mosques and sermons. Mosques and religious communities did not recognise the *zeitgeist* and could therefore not counter and compete with radical narratives distributed through newer media as they lacked the literacy to utilise these newer platforms.

A similar development can be observed more recently since jihadist propaganda is very prominently disseminated via the internet and is also identified as a space where the communities still cannot compete. The anecdotal evidence about individuals that radicalised hints at the internet as the platform where radical narratives are distributed and consumed.

Propaganda becomes relevant when it is displayed in a language that members of the Diaspora feel comfortable with, i.e., German or English, and when role models are displayed that recruits can identify with. ISIS also created role models for women, which did not exist before.

Here, the level of education of the Imam becomes crucial. As religious role model and teacher in his congregation, he must be equipped to address questions and discontent uttered by the community members, and especially young people. If the Imam is not able to provide answers to ambiguities or react to criticism and doubts in a convincing way that is based on profound theological knowledge, community members look for answers elsewhere. Nowadays, the most relevant source of information is the internet and social media. Radicalisation entrepreneurs are targeting exactly these individuals who are looking for answers through propaganda online. There are two to three “star preachers” in BiH who disseminate their radical sermons and messages online via videos and texts. Via the internet, this content is directly accessible to members of the Diaspora.

“While the Bosniak community was the exclusive source of affirmation for the older generations, in the younger generation of Bosniak Diaspora nowadays, there is less willingness to engage in empathetic volunteer work; motivations are more self-serving and people are more active in the online space, they might get their affirmation there instead of through concrete activities. These days, Islamic communities must be well-suited to compete in this environment.”

“Religious communities that promote openness experience hostility and defamation by more conservative and radical actors online.”

These actors need to be equipped to keep up to speed with the discourse in the online sphere in order to remain credible for younger people. This is often not the case.

For Muslim Diaspora communities in Greece cyberspace and especially social media plays an important role in terms of networking, recruitment and vulnerability in propaganda. Furthermore, the online dimension of the violence abuse among teenagers and young adults that incorporate components to change cultural and social norms. Also the daily interaction with violence in terms of video games, movies, comics etc. creates an essence of violence normality.

Many interviewees from the Palestinian Diaspora in France and Denmark describe the internet as a main factor of radicalisation, mainly through the spread of different negative images from Islam and Muslims.

“YouTube is the apparent reason, the case is an issue of the rights and money of Saoud family. Injustice and oppression. But with the Internet, injustice is spreading faster, and people will see it faster. Oppression and injustice.”

Social media and the spread of propaganda is an important risk factor according to the Amazigh community in Spain. Some remarked the importance of social media in the dissemination of radical propaganda. Specifically, Riffian imams and preachers that are spreading this kind of propaganda in their local language through a platform called Paltalk.

Finally, the role of social media as a driver of radicalisation has been identified as a factor in rural communities in Ireland.

“I think isolation can definitely add to that, when people don't feel like they can associate or relate to someone in their local area. In Dublin there is a lot of discussion, whereas I think in the West in terms of the support that young people or communities are given, those conversations aren't necessarily there. And I think rural communities don't have facilities and resources to be able to do that, so people turn, definitely turn, to social media.”

2.5 External influence from state and non-state actors

In the course of the collapse of Soviet Union and the war in BiH, actors from Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states have delivered humanitarian aid but also exerted an ideological influence. Consequently, a crisis of Islamic identity emerged: During the period of socialist Yugoslavia, most people were “cultural Muslims”, they were living in a very secular fashion, women mostly did not wear headscarves, and their religious practice was coloured by and intertwined with other non-Islamic traditions.

In the midst of this very limited theological knowledge, influence from Saudi-Arabia resulted in the questioning of traditional religious behaviour, causing a crisis of Muslim identity. Foremost the younger generation was impacted by Saudi-Arabian influence and this caused a clash between the generations.

Influence by Saudi Arabia was exerted mainly through two channels. On the one hand, they provided financial assistance, and on the other hand they picked charismatic personalities as propagators who were invited to study in Saudi Arabia and questioned the existing Islamic structures in BiH after their return. Especially the younger generation was susceptible to such influences, and puritanical Islamic narratives were disseminated through media such as CDs, MP3s and emerging messaging services on the internet.

Influence from such actors exists nowadays, but is much less prominent than during the 1990s and 2000s. The impact is identified as marginal by one interviewee as the third and fourth generations of Bosniaks who were born and grew up in Germany show much less interest in radical narratives of Islam and are socialised foremost in the context of mainstream German society.

Many Palestinians in France and Denmark register outside or on the fringes of militant structures. Palestinian engagement is not unified but fragmented. A decline in the defense of the PLO and a rise in the popularity of Islamist organisations can be observed. This leads to repercussions due to the lack of agreement and coordination and increase in demands. The Palestine mission in France does not encourage the emergence of strong communities and has difficult relations with some. Influence from state and non-state actors was fluctuating during interviews and it is reflected in the speech on KSA or Qatar.

In the case of Amazigh in Spain the main external influence remarked was the role of social media and Satellite TV in spreading a vision that respondents would not consider originally theirs. For example, they remarked how in Europe most Amazigh women started following Salafi practices in their daily religious life, when this was not a thing back home in Morocco. There is a general tendency to prove who the purest Muslim is, since some respondents remark how they are reprimanded by family members on things they have always done that now might be *haram* according to these Saudi preachers.

Furthermore, some respondents remarked the way in which non-governmental organisations coming from the Gulf and working in Europe hide certain political agendas that favor Jihadi-Salafism. Some explained how in certain town markets, organisations that are supposed to support Palestinian refugees or other Muslim victims, are actually collecting money for other uses and trying to spread their version of Islam amongst women that go to the market.

2.6 Linkages with Foreign Terrorist Fighters or other radicalised persons

According to Mendelsohn, the analysis of the phenomenon of "foreign fighters" should not be limited to the current version of individual Muslims who are classified at jihadist terrorist organisations around the world. "Foreign fighters" have historically taken part in conflicts based on their choice of nationality, religious identity, but also ideology. To support this approach, it focuses on two reference

cases for the emergence of "foreign fighters" in the modern world: a) the Spanish Civil War and b) the 1948 Arab-Israeli War (Mendelsohn, 2011).

The strategic choice of using "foreign fighters" was expected to be a priority for globalised terrorist organisations in the form of networks. States find it difficult to enter the process of systematically exploiting the "foreign" factor because of its unpredictable and differentiated nature, but also the increased costs and time that would be required for their training and integration into the organised military formations of the states. In contrast, "foreign fighters" are found mainly in asymmetric conflicts in which at least one side is a non-state actor and usually a revolutionary force. In these cases, where conflicts take place with surprise attacks and small arms, the usefulness of volunteers, even with limited training and combat experience, is clearly greater. The current form of Islamist "foreign fighters" stems from a similar process of revolutionary action, the Afghan resistance to the Soviets in the 1980s (Burke, 2003).

Apparently, Islamist "foreign fighters" did not appear for the first time in the war zones of Syria and Iraq. On the contrary, from the period of Afghanistan's resistance to the Soviets onwards, we are talking about a phenomenon that has been evolving over time. What draws the spotlight in the case of the "foreign fighters" who have joined ISIS is their widespread use on the battlefield, a point that differentiates them significantly from their different uses by Islamist organisations in the past. However, in order to fully approach this phenomenon, we must take into account Mendelsohn's observation of its multidimensional nature: "A life cycle that starts when an individual begins to think about joining a conflict taking place in a foreign country, continues with his participation in the battle and ends with his actions when he leaves the battlefields" (Mendelsohn, 2011).

This observation, based on his thorough research into the phenomenon of Islamist "foreign fighters", puts an important parameter for the systematic study and analysis of dangers by ISIS fighters. If we exceed the initial surprise by the number of "foreign fighters", and especially that of Europeans, we will find that these people are potential multipliers of violence when they leave the battlefields. Veteran jihadists, equipped with practical knowledge of warfare, training, recruitment, use of the media and, in particular, social media for the transmission of propaganda, and the manufacture of explosives, in order to carry the field of conflict back in their homelands (Mendelsohn, 2011).

Another important dimension is the evolutionary nature of the role and influence of "foreign fighters". Trends in the development of the phenomenon are closely linked to variables such as the evolution of technology, social norms, the political atmosphere and the prevailing dogmas for dealing with and preventing terrorist action. Their role, as confirmed by the developments themselves, is closely linked to the changes in global Islamist terrorism, especially since the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

Iraq is the turning point in the development of both global jihadism and the phenomenon of "foreign fighters". It is worth noting that the presence of US troops in Iraq has created a reverse momentum of "foreignness" for radicalised Islamists worldwide. The "foreign fighters" who wanted to fight in Iraq perceived the Americans as "foreign" invaders. Therefore, the motive for their movement was not the battle in a foreign homeland, but the defense of their historic homeland by the invaders (Hegghammer, 2006).

The difference between the traditional "foreign fighters" and the "foreign fighters" of the younger generation is another important point. The first generation of Islamist "foreign fighters" focuses on the implications of their involvement in guerrilla warfare in the context of a particular conflict, while the second sees the destination of the battle as a mean of sacrifice and action, as tools for the violent transfer of political incentives. In this case, we can speak of a substantial shift from the battlefield as a final destination to the battlefield as part of a broader process of violent radicalisation.

Stephanie Kaplan argues that the analysis of the phenomenon of "foreign fighters" should be done at three levels which correspond to the phases of the life cycle of the fighters. In the first phase, that of pre-transition on the battlefield, the emphasis is on the motivations, which are primarily ideological, on the factors and people who shape the final choice of the transition, but also the transformation from 'sympathiser' to 'fighter' (Kaplan, 2009). In the second phase, in the war phase, the questions concern their training, their operational roles and their general involvement in the armed conflict. The analysis of the third and final phase of the life of the "foreign fighter", of the post-conflict period, is related to his subsequent action, from the moment he leaves the battlefield (Mendelsohn, 2011).

Mendelsohn identifies a number of areas in which the evolution of the phenomenon of Islamist "foreign fighters" needs to be analysed in order to be able to design effective prevention and response policies:

Their place in the war hierarchy and on the battlefields. It is difficult for "foreign fighters", especially for Westerners, to adapt effectively to battle tactics, but also to the wider culture of the area where they have gone. There are few cases where Western "foreign fighters" have managed, mainly thanks to some of their special abilities, to occupy a distinct position on the battlefield and in the action of organisations. Typical cases are the Jihadi John or Mohammed Emwazi in ISIS and Omar Hammami, also known as Abu Mansoor al-Amriki, a young "foreign fighter" from Alabama who played a leading role in al-Shabaab in Somalia (Roggion, 2013).

Utilising them as terrorists and planners of terrorist attacks. An important parameter is the use, mainly of Western "fighters", and especially of women and minors, as "fighters", not in the traditional sense of the word, but as terrorists or planners and supporters of terrorist attacks. There is a distinction here between those who are considered consumables and are used as suicide bombers and those who are trained to carry out major attacks, such as 9/11 and attacks on European capitals, without exposing themselves to imminent danger. In these cases, we are talking mainly about "foreign fighters" of Al Qaeda who returned and used their European passports as a comparative advantage.

Utilising them as carriers of knowledge. One of the most effective functions of "foreign fighters" who have left the battlefields is to diffuse and transfer their operational knowledge. Typical cases are the transfer of knowledge from Iraq to Afghanistan and Pakistan initially, but also to Somalia, Algeria, Yemen and Libya later.

Utilising them as recruiters. In the 1990s, "foreign fighters" who returned home or simply left the battle became the most effective second-generation conscripts to have fought in Iraq and Afghanistan in the early 21st century. These former "fighters" experienced in propaganda have a comparative advantage in approaching young, excluded and angry people, whom they can radicalise and turn into "foreign fighters" using their personal stories-experiences.

Their utilisation for the media. One area in which "foreign fighters", especially Westerners, are being exploited is in the image game and in the creation of media material - an important part of Islamic State propaganda. Their participation is multifaceted and ranges from the preparation of statements and messages and the production of audiovisual material to the translation of messages into English and other languages, as well as their participation in videos in order to reinforce propaganda and fear.

ISIS focused their recruitment strategy on vulnerable individuals, a shift in recruiting pool compared to Al Qaida. ISIS recruited foreign fighters in the milieu of petty criminals, which entails advantages for both sides: the recruits receive absolution for their previous life and the recruiting violent extremist organisation gets people with capabilities that are relevant for their purposes, such as burgling, handling weapons and even explosives. Additionally, the recruits know how to hide in the "underground".

In contrast, ideologically radicalised individuals can be spotted easily by security agencies.

“Interviews with members of security agencies have shown that some individuals with a criminal record in Germany who associated with ISIS’s network and went to Syria as foreign fighters had a family background originating from the Western Balkans, sometimes through one parent or both parents, but this background was not decisive for recruitment.”

Additionally, individuals with a criminal record who are recruited as foreign fighters are more interesting for organised crime organisations after returning from their Jihadist activities abroad, as they often passed training camps and obtained important capabilities to execute criminal activities successfully.

Members of the Muslim Diaspora communities in Ireland who went to fight as FTF’S were second generation migrants and refugees, so it was stressed as a generational issue. Furthermore, the role of war veterans and solidarity was stressed as important factors particularly in meeting offline.

“I think those who are veterans do more offline [radicalisation]. Okay. It's not because there's too old because most of them are under 50, under 45. But there's only so much you can do online you have bonds, and fraternities, and belonging and co-victimisation plays a role. So shared experiences of war bring people together.”

Connections with FTF’s or radicalised persons were mentioned by some interviewees. They present many enrolled youths in ISIS in spite of themselves, they went for humanitarian work and saw themselves blocked there.

Some respondents remarked having had connections with radicalised individuals. One respondent explained the case of a friend from Morocco who experienced a process of radicalisation in the circles of a mosque in France. According to her, he let himself be influenced because he was young, alone, he was feeling lost in a different country, and was in search for references. Another case reported involved a young Moroccan immigrant who arrived in Spain as a child and went through a lot of trouble in order to find his place in Spanish society. He reportedly suffered from discrimination and lost all hope in staying, so he decided to go to Syria and join ISIS. He died in the war.

Finally, for the Muslim Diaspora communities in Greece the risk of possible exploitation of migration flows from Foreign Terrorist Fighters was important. The risk was bigger during the refugee-migration crisis, due to the influx of the arrivals. Of great importance are children/youth returnees from ISIS (people who travelled to fight for ISIS in Syria) that could use the refugees/migrants flows in Greece. These people suffered strong paramilitary training, have been involved in murders, in-battle/terrorist attacks and they are victims of violence and propaganda—facts that if combined with loss of hope could lead to a new circle of violence.

3 Resilience factors

This section outlines key findings with respect to the resilient factors. According to the literature, the aim of protective interventions was to encouraging community and religious leaders to take steps to monitor and counter radicalisation processes within their communities (Whine, 2009). Curtis & Jaine (2012) highlight arguments that Diasporas should be viewed not solely in terms of potential social problems but rather as important resources and ideal subjects for initiatives in relationship building. Ranstorp & Hyllengren (2013) emphasise that women can play an important role in preventing extremism. They argue that Muslim women should not be seen as silent victims, but rather as potential influential advocates of anti-extremist measures. Finally, some experts emphasise the importance of

developing credible counter narratives to those of radical and extremist groups (Schmid, 2013; Parent & Ellis, 2013).

The outcome of this research was the development of the concept of resilient communities as the main driver for prevention of radicalisation leading to violent extremism within diaspora communities. Resilience refers to the process of overcoming the negative effects of risk exposure, coping successfully with traumatic experiences, and avoiding the negative trajectories associated with risks (Fergus-Zimmerman, 2005). Researchers have identified three models of resilience—compensatory, protective, and challenge—that explain how promotive factors operate to alter the trajectory from risk exposure to negative outcome (Fergus-Zimmerman, 2005). A compensatory model is defined when a promotive factor counteracts or operates in an opposite direction of a risk factor. A compensatory model therefore involves a direct effect of a promotive factor on an outcome. Another model of resilience is the protective factor model. In this model, assets or resources moderate or reduce the effects of a risk on a negative outcome. A third model of resilience is the challenge model. In this model, the association between a risk factor and an outcome is curvilinear. This suggests that exposure to low levels and high levels of a risk factor are associated with negative outcomes, but moderate levels of the risk are related to less negative (or positive) outcomes.

Social connection is at the heart of resilient communities and suggests that any strategy to increase community resilience must both harness and enhance existing social connections while endeavouring to not damage or diminish them. (Ellis- Abdi, 2017). Three types of social connections are critical to a resilient community in relation to violent extremism (Ellis- Abdi, 2017). First, social connection within and between communities specifically mitigate risk factors associated with violent extremism; within communities refers to individuals that share similar social identities (termed social bonding), and between communities refers to groups composed of individuals with diverse social identities but who share a common sense of community in some other way (termed social bridging). Second, the role of social connection between communities and institutions or governing bodies (termed social linking) provides an opportunity for addressing social injustice and building structures for intervention with youth who begin down that path. Finally, CBPR, a model of community engagement and partnership in research, provides a road map for how to enhance these types of social connection and build resilient communities (Ellis- Abdi, 2017).

RAN (2018) provides a set of protective factors as part of the general resilience to violent extremism concept:

1. To protect against political alienation, focus on democratic citizenship.
2. To protect against apocalyptic ideology, offer religious knowledge.
3. To protect against identity crises, stimulate personal participation.
4. To protect against the pull of the extremist milieu, provide a warm and/or supported family environment.
5. To help individuals resist negative influences from friendship and kinship, cultivate autonomy and self-esteem.
6. To protect from (feelings of) exclusion, enhance social coping skills (RAN 2018).

3.1 Successful integration – engagement and cooperation between the host country and the communities

Successful integration was highlighted as the primary condition for a resilient community. Cooperating with other initiatives and organisations as well as state institutions is an important factor. Ireland as a host country has initiated various engagement programmes with different communities to develop resilience against radicalisation. Apart from engagement programmes there have been some integration programmes especially devised after international events such as the 9/11 attacks, i.e. the “Garda Diversity” programme. One example from Germany is visiting schools of community children

to introduce the community and to convey to the children and teachers that representatives of Islamic congregations can function as positive role models. Religious responsibility is understood also as societal responsibility. For diaspora communities in Spain the key is in finding a balance between the knowledge of the local culture and the culture of origin. In this sense, some respondents participated in activities within the Erasmus+ programme. They consider intercultural exchanges and having experiences in other cities and countries as something positive for the change of mentalities that can be linked to better integration.

In Greece, the Council of Europe and the Greek Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs run a programme, through which refugees can apply for a document called the “European Qualifications Passport for Refugees”. The programme started in 2017 and contributes to helping refugees who have lost the documents to certify their qualifications. After the investigation of the refugees by a council, the Greek authorities give them a certification that proves their higher education qualifications, work experience and language proficiency. It is a programme that promotes their professional and social integration.

Furthermore, the role of education in general is very important for integration. In details, the promotion of school activities and courses that spread the principles of Human Rights and the cultural and religious respect. The schools in Greece have some courses in this direction: “Environmental Education”, “Social and Political Education”, “Sexuality Education”, “Health Education” etc. More specifically: the main courses in the schools’ programmes “Modern Greek” and “Greek Literature” include sections on the respect of distinctness and democratic values. Moreover, the English course has cultural sections. However the most important change has been done in the “Religious Education”: the schools have passed from a dogma dissemination approach to a comparative and historical approach of dogmas. The projects in Greek schools highlight the intercultural element and the democratic dialogue (role playing, simulation of the Greek parliament, debates, artistic activities with theatrical productions that empower the democratic interaction etc.)

A successful example of integration is the Palestinian community in France. The Palestinian community in France is clearly integrated, if not in some practices, merged; this is due to the weakness of the community structure and its institution. Palestinians in France are part of a Palestinian activism, and maintain a special link to their identity. The community has spared no effort to establish an effective network to help build and organise a competent and active Palestinian and Arab community. The diaspora organisations are governed by members of the Palestinian Diaspora and are geared towards the Diaspora. The solidarity network associations are governed by French activists.

It is important to highlight that many initiatives and projects are initiated by German and Greek state and non-state institutions that target the integration of Muslim communities and prevention of radicalisation (i.e. the intercultural training of public servants in Greece), but often these projects are developed and implemented in an ad-hoc fashion and lack a long-term perspective.

3.2 Community cohesion programmes linked with prevention of radicalisation initiatives

Increased social (community) cohesion builds relationships and reduces the marginalisation that can be a potential driver of VE (Mitchell, 2018). Haider (2009: 11) explains the logic behind community-led approaches to integration: “The assumption is that participation in common projects, such as service delivery, livelihood and community development projects, and structured interaction among previously divided communities will help to reframe perceptions of the ‘other’, dispel negative myths and facilitate changes in perceptions and attitudes.”

In Ireland, some Community Cohesion Programs have been initiated by the government and civil society organisations. These programmes have aimed at building collective community resilience against radicalisation. One example is “National Youth Council of Ireland”. The intervention was crucial and creates community cohesion spaces that break the silencing process of individuals, which is a driver for behaviours that might lead to radicalisation and extremism.

Another example is coming from the Bosnian Diaspora community in Germany. During the war, the Bosniak communities’ main activities were focused on supporting its community members in coping with the difficult circumstances in Germany and back in BiH. The congregations were active in additional fields apart from the organisation of common religious practice. These consisted in practically supporting people who arrived as war refugees in Germany, provide spiritual welfare to process trauma, and to provide economic support and helped to organise administrative processes in the new country. Community members gathered on the weekends to spend time together, receive Islamic religious education and tutoring as well as supplementary Bosnian school education.

While challenges and needs of community members changed since the 1990s and 2000s, many members of the Bosniak communities who experienced this kind of support during this time are now engaged in the community and working to pass on this positive experience to the next generations. The experience of affirmation and providing positive role models especially for young people is carried on for the next generation. By now, the third and fourth generations of Bosniak individuals growing up in Germany are much better educated and integrated in German society than the older generations.

Through the organisation of community gatherings on weekends, cultural events such as literary evenings in addition to well-prepared Friday prayers, religion classes and Bosnian language classes, young community members are supported in positively affirming their Bosniak origins and embracing their identity as multi-dimensional. It is expected that better knowledge about Bosniak culture prevents the eruption of identity crises in individuals and supports them to confront discriminating labelling. Part of this is also the establishment of a positive image of the communities in the public through collaboration with the media so that younger generations identify positively with these spaces and continue to consider them parts of their lives in Germany.

In Spain, the members of the Amazigh Diaspora in some way participate in organising activities that promote Amazigh culture and intercultural dialogue with the local community. Although, they remark how important it is to expand the meeting spaces between the Spanish and Amazigh communities, mainly through culture and art. For the members of the Amazigh Diaspora the possibility of participating in activism and cultural-promotion activities for the Amazigh community has prevented those in vulnerable situations to lose hope or recur to extremisms.

One example was the Herak movement which supports Rifian activists who come to Spain escaping the brutality of the Moroccan government. Furthermore, the movement is working on spreading awareness on the situation in the Moroccan Riff around Europe and denouncing Human Rights violations. As part of this, the organisation won the Sakharov Prize for 2020. Another example is mentorship of unaccompanied minor migrants in the Basque Region. The project involves helping these minors when they arrive and need help navigating a new language and culture. Most importantly, it brings in former unaccompanied minors who have managed to study, find a job and reach their expectations to become role models and inspire others.

Social cohesion is also a strategic objective of the “Aarhus Model” in Denmark. Local police officers, educators, social workers, and mental health professionals, work together to engage vulnerable individuals. Young people on the path to radicalisation to violence are partnered with mentors who have faced similar challenges. This programme, originally designed to deal with violent right-wing extremists, expanded its focus after the rise of al-Qaida and ISIS.

In the case of Greece, participation of first-line practitioners in educational trainings, in raising awareness activities, in networks like RAN (Radicalisation Awareness Network), their cooperation with relevant professionals such as psychologists and social workers are key elements in the prevention (early identification of signs of radicalisation, adjusted approach of radicalised youth and minors). Another example is the programme “Protecting children in the context of the Refugee and Migrant Crisis in Europe”, to ensure that refugee and migrant children are provided with education. Education is also an important factor to promote social cohesion and especially for the most vulnerable youngsters and refugees. The integration of these groups is achieved by: special reception classrooms, enhancing courses to the vulnerable students so that they can deeply study the Greek language as a second language, special evening reception classrooms inside the Greek schools for young refugees that live in hotspots (the goal is the integration of these children into the typical morning classrooms).

3.3 Pluralistic inter-religion dialogue and initiatives to avoid the stigmatisation and separation of Islam from other religions

For diaspora communities in Germany inter-religious dialogue is considered important but in order to be fruitful, it needs to be genuine and exceed purely formalistic exchange. Interreligious dialogue is a demanding practice as it entails pushing the frontier of own convictions and trust-building. “It can be useful to start to gather around topics of common interest from the perspective of different world views, such as the environment”. While friendly and honest dialogue with German institutions is more advanced, for the different religious communities with Western Balkan origin, dialogue remains a severe challenge in the face of the recent experience with violent conflict between these communities in the region.

For the Muslim diaspora communities in Ireland, inter-religious dialogue is an important factor/initiative for community resilience. For example, the Irish Muslim Peace and Integration Council challenges divisions theologically. The practice of inter-religious dialogue helps to bridge the gap between Irishness and being a Muslim in Ireland. The voices of other faith leaders empower their voices as it shows a way of co-existing in harmony. Another example is coming from the Shia Community Centre which takes rigorous efforts in holding various activities related to interfaith dialogue. One activity is the “Understanding Islam” initiative which introduces Islam to people from other faiths, Garda and other officials.

For diaspora communities in Spain, inter-religion dialogue is very important. The members of the community note how getting to know more about the other helps to build understanding and could contribute to the prevention of violent extremism. However, they remark how it is normally the migrant community that makes the effort to get to know the local community. This does not happen the other way round. It was remarked from the city of Melilla (which is around 55% Amazigh/Muslim) that not even in these circumstances can you find a Spanish person who learns a word in Amazigh or has an interest to understand a bit more about the culture and religion of more than half of the population in the area. Thus, inter-cultural initiatives cannot work unless there are actual changes in the attitude of local Spanish communities towards other cultures and languages.

In Greece, over 100 schools are participating in a European network of schools under UNESCO. Many UNESCO activities are held in classrooms. Additionally, many teachers that are chosen taking into consideration qualitative criteria, participate in ERASMUS+ activities abroad in order to become multipliers of best practices after their return. Apart from this, an important initiative is the intercultural training and awareness raising programme. The aim of this programme is to improve the knowledge and the understanding of police officers for migrants and different cultures, to develop communication skills in a multicultural environment and management of fragmented communications, to promote the respect for human rights and cultural differentiations, to empower police officers and other civil servants for effective engagement in multicultural workflow and combating discrimination,

to raise the awareness for the use of intercultural communication and intercultural dialogue in Law enforcement tasks, to prevent and resolve cultural crises and to improve the understanding for the “Other” and of self- knowledge and critical thinking and abolition of stereotypes and prejudices.

3.4 Cooperation with the communities and engagement of credible and moderate voices

Cooperation of communities was a sub-factor that emerged during the discussion of integration programs in Ireland. A very specific example is the training programme which is called “Safe Haven” that Dublin City Interfaith Forum runs. “Safe Haven” is an attempt to amplify the credible voices as it works with religious leaders and members from different faith communities, and specifically addressing the issue of religiously motivated hate crime. The co-operation with the communities and attempts like Safe Haven also provide a resilient ground of enquiry to understand the various factors of radicalisation and equips the participant with skills on how to respond to it. “Safe Haven” also has a reporting mechanism at record and provides victim support that the victims require.

In Germany, the role of the Imam is crucial for the interaction of Muslim communities with the government and other state and non-state institutions. In each Islamic congregation, the Imam is the most important person as he interprets the faith. How this interpretation is coloured influences the religious practice and belief system of the members of the congregation. The Imam has three areas of responsibility: giving Friday sermons, leading prayer and teaching religion. The variables in these roles of responsibility are: How to convey religion to the next generation, how to convey religious practice to the community and how to exert an exemplary role. Depending on how the Imam executes these roles, he has a lot of leeway. The Imam is the key religious authority, impacting the lived religious practice by the community members. Therefore, education of the Imam is key to prevent radicalisation in diaspora communities. Profound theological education allows the Imam to be able to counter radicalising narratives from the theological angle. As such, a well-educated Imam is key to preventing radicalisation of members of his congregation.

For the Palestinian Diaspora community in Denmark the most important channel for communication is the political participation at different governmental levels. For example, a member of the Palestinian Diaspora founded the New Alliance Party in May 2007, when he became the first leader of a Danish party of foreign origin. Members of the Palestinian Diaspora community are elected to different municipal councils in Denmark (i.e. Aarhus, Baliroupe etc.).

3.5 Counter narratives, use of social media

The role of media has been seen as a very important resilience factor in Ireland as media reporting has been perceived as responsible. Counter narratives in Ireland have greatly challenged stereotypes and prejudice that people might have about different people within society, particularly when there is ignorance or a lack of understanding. One example is the *Hijab on Hatricks*, a programme for young Muslim women who play football. It was set up in 2014 “to encourage young Muslim women to play football after FIFA had lifted the ban on the hijab”. This counter narrative also got a lot of media attention and inspired RTE to create a radio drama about “Being Muslim in Ireland”. Also, counter narratives play a crucial role for the resilience in the lives of people who are cognitively vulnerable towards radicalisation. One example in the Irish context was the “Muslim sisters of Eire” who sends the message that “if you are young and want to fight in Syria, come feed the homeless and there is no need to take a gun to help”.

In the case of Germany, counter narratives need to work against strict friend-foe worldviews, and teach the value of heterogeneity and multi-perspective approaches. In times of the pandemic specifically, sermons and messages have been transported online. But content in Bosnian language is not as

interesting for the younger generation and older volunteer community workers are often not equipped to do professional social media outreach. This is nevertheless considered as a decisive step in preventing the younger generations from detaching from the community, as counter narratives need to be target group specific.

For the diaspora communities in Spain social media plays a positive role for resilience. In this way, the social media networks created by Amazighs in Morocco and in the Diaspora were important in order to get to know about the reality of their lives in Morocco and in the Diaspora. Most importantly, these networks have also created a space to share historical and cultural findings that Amazigh individuals have made personally. For example, they share family stories, try to re-create history from the point of view of the Amazigh people (instead of the Moroccan or European point of view), etc. This has allowed them to find a source of knowledge about their own culture and identity through social media. For the diaspora communities in Greece “counter narratives” initiatives are considered important and must start from school in a bottom-up approach in order for extreme ideologies to be limited. In this direction, awareness raising activities could be valuable for “bringing back” in the healthy part of society, youth and minors at risk. Promotion of school activities and courses that spread the principles of respect for Human Rights is done by the Ministry of Education.

4 Gender

In both risk and resilient factors, the PAVE fieldwork research with Diaspora communities in European countries shows that communities recognise that women play an essential role in the development of resilience initiatives and prevention and de-radicalisation initiatives. A community that promotes tolerance and inclusivity, and reflects norms of gender equality, is stronger and less vulnerable to violent extremism. Not only does women’s active participation in a Diaspora community – formally or informally – strengthen its fabric, women themselves are among the most powerful voices of prevention. Women can, uniquely, help build the social cohesion, sense of belonging, and self-esteem that youth might need to resist the appeal of a violent group. Community engagement in CVE requires the participation of women to be successful.

5 Conclusions

Identity crisis has been identified as one the most important risk factors that could lead to violent extremism. In many of the terrorist attacks in different EU countries during the last years, we observed the engagement of young second or third generation of immigrants as perpetrators. Among the different stories and backgrounds of those individuals we can emphasise the issue of identity crisis and mainly the non-belonging phenomenon. An important form of identity crisis is when someone has difficulties in identifying oneself in different spaces (i.e. the Amazigh Diaspora community in Spain). The Identity crisis of youngsters plays a crucial role as a risk factor that could lead to radicalisation. This usually is linked with the essence of ‘lack of belonging’, an important factor when there is a situation of ‘dual identity’ (i.e. Muslim minorities in Ireland).

A really important risk factor stems from the different characteristics of the new generation of immigrants and mainly refugees. The different types of migration influence the integration process of these individuals. Individuals who left their country involuntarily as refugees and carry the trauma of war and flight are generally more vulnerable mentally, economically and with regards to their legal status (i.e. the Bosniak community in Germany). The same perception derives also from the new generation of migrants and refugees in Ireland, with many new people arrived from war-torn places with deep sectarian divisions, which could be seen as a factor that is relevant for the integration trajectory.

The issue of religion leaders is also important for the Muslim communities in Ireland. The factor of religion is generally linked with successful integration, since the absence of a legitimate and credible representative body for the Muslim community and the numerous unofficial mosques (i.e. in Greece) are conditions that lead to poor integration and risks for radicalisation. The separation of religion from culture of origin that could lead Muslim diaspora communities to identify themselves as members of the global Islamic community (Ummah) was also a very important evidence in the research with different diaspora communities. (i.e. Amazigh community in Spain).

The final factor that is very important for the identity crisis is discrimination (whether real or perceived), the feeling of stigmatisation and marginalisation. For some communities (i.e. in Greece), an important dimension was the economic crisis and the marginalisation of big parts of the population. Vulnerability is also crucial for identity crisis and exploitation to radicalisation. Finally, instances of Islamophobia linked with discrimination and stigmatisation are integral parts of the risk situation (i.e. in Germany and Ireland).

Another source of diaspora communities' radicalisation is Western foreign policy, especially Western interventions in predominantly Muslim countries. For Bosniak Diaspora communities in Germany the role of the West in the war is an important parameter (it was perceived as unjust). In general, extremist propaganda displays the war in Bosnia as an attack by the West on the Islamic world, thereby establishing a direct connection to Islamist ideology in the interpretation of the conflict. Other fields of EU policy, such as the freedom of movement from third countries, was also highlighted as a factor that creates the perception for a negative role of Western policies (Amazigh community in Spain). For the Palestinian Diaspora communities in France and Denmark the support of Israel from the west is a very important factor that could produce radicalisation. Finally, the war in Syria was highlighted as the most important turning point.

Engagement by state and non-state organisations in the home country can play a role in the position of diaspora groups. In some countries political Islam has tended to operate through non-violent political channels and to veer away from intolerant extremism. From the point of view of the Bosniak Diaspora Community in Germany two types of networks (physical and war veterans networks) are the main important non-state actors in terms of linkages and engagement with the home country. German Salafi-Jihadist organisations like "The True Religion" (*Die wahre Religion*) and successor organisations are well connected with their counterparts in BiH and there is a lot of exchange between these German-based organisations and Jihadi networks located in the Western Balkans. For Muslim Diaspora communities in Ireland the issue of imams and mosques is the most important domain where we can identify engagement with state and non-state actors from home countries. Some communities (such as Bosnian) bring their religious interpretations/practices/worldview and have their own mosques/places of prayer. For the Palestinian Diaspora communities in France and Denmark the linkages with the home country is part of their identity and something really important for their high level of politicisation. A considerable number of Palestinians see themselves and the Diaspora as part of a resistance strategy against Israel.

Jihadist propaganda is very prominently disseminated via the internet and is also identified as a space where the communities still cannot compete. Nowadays, the most relevant source of information is the internet and social media. Radicalisation entrepreneurs are targeting exactly these individuals who are looking for answers through propaganda online. There are two to three "star preachers" in BiH who disseminate their radical sermons and messages online via videos and texts. Via the internet, this content is directly accessible to members of the diaspora. For Muslim Diaspora communities in Greece and Spain cyberspace and especially social media plays an important role in terms of networking, recruitment and vulnerability in propaganda. Many interviewees from the Palestinian Diaspora in France and Denmark describe the internet as a main factor of radicalisation, mainly through the spread of different negative images from Islam and Muslims.

In the course of the collapse of the Soviet Union and the war in BiH, actors from Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states have delivered humanitarian aid but also exerted an ideological influence. Consequently, a crisis of Islamic identity emerged. Influence by third countries was exerted mainly through two channels. On the one hand, they provided financial assistance, and on the other hand they picked charismatic personalities as propagators who were invited to study in Saudi Arabia and questioned the existing Islamic structures. Many Palestinians in France and Denmark register outside or on the fringes of militant structures. Palestinian engagement is not unified but fragmented. A decline in the defense of the PLO and a rise in the popularity of Islamist organisations was observed. In the case of Amazigh communities in Spain, the role of social media and Satellite TV was named the main external influence. Furthermore, non-governmental organisations coming from the Gulf and working in Europe hide certain political agendas that favour Salafi-Jihadism.

ISIS focused their recruitment strategy on vulnerable individuals, a shift in the recruiting pool compared to Al Qaida. ISIS recruited foreign fighters in the milieu of petty criminals, which entails advantages for both sides. Individuals with a criminal record who are recruited as foreign fighters are more interesting for organised crime organisations after returning from their Jihadist activities abroad, as they often passed training camps and obtained important capabilities to execute criminal activities successfully. Members of the Muslim diaspora communities in Ireland who went to fight as FTF'S were second generation migrants and refugees, so it was stressed as a generational issue. Furthermore, the role of war veterans and solidarity was stressed as an important factor and particularly in meeting offline. Finally, for the Muslim Diaspora communities in Greece, the risk of possible exploitation of migration flows by Foreign Fighters was important. The risk was bigger during the refugee-migration crisis, due to the big influx of the arrivals.

Successful integration was highlighted as the primary condition for a resilient community. Cooperating with other initiatives and organisations as well as state institutions is an important factor. Furthermore, the role of education in general is very important for integration. In details, the promotion of school activities and courses that spread the principles of Human Rights and cultural and religious respect. Another important factor that can be linked to better integration is intercultural exchanges and experiences in other cities and countries. Some examples are the visiting schools in Germany and the "Garda Diversity" program in Ireland and the "European Qualifications Passport for Refugees". Another form of integration is the social and political activism by the Palestinian Diaspora in France, which represents a good resilience example.

Increased social (community) cohesion builds relationships and reduces the marginalisation that can be a potential driver of violent extremism. Community Cohesion Programmes have been initiated by the government and civil society organisations in European countries. These programmes have aimed at building collective community resilience against radicalisation. One example is "National Youth Council of Ireland" or activities that promote Amazigh culture and intercultural dialogue with the local community in Spain, mainly through culture and art. An important part of social cohesion is the support of vulnerable population and especially refugees and unaccompanied minors. One example is the support of Bosnian refugees in Germany, including spiritual welfare to process trauma, economic support and administrative legal assistance. Apart from this, Community members gathered on the weekends to spend time together, receive Islamic religious education and tutoring as well as supplementary Bosnian school education. Another example is mentorship of unaccompanied minor migrants in the Basque Region and "Protecting children in the context of the Refugee and Migrant Crisis in Europe" in Greece. The engagement of vulnerable individuals is also an integral part of the "Aarhus Model" in Denmark. Finally, education is also an important factor to promote social cohesion and especially for the most vulnerable youngsters and refugees.

For the Muslim Diaspora communities the inter- religious dialogue is an important factor/ initiative for community resilience. For example, the Irish Muslim Peace and Integration Council challenges divisions theologically. Inter- religion dialogue is also part of Intercultural training and awareness raising

programmes. One example from Greece is the intercultural training for police officers and public servants. The aim of this programme is to improve the knowledge and the understanding of police officers for migrants and different cultures, to develop communication skills in a multicultural environment and management of fragmented communications and to promote the respect for human rights and cultural and religion differentiations.

Cooperation of communities was a sub factor that emerged during the field research with Diaspora communities in Europe. A very specific example is the training programme which is called “Safe Haven” that Dublin City Interfaith Forum runs. In Germany, the role of the imam is crucial for the interaction of Muslim communities with the government and other state and non-state institutions. Furthermore, for Palestinians Diaspora community in Denmark the most important channel for communication is the political participation at different governmental level.

The role of the media has been seen as very important resilience factor in Ireland as media reporting has been perceived as responsible. Counter narratives in Ireland have greatly challenged stereotypes and prejudice that people might have about different people within society, particularly when there is ignorance or a lack of understanding. One example is the *Hijab on Hatricks*, a programme supporting young Muslim women to play football. In the case of Germany, counter narratives need to work against strict friend-foe worldviews, and teach the value of heterogeneity and multi-perspective approaches. For the diaspora communities in Spain, social media plays a positive role for resilience. The social media networks created by Amazighs in Morocco and in the Diaspora were important in order to get to know about the reality of their lives in Morocco and in the Diaspora. Finally, for the diaspora communities in Greece, “counter narratives” initiatives are considered important and must start from school in a bottom-up approach in order for extreme ideologies to be limited.

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