

# CHARLES UNIVERSITY

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

Institute of Political Studies

Department of Security Studies

**Master's Thesis**



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**Extremism-countering Security Measures in Bosnia-Herzegovina:  
Room for Improvement?**

Master's Thesis

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Study programme: Security Studies

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Year of the Defence: 2018

## **Declaration**

1. I hereby declare that I have compiled this thesis using the listed literature and resources only.
2. I hereby declare that my thesis has not been used to gain any other academic title.
3. I fully agree to my work being used for study and scientific purposes.

In Prague on

Kevin Karabin

## References

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## **Abstract**

This diploma thesis' aim was to find out what are the security measures countering radicalization and extremism in Bosnia-Herzegovina and whether there is any room for improvement. Firstly, the thesis analysed several official documents related to the security of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the relevant reports of the international community, in order to review the concrete security measures and compared them with security measures, which are in effect in other European countries. This allowed the author to draw specific security recommendation for Bosnia-Herzegovina based on the best-practices from abroad. Secondly, this thesis provides the opinions of three experts on Bosnia-Herzegovina and its internal situation. The experts assessed the security situation in the country, identified the areas of security which shall be enhanced and proposed concrete measures, which could elevate the security situation in the country.

This thesis's main assumption was that the security measures currently in effect are insufficient and that there is much room for improvement. The analysis of the documents showed that there are many specific security measures, in terms of fighting radicalisation of youth, online radicalisation or religious extremism, which are used abroad, that could be implemented to Bosnia-Herzegovina to increase its overall levels of security. On the other hand, the experts expressed that the security situation is from their point of view satisfactory and what is missing is the politician's willingness and ability to move forward from populism, nationalism and inter-ethnic hatred to a more progressive political culture, dealing with what really bothers the people, increasing their low standards of living, fighting unemployment and corruption and continuing in the integration of the country – both internal and into the Euro-Atlantic organisations.

**Keywords:** Bosnia-Herzegovina, security measures, radicalization, extremism, protracted social conflict, interviews, coding

## **Abstrakt**

Cílem této diplomové práce bylo zjistit, jaké jsou bezpečnostní opatření proti radikalizaci a extremismu v Bosně a Hercegovině a zda existuje prostor pro zlepšení. Nejprve se práce zabývala několika oficiálními dokumenty vztahujícími se k bezpečnostní situaci Bosny a Hercegoviny a relevantními zprávami mezinárodního společenství s cílem přezkoumat konkrétní bezpečnostní opatření a porovnat je s bezpečnostními opatřeními, která platí v jiných evropských zemích. To umožnilo autorovi vypracovat pro Bosnu a Hercegovinu konkrétní bezpečnostní doporučení na základě osvědčených postupů ze zahraničí. Za druhé, tato práce poskytuje názory tří expertů na Bosnu a Hercegovinu a její vnitřní situaci. Odborníci posoudili bezpečnostní situaci v zemi, určili oblasti bezpečnosti, které budou posíleny, a konkrétní opatření, která by mohla zvýšit bezpečnostní situaci v zemi.

Hlavním předpokladem této práce byla skutečnost, že bezpečnostní opatření, která jsou v současné době platná, jsou nedostatečná, a proto existuje mnoho možností ke zlepšení. Analýza dokumentů ukázala, že existuje mnoho specifických bezpečnostních opatření, která se týkají boje proti radikalizaci mládeže, online radikalizaci nebo náboženskému extremismu, které jsou využívány v zahraničí a které by mohly být zavedeny do Bosny a Hercegoviny s cílem zvýšit její celkovou úroveň bezpečnosti. Na druhou stranu odborníci vyjádřili, že bezpečnostní situace je z jejich hlediska uspokojivá a chybí jen ochota a schopnost politiků přecházet z populismu, nacionalismu a interetnické nenávisti k progresivnější politické kultuře, zabývající se tím, co skutečně obtěžuje lidi, zvyšuje jejich nízkou životní úroveň, bojuje proti nezaměstnanosti a korupci a pokračuje v integraci země – a to jak uvnitř, tak i do euroatlantických organizací.

**Klíčová slova:** Bosna a Hercegovina, bezpečnostní opatření, radikalizace, extremismus, dlouhotrvající sociální konflikt, rozhovory, kódování

**Název práce:** Bezpečnostní opatření proti extrémizmu v Bosně a Hercegovině: prostor pro zlepšení?

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Finally, I would like to thank Ján Cingel' for providing his kind advice.

## **List of abbreviations**

BiH – Bosnia-Herzegovina

EU – European Union

FYROM – Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

ICTY – International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia

ISIS – Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Association

NGO – Non-Governmental Organisation

OSCE – Organisation for Security and Co-Operation in Europe

PSC – Protracted Social Conflict

UN – United Nations

UNDP – United Nations Development Programme



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## Introduction

Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH) is dealing with all the socio-economic issues which could be well expected in a country torn by a conflict and genocide only two decades ago. Persistent tensions within the society, bounded in the multi-ethnic composition of the population of Serbs, Croats and Bosnians, and the religious disparity amongst the Muslims, the Orthodox and the Catholic Christians, are still looked at with great caution. *“The 3.5 million people in Bosnia, 50 percent identify as Bosnian Muslims, 30 percent as Bosnian Serbs (predominantly Orthodox), and 15 percent as Bosnian Croats (predominantly Catholic). Bosnian Muslims—representing the largest single ethnic religious identity in the country—are believed to by and large adhere to a moderate interpretation of Islam. Nonetheless, a small contingency of Bosnian Muslims is believed to have inherited a violent interpretation of Islamic extremism from foreign terrorist fighters during the 1992-1995 Bosnian War”* (Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2016).

This is the reason why the political leaders, the NGOs, the media, the entrepreneurs, the civic society and the country’s neighbours (most notably Croatia and Serbia), as well as the international community, represented mainly by UN, NATO and EU, look at the country with a great amount of concerns and cautiousness. Also, this is the reason why all the concerned parts are interested in enhancing reconciliation in the country and thus supporting peace-keeping and peace-building even after the signing and implementation of the Dayton peace accords from 1995, which has turned Bosnia-Herzegovina into a tripartite state.

The security situation in the country, in spite of minor security breaches and attacks, seems rather stable in the past decade. However, the tensions amongst the respective members of the ethnic and religious groups and the persistency of the division amongst *the Self* and *the Other* are undeniable. This is demonstrated also on the results of a Pew Poll conducted between June 2015 – July 2016, which showed that the Orthodox, Catholic and Muslim citizens did not have any negative feelings towards each other, unless they were asked whether they would accept the other as a part of their family. The results showed that: *“only*

*42 percent of respondents accepting of Muslims and only 40 and 43 percent accepting of Orthodox Christians and Catholics, respectively” (Gardner, Evans, 2017).*

The tensions, which have remained underneath the society even after many international missions and reconciliation programs, and their possible escalation, is what worries both the domestic security experts and the international community. This also goes hand in hand with the prevention of radicalisation, which is one of the main threats stemming from the wide disparities amongst the country’s population. Thorough preventive measures should be thus placed in effect in the country.

Experts’ worries have been worsened throughout the past years by severe radicalisation, mostly among Muslims, who have massively fled the country to engage in the fighting in Iraq and Syria for the so-called Islamic State (ISIS). *“Between 900 and 1000 fighters from Western Balkan countries have travelled to Syria and Iraq between 2011 and 2016. The most active ‘exporters’ of war travelers have been from Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania, and Macedonia” (Metodieva, 2018).* These people pose threat not only before their runaway to ISIS, but also after the fall-out of the caliphate, when dozens of foreign fighters returned home to Bosnia-Herzegovina and could possibly serve as leaders to further radicalisation movements (Metodieva, 2018). It is necessary for the local authorities, the police and the international community to invest not only into preventive measures, but also into deradicalisation programs and thorough investigation and oversight of those who could after their return continue to show the marks of severe radicalisation, possibly plotting terrorist attacks. On the other hand, the Islamic radicalisation is not the only issue, which should be worrying the local authorities. The rise of nationalism and far-right movements should be monitored by the competent agencies with the same precision, as in the case of the Muslim communities.

However, as this thesis later shows, it is important not only to implement hard security measures, but also to focus on improving the socio-economic conditions of the people’s everyday lives, to tackle the sky-rocketing unemployment, to provide the people with solid education and health care and also to deal with severe levels of corruption and other political issues, which create further instabilities within the county. Unless such complex measures are

taken in effect and the people are given a sense of perspective future, the country will not be able to overbridge its conflicting past.

This thesis deals with the security situation in contemporary Bosnia-Herzegovina, focusing mostly on the security measures aimed at countering extremism, radicalisation and fostering further deradicalisation measures, in order to increase the overall levels of security in Bosnia-Herzegovina. It is the aim of this thesis to provide an overview of the complex security measures implemented to tackle extremism and radicalisation, which are currently in effect in the country, as well as to analyse similar measures, which are in effect abroad. This shall be done in order to be able to compare them and to suggest possible improvements, perhaps even outlining specific security measures that should be implemented in Bosnia-Herzegovina. In other words, this thesis aims to assess the current security measures to counter extremism and radicalisation in Bosnia-Herzegovina and to find out whether there is any space for improvement – and if so, to provide specific policy recommendations.

In order to cover these issues, this thesis asks the following research questions:

**Q1: What are the current security measures to counter extremism in Bosnia-Herzegovina?**

**Q2: To what extent can the extremism-countering measures be improved?**

**Q3: What are the specific recommendations?**

However, this thesis also seeks to take more hand-on approach, and thus the author will attempt to look for the answers to the previously stated questions also in semi-structured interviews with three respected experts on Bosnia-Herzegovina and its security implications. The experts shall provide more valuable insights into current security status of BiH and suggest further measures to be implemented to increase the levels of security. In order to be able to get the most out of these interviews, the interview will be transcribed and coded line-by-line, providing us with more profound understanding of the experts' views.

First chapter of the thesis provides a conceptualisation of most frequent theoretical terms used throughout the thesis. Second chapter provides contextual understanding of historical development in BiH shortly before the Bosnian war, its progress and aftermath. Third

chapter builds on the previous one providing overview of the security breaches that occurred in the country in the past decade considered as serious, thus getting the label “terrorist attack”; together with uncovering how the underneath tensions amongst various ethnicities and religions have broken out into instances of radicalised individuals. Fourth chapter provides a review of literature, summarising dozens of relevant academic articles, whilst also drawing out how this particular thesis could be a valuable enrichment to the stated literature. Fifth chapter grounds the research in post-structuralism, using its approach of understanding the concept in its complexity, which the Critical Security Studies provide. Moreover, this chapter finds grounding also in the Aberystwyth school and in the Edward Azar’s theory of Protracted Social Conflict. Sixth chapter summarises methodology used throughout the thesis and thoroughly explains both the process of analysing the security documents, enabling the researcher to explore the status of security measures currently in effect in BiH, as well as the process of preparing, recording, transcribing and coding the interviews. This chapter also includes formulation of hypotheses and acknowledges limits of the research. Seventh chapter provides an overview of security measures currently in effect in BiH and further explores security measures of other countries, possibly serving as an inspiration for BiH. Eighth chapter summarises results of the interviews and shows the most frequent codes developed from the process of coding. This chapter also formulates interviewees’ insight regarding security measures in effect, areas of improvement as well as suggested security measures. Final part of this thesis concludes the research, stating its objectives, research question, hypothesis, the methods that were used to answer and either validate or disprove them and summarises the results of the analysis. Finally, conclusion acknowledges the limits inherently bounded in the chosen methodological approach and suggests possible application of future researches. Conclusion is followed by an extensive bibliographical overview of all sources used. Lastly, the thesis includes three appendices – transcriptions of the interviews with experts.

This thesis aims to contribute to the field of security studies and to the topic of security in post-war BiH with a more contemporary approach, researching security measures currently in effect, comparing them with measures implemented in other European states, thus suggesting possible improvements to Bosnian security situation. Furthermore, it is also the aim

of this thesis to provide more insight from the experts that are present in Sarajevo and get the information from the first hand. This thesis thus aims to be a valuable provider of these insights via the perpetrated and coded interviews. It is the hope of the author that this could even help to encourage further studies on the topic, researching what else could be done in order to elevate the security situation in BiH and drawing out measures, that could eventually lead to increasing of the security of the people.



## 1. Conceptualisation

**Deradicalisation** – *“Deradicalisation,” refers to the process of divorcing a person, voluntarily or otherwise, from their extreme views”* (International Peace Institute, 2010, p. 2).

**Emancipation** – is defined by Ken Booth, and his definition could be molded into following: *“the securing of people from those oppressions that stop them carrying out what they would freely choose to do, compatible with the freedom of others. It provides a threefold framework for politics: a philosophical anchorage for knowledge, a theory of progress for society, and a practice of resistance against oppression”* (Booth, 2007, p. 112).

**Ethnic conflict** – *“is a conflict, in which the key issues at stake – that is, the express reason political power is being contested – involve either ethnic markers such as language or religion or the status of ethnic groups themselves”* (Kaufman, 2001, p. 17).

**Ethnic cleansing** – Definition of ethnic cleansing, which this paper adopted is defined by the United Nations as *“... a purposeful policy designed by one ethnic or religious group to remove by violent and terror-inspiring means the civilian population of another ethnic or religious group from certain geographic areas”* (United Nations, NAa).

**Extremism** – Extremism is very well defined by United Kingdom’s report, as: *“extremism is the vocal or active opposition to our fundamental values, including democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and the mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We also regard calls for the death of members of our armed forces as extremist”* (HM Government 2015).

**Genocide** – For the purpose of this thesis, genocide is defined by United Nations as: *“genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:*

- a) *Killing members of the group;*
- b) *Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;*
- c) *Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;*
- d) *Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;*

e) *Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group*” (United Nations, NAb).

**ISIS** - Terrorist organization, sometimes referred to as ISIL or DAISH. ISIS is abbreviation of “Islamic State of Iraq and Syria”, and is the most commonly used in media. *“ISIS is a Sunni jihadist group with a particularly violent ideology that calls itself a caliphate and claims religious authority over all Muslims”* (RAND, NA).

**Jihad** – *“Jihad, also spelled jehad, (“struggle,” or “battle”), a religious duty imposed on Muslims to spread Islam by waging war; jihad has come to denote any conflict waged for principle or belief and is often translated to mean “holy war””* (Encyclopaedia Britannica, NA).

**Multiethnicity** – comprising of multiple ethnic groups. For this paper is most relevant multiethnicity in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which is comprised of Bosnians, Serbs and Croats (CIA, 2013).

**Policy recommendations** – *Are simply written policy advice prepared for some group that has the authority to make decisions, whether that is a Cabinet, council, committee or other body. Policy recommendations are in many ways the chief product of the ongoing work of government managers to create and administer public policy. Policy recommendations are the key means through which policy decisions are made in most levels of government* (Doyle, 2003).

**Protracted social conflict** – Protracted social conflict as defined by Edward Azar is a group of *“hostile interactions which extend over long periods of time with sporadic outbreaks of open warfare fluctuating in frequency and intensity”* (Azar, Jureidini, McLaurin, 1978, p. 50).

**Radicalisation** – *“Radicalization is a process involving an individual or group whereby they are indoctrinated to a set of beliefs that support acts of terrorism, that can be manifested in one’s behaviour and attitudes”* (Abdalla, Larmar, Rahimullah, 2013, p. 20).

**Security** – This thesis finds theoretical grounding in post-structuralism and thus the conceptualization of security is bounded in this theory, as well. *“Post-structuralists think that security should be seen as discursive practice rather than as a direct representation of an objectively threatening reality”* (Hansen, 1997, p. 376).

**Security measures** – is simply defined as: *“a precaution taken against terrorism, espionage or other danger”* (Collins Dictionary, NA)

**Self and the Other** – *“Othering is the process of casting a group, an individual or an object into the role of the ‘other’ and establishing one’s own identity through opposition to and, frequently, vilification of this Other”* (Gabriel, 2012).

**Salafism** – *“Salafism”* comes from the Arabic word *salaf*, or the first generations of Muslims. *“Salafis have aimed at reviving Islam’s original purity and greatness by clearing away the dross of later cultural accretions”* (Brown, 2009, p. 257).

**Terrorism** – This paper works with the definition of terrorism by European Council, where terrorism is defined as: *“intentional acts that are being committed with the aim of seriously intimidating a population, or to compel a government or international organisation to perform or abstain from performing any act, or seriously destabilising or destroying the fundamental political, constitutional, economic or social structures of a country or an international organisation”* (European Council, 2002, Article 1).

**Violence** – *“the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment, or deprivation.”* (Violence Prevention Alliance, NA)

**Wahhabism** – a form of Islam, that can be defined as: *“Wahhabism is a puritanical form of Sunni Islam and is practiced in Saudi Arabia and Qatar, although it is much less rigidly enforced in the latter. The word “Wahhabi” is derived from the name of a Muslim scholar, Muhammad bin Abd al Wahhab, who lived in the Arabian peninsula during the eighteenth century (1703-1791). Today, the term “Wahhabism” is broadly applied outside of the Arabian peninsula to refer to a Sunni Islamic movement that seeks to purify Islam of any innovations or practices that deviate from the seventh-century teachings of the Prophet Muhammad and his companions”* (Blanchard, 2008, p. 1).

## 2. Historical Development

The instability in the Balkan region, and especially in Bosnia-Herzegovina, is rooted in its historical development and the multiethnicity of the country, leading to severe conflicts amongst its Serb, Croat and Bosnian (Muslim) communities. The historical circumstances of the Balkan/Bosnian war in 1992 – 1995 are vast and have been analysed multiple times, it is thus out of the scope of this thesis to provide a detailed enumeration of the events leading to the war, the course of the conflict and its de-escalation, as well. This chapter will thus provide a brief introduction into the historical development in the region, which serves as a cornerstone for further chapters dealing with contemporary security breaches in BiH and the security measures, which are in effect in order to counter radicalization and de-escalate further tensions in the region, possibly recommending also other measures, that could be applied in the country.

The ethnical tensions have been rooted in BiH for decades even before the outbreak of the Bosnian War in 1992 – 1995. After the collapse of the Austria-Hungary, Bosnia was incorporated into the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. In the midst of the WW2, Bosnia was again absorbed by the Croat state, leaving thousands of Serbs and other minorities to be sent to concentration camps. The foundations of the multi-ethnic hatred could have been tracked back to these wrongdoings. However, the tensions became more pressing in the wake of the dissolution of Yugoslavia. Indeed, the invoking of the WW2 imaginary and opening old wounds was a popular form of communication both of Croat and Serbian political leaders in the early 1990s. *“While the Bosnians deployed the notion of genocide and cast the Serbs as the Nazis, the Serbs were busy invoking World War II analogies to shift that mantle to the Croats and the Bosnians. In a March 1992 speech to the last Congress of Serbian Intellectuals in Sarajevo, Milorad Ekmecic declared that in the history of the world, only the Jews have paid a higher price for their freedoms than the Serbs”* (Campbell, 1998, p. 9).

The ethno-demographic development between 1971 – 1991 is often described as uneven, since the number of Bosnian Serbs and Croats was in decline, whilst the population of Bosnian Muslims was on increase – the other two ethnic groups thus started to feel the fear of Muslim domination, which was only strengthened by the atmosphere of panic that the

nationalists in BiH were spreading throughout the 1980s (Žiĉla, 2013). Some of them contemplated – and thus spread the concerns about whether a dominance of Bosnians would leave them with the right to establish a traditional Islamic country and silence the voice of the Serb and Croat minorities. Such claims were further on used by political leaders representing these ethnic minorities in order to mobilize them in the election, further highlighting the division between *the Self* and *the Other* (Žiĉla, 2013). The demography of the pre-war Bosnia-Herzegovina is illustrated below.

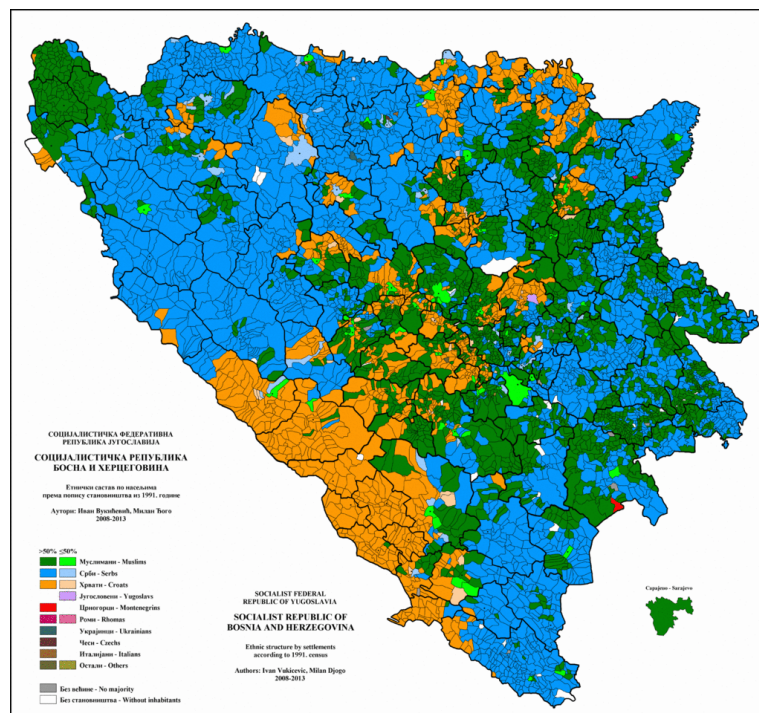


Figure 1: The ethnic composition of BiH in 1991; Serbs (blue), Croats (orange) and Bosnian Muslims (green). Source: Vukicević, Djogo (2008 – 2013)

Moreover, the division of the ethnicities across the country was not even, as well. In 1991, there were very few administrative units in Bosnia-Herzegovina, which inhabitants predominantly belonged to one ethnic group. Most of the administrative units were either composed of binational and binational ethnically balanced communities, and there were also many heterogenous communities, often with one ethnicity dominating the community. This can be on its own considered as a root for conflict, given the history of inter-ethnic relation

between the Croat, Serb and Bosnian population in BiH. The figure below demonstrates the ethnic diversity within most of the administrative units, shortly before the war.

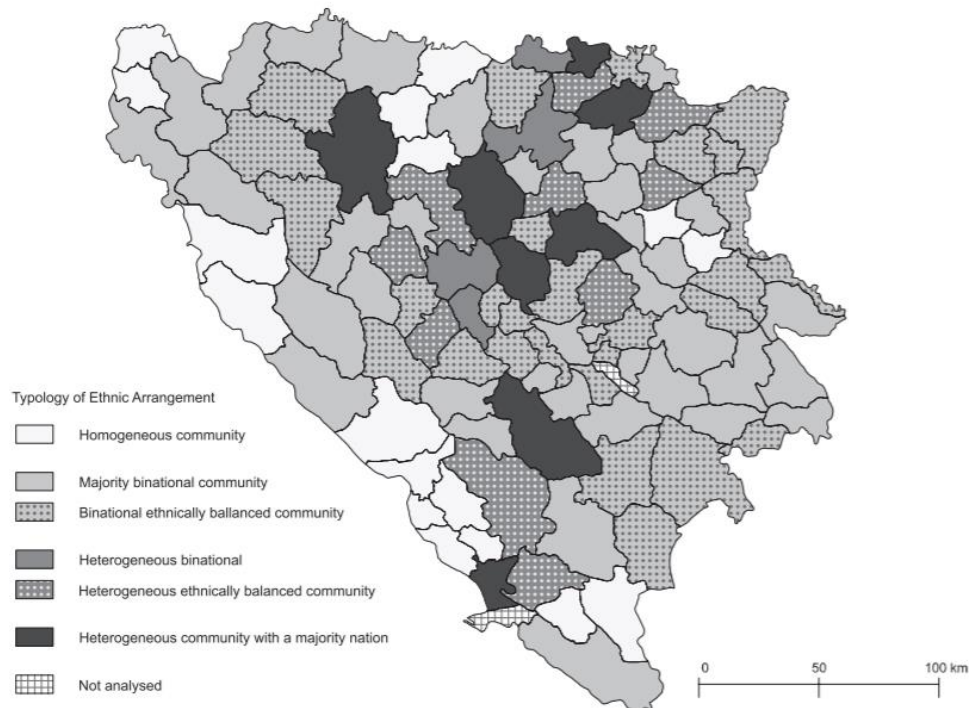


Figure 2: Typology of ethnic arrangement of districts in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1991. Source: Žiła (2013)

However, the sense of hostility towards other ethnic groups, which could have been perceived as *the Other*, is thus deeply rooted in the country's history. "According to the logic of ethnic politics in the former Yugoslavia (...), a member of the opposite ethnic group or "nationality" translated into a political enemy" (Bringa, 2002, p. 198). This was shown in the upcoming years.

In 1990, Radovan Karadžić founded a Serb Democratic Party (SDS), which did not gain majority in that year's elections, but created a Serb administration parallel to the government, which was in fact arming Serbs from Belgrade and the Yugoslav People's Army (Bringa, 2002). However, throughout this year, the situation got much more complicated. "The former Yugoslav republics of Slovenia and Croatia had declared their independence in June 1991. Within five months of Croatia's declaring its independence from Yugoslavia, the JNA (Yugoslav

*People's Army) and local Serb paramilitaries occupied more than one-third of Croatia” (Bringa, 2002, p. 197).*

In November 1991, Karadžić and his SDS held a referendum about whether the Serbs want to remain in Yugoslavia, instead of a newly established Bosnia-Herzegovina and majority of the Serbs answered “yes” to the question (Bringa, 2002). The Serbs in the same year declared independence from the Republic of Croatia, Macedonia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, and proposed their plan for a renewed Yugoslavia (that could be in fact seen as an attempt to establish a concept of a Great Serbia, which considered Eastern Bosnia-Herzegovina of its crucial part), although this plan was rejected by both Croatia and Slovenia (BBC, 2018). In April 1992, the EU declared Bosnia-Herzegovina as a succession and independent state of the former Bosnian region of Yugoslavia (Bringa, 2002).

However, this was anticipated with a great level of resentment of local population. Only a day before the EU’s declaration of BiH’s independence, the public engaged in mass peace protests, which, in the end, turned out everything but peaceful, since a sniper of Serbian origin killed two young women in an open fire near the Holiday Inn hotel in Sarajevo (Bringa, 2002). This could be considered as the beginning of the civil war in the centre of Bosnia-Herzegovina, even though various instances of violence over the ethnicity and their political and geographical self-determination already broke out in other regions in the previous months (Campbell, 1998; Bringa, 2002).

The Serbs led by Radovan Karadžić, sieged Sarajevo on the 6<sup>th</sup> of April, meaning that they have already occupied as much as 70 percent of the country and continued to persecute Croats and Muslims, in order to establish a Serbian supremacy (Reuters, 2008). *“From that date on, the Western media began to report almost daily about the shelling of civilians; about massacres; forced expulsions; the herding of civilians into camps; the burning of homes, mosques, and churches; and the everyday suffering of ordinary people in cities under siege and constant bombardment”* (Bringa, 2002, p. 198).

The war was waged on ordinary citizens, most harshly affecting those in eastern Bosnia-Herzegovina, in the towns Zvornik, Bratunac, Vlasenica, Rogatica, Foča, Višegrad and the

villages surrounding them, again, most likely because of the attempt to exterminate Bosnian Muslim population and to make Eastern Bosnia a part of the intended Greater Serbia (BBC, 2018; Bringa, 2002). Not only that the Serbs were killing Bosnian Muslims, but also Serbs that opposed their violence. *“Opposition and resistance became impossible. If you opposed the harassment or expulsion of your neighbour with, say, a Muslim name, you were a traitor; you risked being killed (or were killed), or, even worse, the “ethnic cleansers” threatened to kill (or killed) your son or another close relative (...) In this fashion, even if a person wanted to disassociate himself from acts of violence committed in the name of the ethnic or national group he identified with, it would be difficult, since every attempt was made to implicate everybody”* (Bringa, 2002, p. 212 - 213).

In May 1992, UN imposed sanctions on Serbia for backing the Serbs, who engaged in the wars in Croatia and Bosnia (Reuters, 2008). The inter-ethnic war between Bosnians, Serbs and Croats continued in between 1992 – 1995, whilst Sarajevo remained sieged and all of the EU and UN effort for peace talks failed (BBC, 2018). NATO reacted with a ban on flights over Bosnia, then American President Bill Clinton enhanced relief supplies to Bosnia-Herzegovina and UN created six *“safe havens”* for civilian Bosnian Muslims, that included Sarajevo, Tuzla, Bihac, Srebrenica, Gorazde and Zepa (Tanner, 1993). However, the massacre in Srebrenica that occurred in July 1995 and that was later recognized as a genocide, shows that safe havens were not a guarantee for the citizens’ safety.

As an unnamed American military officer in the service of NATO told The New York Times in 1995: "It sounds good, 'safe areas,' but the peacekeepers were little more than observers. They didn't have the firepower. The truth is the safe areas were always a myth" (The New York Times, 1995). As the contemporary article noted: *“The Bosnian soldiers in Srebrenica conducted raids against Bosnian Serb villages, a tactic some townspeople saw as suicidally stupid because it invited retaliation. The attacks infuriated the Serbs, particularly Gen. Ratko Mladic, the Bosnian Serb commander, and in July his troops swept into Srebrenica, expelled the Dutch peacekeepers and took over the town”* (The New York Times, 1995). First, the Serbian army stopped the convoys of food aid, starving the local population. In the end, at least 8000 young boys and men were massacred in Srebrenica, with very few survivors from



the village. The Serbian military commanders, who were responsible for Srebrenica massacre, were brought to justice after many years, and often were convicted of genocide (BBC, 2018). In the end of August 1995, NATO responded with severe bombardment of the main targets held by Serbs, even though some experts of the region and security, as Tone Bringa (2002), claim, that such an action came too late (Hendrickson, 2005).

Tone Rand Bringa (2002), who was shortly after the Srebrenica genocide present at Tuzla airbase in North Eastern Bosnia-Herzegovina with the UNPROFOR human rights team, notes: *“There are two main stories: on the one hand, what the Bosnian Serb Army planned and executed under the command of Ratko Mladić, and on the other the complacency, incompetence, and unwillingness to act to prevent genocide represented by the international community through its U.N. peacekeeping forces”* (Bringa, 2002, p. 196). Bringa (2002) further notes, that despite the Srebrenica massacre was the worst post-WW2 bloodbath in Europe, it could have been predicted and thus also prevented by the international community.

In November 1995, the Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic, Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic, and Croatian President Franjo Tudjman reached a final agreement at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base near Dayton, Ohio. The agreement was formally signed on the 14<sup>th</sup> of December 1995 in Paris (OSCE, 1995; Giardina, 2015). The peace accords included a notion of temporary establishment of a Peacekeeping Implementation Force in Bosnia and a presence of an international oversight represented by the office of the High Representative (Reuters, 2008; BBC, 2018). The road to the Dayton Peace Accord is often described as awkward, difficult and mostly long. *“The peace agreement, consisting of an umbrella document, 11 annexes and 102 maps, outlined in detail the obligations by the parties and the international community during the implementation stage”* (Paczulla, 2005). However, many believe that the Dayton agreement, as a peace treaty focusing rather on military oversight over the country, rather than on the reconciliation of its inhabitants and reconstruction of its culture, economy and society, together with its complicated implementation, did not provide the necessary support for the country and thus many old wounds remained unresolved and bounded in the society (Paczulla, 2005).

However, the final statistics of the war seem horrendous: the Bosnian war of 1992 - 1995 cost at least 250 000 lives and many others seem unaccounted for, other 200 000 were wounded, including around 50 000 children, nearly half of the pre-war population was re-allocated or became war refugees (1,8 million people from the entire population of 4 million), majority of them exiled outside of BiH, and around 30 percent of all residential buildings in the country were damaged. The financial losses and damages were estimated at 15 – 20 billion USD (World Bank, 1997).

In 1996, the international community established The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), which is located in the Hague. The first people, Bosnian Muslims and Croats, were convicted of the war crimes in 1998. The main perpetrators of the atrocities of the war have gone missing in the meantime, although most of them were brought to justice in the upcoming year. During these times, the open-ware sometimes broke out, also in major cities, such as Brčko and Mostar (Paczula, 2005).

In 2002, a trial with Slobodan Milošević, the former president of Yugoslavia, started over serious allegations of 66 different crimes over genocide and war in BiH, Croatia and Kosovo (ICTY, NA; BBC, 2018). In the same year, a British politician Paddy Ashdown was nominated in the function of the UN High Representative for Bosnia-Herzegovina, overseeing the country's transition with quite impressive authority (BBC, 2018). In June 2003, the Bosnian Serb government admitted the massacre of Muslims in Srebrenica, which was a great breakthrough in the reconciliation process, even though the pressure of the international community was necessary (Reuters, 2008). In 2005, the EU foreign ministers permitted the EU to sign a Stabilization and Association Agreement with BiH (European Commission, 2015).

In 2006, Slobodan Milošević was found dead in his cell, apparently of natural causes and thus has never been found guilty in the trial (Simons, Crouch, 2006). In 2007, the office of a High Representative was taken by a Slovak professional diplomat Miroslav Lajčák (BBC, 2018). ICTY also ruled out that the massacre in Srebrenica can be officially declared as genocide and found Serbia guilty of the act (BBC, 2018).

In 2008, Radovan Karadžić, the Bosnian-Serb president during the Bosnian war, was arrested by Serbian police. Karadžić was the one responsible both of the siege of Sarajevo and of the Srebrenica massacre, and thus his arrest was a part for EU-accession conditionality (Tzortzi, 2008). In 2011, Ratko Mladić, another former Bosnian Serb commander and a war criminal, also held responsible for the Srebrenica massacre, was arrested after 15 years that he spent in hiding (BBC, 2011). In 2012, Zdravko Tolimir, former Assistant Commander and Chief for Intelligence and Security of the Main Staff of the Bosnian Serb Army and a close aide to Ratko Mladić, was found guilty for the part he played in the Srebrenica massacre and was sentenced for a lifetime in prison (ICTY, 2012). This “lifetime” in the prison ended in 2016, when he died in the ICTY’s custody (AFP, 2016).

In the same year, Bosnia has submitted formal application to access EU and the European Commission started the evaluation of the BiH’s readiness to join the club (Gotev, 2016). In 2017, the former Bosnian-Serb military commander Ratko Mladić was found guilty of “crimes against humanity” and genocide and was sentenced to life imprisonment by ICTY. The official statement of ICTY was formulated by the following words: *“Mladić was convicted of genocide and persecution, extermination, murder, and the inhumane act of forcible transfer in the area of Srebrenica in 1995; of persecution, extermination, murder, deportation and inhumane act of forcible transfer in municipalities throughout BiH; of murder, terror and unlawful attacks on civilians in Sarajevo; and of hostage-taking of UN personnel”* (ICTY, 2017).

The conviction of Ratko Mladić was the most major and final judicial restitution conducted by ICTY. In December 2016, the international tribunal in Hague was formally dissolved. The overall statistics are impressive: the court announced during its 24 years of existence precisely 161 high-profile indictments, amongst which 90 individuals were convicted of genocide and/or crimes against humanity, hearing 4650 witnesses in the processes (Bowcott, 2017). The legacy of the international court is indispensable, even though many wounds remain opened and unresolved. As Serge Brammertz, a former chief prosecutor of ICTY, told The Guardian: *“As we have seen ... the crimes have left wounds that still have not healed. Convicted war criminals continue to be seen by many as heroes, while victims and survivors are ignored and dismissed”* (Bowcott, 2017).

The multi-ethnic composition and the post-Dayton formal arrangements have remained rooted at the core of the problems, that started to erupt only on the past few years and that might continue to do so, unless specific and sophisticated measures are taken in effect. The next chapter provides the reader with a demonstration of several security breaches in the country, that occurred during the past decade, and that exposed the enduring Bosnia-Herzegovina's vulnerability, when it comes to terror.

### 3. Security Breaches and Radicalisation in Bosnia-Herzegovina

There have been several attacks and breaches of security in Bosnia-Herzegovina in the past years, which were described by the media and the experts as terrorist attacks.

In 2010, there was a bomb attack at a police station in Bugojno, in which one of the police officers was killed and six other police officers were wounded (Jukić, 2015). The bombing also caused extensive damage in the town, located 75 kilometres north-west of Sarajevo (BBC, 2010). The perpetrator of the attack, Haris Causevic, was found guilty and was sentenced to 45 years of imprisonment (Balkan Insight, 2013). The Bosnian National Television Channel (BHT) said that *“the suspect was a member of the radical Islamic Wahhabi movement which is active in Bosnia and that he is already known by police for previous crimes”* (BBC, 2010). In the aftermath of the attack, six men were charged with the crime of either perpetrating a deadly attack, or, in case of three of them, they were charged with terrorism. It is interesting to note that all of the men were members of a Wahhabi branch of Islam, operating in BiH since its establishment following the 1992 – 1995 war in the Balkans (Reuters, 2013).

In 2011, one policeman had suffered severe injuries during a shooting at the US embassy in Sarajevo (Jukić, 2015). The men found guilty of the attack, Mevludin Jasarevic, was a 23-years old Serbian citizen, living in Novi Pazar, which is a pre-dominantly Muslim town, where police have already uncovered an Islamist terrorist training camp in 2007 (Robinson, 2011). Jasarevic had already a criminal history, he was convicted of robbery in Austria in 2005 and has been deported to Serbia (Robinson, 2011). In the end, Jasarevic was officially convicted of committing a terrorist act and was jailed for 18 years (BBC, 2012). He and his other two companions, responsible for the attack, were previously living in a Serbian village of Gornja Maoča, which is well-known for its rejection of the central BiH’s authority. The village has been raided multiple times by the police and its local Wahhabi group, suspected for radicalization activities, has been closely monitored since (BBC, 2012).

In 2015, a policeman was killed by a radicalized Bosnian Muslim on a police station in Zvornik (Andelković, 2017). The attack occurred after the main minority-representing Serb and

Croat parties in BiH attempted to elect new leaders of the party and emphasized their goals to separate Republika Srpska from BiH and to provide legitimacy to separatist Croat regions in BiH (Jukić, 2015). The Minister of the Interior, Dragan Lukać, told the media that he did not believe that such attack could occur in Republika Srpska and yet it happened. *“I am afraid this could be a start of much worse events in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We should undertake all measures to protect our citizens and institutions”* (Jukić, 2015).

The same year also an assault on the members of the Bosnian army occurred in the outskirts of Sarajevo (Andelković, 2017). The shooter, later identified as Enes Omeragic, killed two soldiers of the Bosnian Army and wounded another soldier in the suburbs of Rajlovać (BBC, 2015; Toe, 2015). BBC (2015) reported that the gunman, according to the local police, shouted “Allahu Akbar!” (“God is great!”) during the assault, in the end of which he committed suicide. The local media later reported, based on unnamed official governmental sources, that Omeragic had severe connections to a radical Islamist movement (BBC, 2015).

The most recent and also the most endangering radicalization can be demonstrated on the example of a large number of Bosnian Muslims, who have fled BiH and joined foreign militias to fight for the so-called Islamic State in Iraq and Syria. The latest *European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2017* issued by Europol (2017) notes that BiH, together with the so-called Sandzak region (between Serbia and Montenegro), Albanian-speaking territories in Serbia and FYROM, Kosovo and Albania, are currently considered as the main hotspots for *“radicalization, recruitment and facilitation activities of foreign terrorist fighters for Syria”* (Europol, 2017).

The Atlantic Initiative assumes that between 900 – 1000 fighters from Western Balkan countries joined the fighting in the Middle East in 2011 – 2016 (Azinović, 2017). The majority of them were from Kosovo (316), Bosnia-Herzegovina (260) and Albania (136) (Metodieva, 2018).

However, it is important to evaluate the data within a certain context, as well. Azinović (2017) notes that if BiH is compared to Belgium, the perspective is rather different. *“The population of Belgium is around 11,000,000 and there are an estimated 451 Belgian foreign*

*fighters, or 41 per one million inhabitants. In BiH, the population is around 3,500,000 and there are some 240 Bosnian citizens of fighting age, both men and women, in Syria and Iraq; making the rate of foreign fighters from Bosnia around 68 per one million inhabitants (...) Yet, the people accounted for in this type of data are almost exclusively Muslim or converts to Islam (again, Muslims), and when one places the statistics on radicalization and recruitment in Belgium and BiH in this context, they look rather different. By that measure, there are 64 foreign fighters for every 100,000 Muslims in Belgium (the total number of which is around 700,000), meaning one foreign fighter in every 1,552 Muslims in Belgium. If one assumes the disputable fact that all ethnic Bosniaks in BiH (estimated at some 1,769,000) are Muslim, then there are close to 14 foreign fighters for every 100,000 Bosnian Muslims, or one in every 7,370 Muslims in BiH.” (Azinović, 2017, p. 9 – 10). The radicalization and recruitment to foreign militias seems to be five times more successful, and thus poses a greater problem, in Belgium, than in BiH.*

On the other hand, the radicalization of Bosnian Muslims occurred mostly in religious cells and other social circles, encourages by the persona of a charismatic leader, often being an imam (Azinović, 2017). Moreover, most of the Bosnians, who have been mobilised as foreign fighters in the Middle East, have been centred within a few geographical locations, in Sarajevo, Zenica, Tuzla, Travnik, and Bihac, which are considered pre-dominantly as Salafist regions (Azinović, 2017; Metodjeva, 2018). The specific case of Bosnia is that most of the male fighters, who fled to Syria and Iraq, took their wives and children with them. Majority of them did not have any criminal past, even though some have experienced war before (Azinović, 2016).

What are the most common factors leading to their radicalization? Some of them include poor education levels, unemployment, broke and uncomplete families, previous experience with criminality or war and mental health issues. Azinović (2017) notes that: *“It has been well documented that many cases of radicalization in the region, especially of younger individuals, have been initially motivated by the desire to meet immediate psychosocial needs, rather than by adherence to extremist or violent ideologies”* (Azinović, 2017, p. 13).

However, the radicalized individuals, who fled the country in order to engage in fighting in Iraq and Syria, had been a security threat not only before their departure, but will continue to do so even after their return to home countries. *“The fear is that returning foreign fighters, who are battle-hardened, skilled in handling arms and explosives, and ideologically radicalized, pose a clear and present threat to national and international security. Raising further alarm is that fact that ISIL/Daesh is now explicitly “re-directing” its followers away from Syria, and back to their homes, following the collapse of the caliphate”* (Azinović, Bećirević, 2017, p. 13). This notion is repeated in the Europol’s situation report on terrorism in Europe, stating that the returnees may cross-cut the boundaries, whether national or ethnic ones, and pose a significant threat both to the region and internationally (Europol, 2017).

Metodieva (2018) notes that 46 people out of 248 who have departed for Iraq and Syria have returned to BiH until December 2016. Azinović and Bećirević (2017) claim that 53 Bosnian and Herzegovinian citizens, including four foreign citizens with Bosnian origin, have returned from the Middle East, 43 of them to BiH, including a few women and children, and 10 to other countries.

**Table 4. War Travelers who have gone to Syria and Iraq; returned**

| Country         | War Travelers | Returned        | Date          |
|-----------------|---------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Western Balkans | 900           | 250             | August 2017   |
| Albania         | 90            | 40              | -             |
| Bosnia          | 248           | 46, remain 115  | December 2016 |
| Kosovo          | 317           | 117, remain 138 | April 2017    |
| Macedonia       | 140           | 80              | -             |
| Serbia          | 50            | 9               | -             |

Source: Soufan Center (2017)

Figure 3: Summary of the returnees in respective Western Balkan countries. Source: Metodieva (2018), as adopted from: Soufan Center (2017)

Metodieva (2018) notes that despite the fact that, so far, there have not been any attacks plotted and discovered in BiH, or perpetrated by the foreign fighters returning to the country, some disturbing signs of further radicalization and presence of the so-called Islamic State in BiH occurred. *“In June 2017, the Bosnian version of IS’s magazine “Rumiyah” published an*



article with a title *“The Balkans – Blood for Enemies, and Honey for Friends”*. The text makes explicit threats to Serbs and Croats over their roles in the Balkan wars” (Metodieva, 2018, p. 7). Some experts are worried that the returnees will take over new supportive and leading functions in the radical networks, fostering further radicalization and spreading their combat skills and know-how, as it has been already spotted in other countries, most notably in Germany (Metodieva, 2018).

Azinović (2017) worries that the persistent turmoil in the country and the further radicalization factors might escalate the ethnical tension and the protracted social conflict might once again spread out. The author writes: *“The sense of being trapped in a hostile ethnic, religious, and political environment may soon lead some young Bosniaks and Albanians to develop a “Gaza Strip mentality,” as they increasingly feel as though they live under a sort of societal occupation and forced isolation”*. (Azinović, 2017, p. 20)

This is the reason, why it is so important to evaluate the sufficiency of the radicalization-countering measures, either in terms of its prevention or its detection and elimination, and also other security measures, which are currently in effect and if possible, to formulate a set of recommendations, which could help to strengthen the levels of security in the country and in the Western Balkan region.

#### 4. Literature Review

The topic of the Bosnian conflict has been covered by many scholars throughout the years, dealing with many of the related issues, such as the historical development and consequences of the Balkan wars, the imprint of the Dayton agreement as seen as the source of further destabilization of the country, the identity formation of the ethnicities in BiH and the emergence of a problematic national identity, the reconstruction of the country and the security measures that were applied in order to do so, but also the radicalization and violent extremism, that emerged despite such efforts, further destabilizing the country and the Balkan region (Bringa, 1995; Campbell, 1998; Caspersen, 2004, Morris, 2008; Dyrstad, Ellingsen, Rød, 2015).

One of the most significant authors on this issue is David Campbell, a post-structuralist scholar of Critical Security Studies, with his book *National Deconstruction: Violence, Identity, and Justice in Bosnia* (1998), in which he deals with the evolution of overlapping identities within the country and its emergence as an ethnocentric problem, resulting into major violence. The author's aim was to fill in the gap in the identity studies of the Balkan countries and most notably of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Campbell (1998) also focuses on the international response to the crisis in the Balkans and the consequent reconstruction of the democracy, peace and stability in the respective countries. The author comes to the conclusion that: *"It can be safely said that with respect to Bosnia the international community's response, informed as it is by theorizations concerning territory and identity drawn from a broadly defined realist discourse, has furthered the violence and would not be difficult to improve upon"* (Campbell, 1998, p. 240).

Other scholars, such as Tone Rand Bringa (1991, 1995), have dealt more closely with the deconstruction of identities of the local population. In his book *Being Muslim the Bosnian Way: Identity and Community in a Central Bosnian Village* (1995), the author focuses on the religious adherence of the people, which he believes is crucial for their perception of *the Self* and of *the Others*. These conclusions have been drawn from Bringa's insightful ethnographic observations of Bosnian Muslims living in a rural village on the outskirts of Sarajevo. Bringa has in this publication built upon his life-long interest in the topic, which started with his

dissertation thesis with the title *Gender, Religion and the Person: The 'Negotiation' of Muslim Identity in Rural Bosnia* (1991). In the thesis, he observed religious rituals and cultural practices of Muslim households in the countryside, focusing mostly on the role of women and their perception of themselves and the role they ascribed to Islam in shaping their identities and their lives. Later, he contributed to a book *Annihilating Difference* (2002) co-written and edited by Alexander Laban Hinton, on the topic of genocide around the world. Bringa (2002) contributed to the book with a chapter *Averted Gaze: Genocide in Bosnia-Herzegovina, 1992–1995*, in which he analyses how the international community reacted to the genocide occurring in the Balkans and why it could be, according to him, considered as a failure (Bringa, 2002, In: Hinton, 2002).

Other authors, such as Kerem Öktem (2011), focused on the analysis of identities of various Muslim communities in multiple South-Eastern European countries, such as Albania, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Greece and Macedonia. The author conducted ethnographic interviews through which he studied the fragmentation within the Muslim communities, the influence of Turkish Islam and Saudi Arabia's Wahhabism and its effect upon the Balkan's emigration to these countries, as well as the continuous de-Islamization of the region (Öktem, 2011).

Karin Dyrstad, Tanja Ellingsen and Jan Ketil Rød (2015) conducted a comparative study of the relation between the ethnicity and nationalism in BiH and in Kosovo and found out that these two cases are rather different. The ethnonationalism in BiH tends to increase with the rising number of members of the community who share their ethnicity and self-awareness, but otherwise remains lower than in Kosovo. Moreover, the ethnonationalism in the localities that were the most severely hit by the war and its atrocities is significantly lower than expected, which the authors of the study explain with the war-weariness argument. *"Since some of the worst cases of fighting and ethnic cleansing in Bosnia took place in areas that were previously mixed, many of the inhabitants had previously experienced good inter-ethnic relations. This prior contact could also possibly dampen or bolster some of the fear spurred by the war"* (Dyrstad, Ellingsen, Rød, 2015). The authors also found out that the main variables that contributed into the strength of the ethnonationalism as perceived by local communities, were the time aspect of the conflict, whether it occurred recently or in the past decades, and also

the consolidation of the local institutions (Dyrstad, Ellingsen, Rød, 2015). Other authors, such as John O'Loughlin (2010) focused on the inter-ethnic interactions amongst in the population in the post-war period and assessed to what extent is the society still subjected to severe ethnicization on the case study of inter-ethnic friendships in BiH (O'Loughlin, 2010).

Furthermore, some of the scholars focused not only on the collective identities, but also on the collective memory, which has persisted in people's mindset since the Balkan wars. For instance, Edina Bećirević, a scholar from University of Sarajevo, researched the genocidal intents of the Serbian leadership to exterminate the Bosnian Muslims in her publication: *The Issue of Genocidal Intent and Denial of Genocide A Case Study of Bosnia and Herzegovina*, concrete methods and ways of what could be understood as conscious acts of genocide, such as intentional starvation of the Muslim population, and analysed the judicial evaluations of the evidence that were submitted to ICTY (2010). Bećirević (2010), as well as other authors, also claims that the UN's negligence and its (dis)involvement in the Balkan wars, only contributed to further destabilization of the region.

Other authors, dealing with the collective memory of the nation, dealt with more concrete impacts of the atrocities during the war. For an illustration, Janet Jacobs (2016) conducted fieldwork in Bosnia-Herzegovina in order to find out what are the narratives present in the discourse regarding the roles of men/boys and women/girls in the aftermath of the genocide in Srebrenica. Among other findings, Jacobs (2016) notes that the sexual atrocities are completely misrepresented in the discourse and any notions related to rape are simply not presented as a part of the trauma.

The methods applied by the respective scholars differ considerably, as well, from the multiple above-mentioned scholars who focused primarily on ethnography, to a post-structuralist feminist approach, as applied by Lene Hansen (2006) in her discourse analysis in her book *Security as Practice: Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War*. In the book, Hansen explores the relations between the identities of Bosnian ethnicities and its impact upon the foreign policy of the country (Hansen, 2006). There are also other scholars, who research the Balkans in an international perspective.

Some authors, such as Shrivastava and Agarwal (2002), focused on the international aspect of the Balkan Wars and the demonstrations of interventionism of the European Community and the United States of America. Others rather analysed the support of the international community and the consequences of its insufficiency for the internal development and reconstruction of the country. Some focused on the attempts of the BiH to become a European state, a member of the European Union and NATO. However, not everybody described only the benefits of such course of actions. For instance, Danijela Majstrović (2007) focused on the drawbacks of what she sees as a forced Europeanization in her analytic paper with the title *Construction of Europeanization in the High Representative's discourse in Bosnia and Herzegovina*. Majstrović claims that the Europeanization assumes a transformation of what she describes as an abnormal Bosnia to a normal European country, often not only meaning to become a member of the European Union, but also to be accepted as a member state of NATO, providing the country with major peace guarantees stability. *"In a fragile country, these words sound like a journey to a fixed destination and a dream of prosperity"* (Majstrović, 2007, p. 648). However, this comes with a severe juxtaposition of the virtues of such Europeanization and the vices as held by the BiH. Majstrović (2007) criticizes such ostracization and notes that: *"The 'stick and carrot' strategy of coercion best reflects the paradox of forced democratization in Bosnia, an experiment that did not yield much self-sustainability and democracy in the country but has resulted in the local perception of the OHR and international community as colonialist and authoritarian"* (Majstrović, 2007, p. 648). Similar arguments were made by other scholars, such as Bob Deacon and Paul Stubbs (1998) from University of Sheffield, to whom BiH resembled a *new feudalist* social formation under the oversight of the supranational agencies (Deacon, Stubbs, 1998).

As the lines above have already suggested, the multi-ethnic composition of BiH, the lack of the ethnicities' political representation, the inability to overcome the past and the unsuccessful democratic consolidation of the country, leading to the afore-mentioned forced democratization as a feudal subjugation to the international community in the after-math of the war, could have all contributed to the gradual radicalization of the Bosnian Muslims and to the rise of the violent extremism in the country.

BiH is a country with the highest potential of radicalization in the region, which is only multiplied by the vast amount of Islamic propaganda materials, which are available in Bosnian language and are often placed also on foreign internet servers outside of Europe, which decreases the ability of the local authorities to counter them (Stojar, 2016). Richard Stojar, a scholar from the University of Defence in Brno, also notes that: *“The specific role in the case of the Bosnian Muslims is represented by their victimization during the period of the Bosnian war, a different group identity within their own state and also a latent feeling of endangerment from the side of the neighbouring non-Islamic ethnicities, which, vice-versa, have the tendency to perceive Islam as an expansionist religious movement and thus a potential threat”* (Stojar, 2016).

Since adolescents and young adults tend to be more perceptive and thus possibly more influenced by propaganda, some authors have attempted to assess how the youth in the Balkans is radicalized and what counter-measures are used to fight this negative, yet present, phenomenon. Richardson, Berlouis and Cameron (2017) studied the reasons for the radicalization of youth across the Balkans and evaluated possible counter-radicalization measures, that could be applied in order to help the youth to such extent, that the help as offered by the religious groups, which tend to be the vehicles for their radicalization, is seriously diminished. *“Radical organisations can take advantage of shortcomings in Government and provide an attractive alternative by assuming the vacant role of ‘provider’. A well-resourced radical organisation can cater to both spiritual and materialistic needs, able to form a paternalistic relationship with young and impressionable adults”* (Richardson, Berlouis, Cameron, 2017, p. 89). The authors of the study thus suggest that the governments and state’s institutions should not focus only on deradicalization, but mostly on preventive measures, ranging broadly from increasing the levels of the youth’s education, providing the youth with accessible health care, diminishing the poverty and guarantee a solid political representation of their ethnicities and their political views (Richardson, Berlouis, Cameron, 2017).

In addition, many scholars have also dealt with the overarching security implications of this so-called Balkan threat to the rest of Europe. Christopher Deliso (2007) notes that the radicalization of the Balkan Muslims and their coordination with other radicalized members

inside the religious communities with ties to terrorist groups, will only continue to increase, which the local authorities, as well as the international policy bodies, shall ascribe greater importance, since it can have serious security implications. *“It is impossible to deny that foreign proselytizers, waving lucre and spouting vitriol, have reprogrammed thousands of Balkan Muslims, making them more receptive to world views antithetical to Western civilization and, in some cases, to views that support the destruction of that civilization. The fact that small numbers of these Muslims have already participate in jihads and terrorist attacks around the world should come as a wake-up to Western policymakers who, unfortunately, seem to hear only what they want to hear”* (Deliso, 2007, p. 174).

However, the scenario, in which local Bosnian Muslims become radicalized and pose a threat in their domestic or neighbouring countries, is not the only one. It is often the case that the radicalized individuals flee the country and join the militias in the Middle East, such as in Iraq or Syria, where their radicalization only continues to develop. Asya Metodieva (2018) in her policy paper *Balkan Foreign Fighters Are Coming Back: What Should Be Done*, notes that there are several structural pre-conditions, so-called *push factors*, which considerably contribute to the decision of a radicalized individual to flee the country and join other radicalized members in a battleground. The most important ones are previous criminal activity or an experience with war, poverty, inequality, poor education, unemployment and other factors, that could indicate the lack of a stable future, and also the support of a local radicalized network (Metodieva, 2018). The author also states, with regards to BiH, that there are several centres of radicalization within the country, namely cities like Sarajevo, Zenica, Tuzla, Travnik and Bihac, which are close to each other and thus certain deradicalization policies and other preventive measures could target these locations directly. Metodieva (2018) also suggests that in order to deradicalize the returned jihadists, it is necessary not to criminalize them, but rather to engage the local communities, such as the church, family or school, into the process of their re-integration. Also, the author emphasizes how important it is to address the mentioned push factors, such as economic insecurity and inequality, in order to be able to provide these people with a perspective of a possible future, which could detach them from further attempts to engage in the radicalization of others, or to engage in criminal and terrorist activities by

themselves (Metodieva, 2018). Interestingly, similar recommendations were proposed by Richardson, Berlouis and Cameron (2017) as a tool for deradicalization and prevention of radicalization of the youth in the Balkans, as it has already been mentioned above.

There are also other concrete studies dealing with concrete policy recommendations and assessment of the policy gaps, which might further foster extremism. For instance, Denis Dzidic (2017) dealt with the issue of lacking financial resources that could dismantle the previous governmental efforts to fight radicalization. Dzidic (2017) illustrates that on the lack of resources for prisons' deradicalization programmes for fighters returning from abroad and being imprisoned in BiH, which could, ironically, lead to spreading further radicalization behind the bars (Dzidic, 2017).

Muhamed Jusić (2017) notes that most of the Bosnian radicals who have departed for Syria or Iraq to engage in the fighting, have belonged to local Bosnian Salafist groups. Despite the fact that these groups do not necessarily need to be the main birthplace of the radicalization and the nature of Islam in BiH is rather pluralistic, it is true that the government has no authority to oversight their teaching and to assess the potential threat that the individual groups might pose. Jusić (2017) thus notes that *"While the government has no right to interfere in the religious teachings and worldviews of these groups so long as their activities are carried out in accordance with the law, Bosnian citizens certainly have the right to question the attitudes and beliefs that are promoted and taught in such circles* (Jusić, 2017, p. 57).

Last, but not least, it is important to state that some of those Bosnian Muslims who express radicalized views, do not necessarily need to pose a significant security threat. However, as Bećirević (2016) in one of her most recent books about BiH, called *Salafism vs. Moderate Islam*, notes: *"In a vulnerable Bosnian society with a recent history of genocide and mass violence, even nonviolent radical behaviour deepens fears of "others" and contributes to general social distrust and insecurity"* (Bećirević, 2016). This only illustrates how important it is for the state institutions to be able to dismantle radicalization and all its expressions, in order to provide the people with a returned feeling of security and stability.



Issue of Balkan wars and their implications for the security in Bosnia-Herzegovina has been covered by dozens of scholars over the past decades. Most of them focused on the analysis of the roots leading to the wars and to the concrete atrocities that occurred during the horrendous times, such as the genocide in Srebrenica. However, the most recent years have shown that the unresolved conflicts remain bounded within the society and can still serve as a catalyser of further radicalization of the local population. This might pose a serious threat, since the radicalized individuals often flee the country and frequently engage in further fighting in the Middle East, returning then to BiH and posing a more imminent terrorist threat. This is one of the most serious reasons why it is important for the academics to deal more profoundly with the issue of deradicalization and radicalization countering and preventing measures. It is thus the aim of this thesis to contribute to the complex list of literature mentioned in this chapter with more contemporaneous analysis of the security measures, which are currently in effect and also to provide an overview of what measures are in effect abroad and could be possibly implemented in BiH, in order to increase the overall levels of security and provide more stability to the region. Last, but not least, this thesis aims to contribute to the previously perpetrated studies with experts' point of view, formulating their perception of the current security status quo in BiH and their policy recommendation for increasing the security levels in the country. It is the goal of this thesis to contribute to the field of security studies and to provide scholars and the public dealing with the topic of deradicalization in the Balkan region with more information and insights from the experts. This could eventually galvanize further studies on the topic and perhaps ideally even lead to the implementation of some of the recommended security measures that could in the end help to increase the security levels in the country.

## 5. Theoretical background

### 5.1. Post-structuralism

This thesis finds theoretical grounding in *post-structuralism*, which presumes that in order to be able to understand *an object*, scholars need to study not only the structure within which the object is bound, but also the processes of its emergence, the circumstances and consequences of such processes, the relations between them, how they impact each other and also the epistemological nature of the knowledge, through which the scholars are aiming to study the object. In other words, it is necessary to take into consideration the full context within which the observed object emerged and continues to exist, as well as the knowledge about its existence (Burke, 2013). The key assumptions of post-structuralism reject the existence of a universal truth and the grand narratives of history and oppose the assumptions held by both the traditional realists and the liberals, and thus form a critical theory of international relations (Burke, 2013; Collins, 2013). Perhaps the most provocative idea held by the post-structuralists is the changing nature of knowledge, which is at the centre of its criticism, since it also dismisses the nature of scientific accomplishments (Collins, 2013).

Post-structuralism encompasses a variety of scholars, from discourse-oriented philosophers, such as Michel Foucault (1969) and Jacques Derrida (1967), to scholars of Critical Security Studies, such as David Campbell (1992), Kevin C. Krause and Michael C. Williams (1997), Ken Booth (2007) and Richard Wyn Jones (1995), who focused on the complexity of security and threat, rather than on the traditionalist state-centred point of view. Burke (2013) notes that: *“Post- structuralism offers ways to rethink the self and its relations with others, and its critique of security has shown how dangerous its models of politics and safety can be”* (Burke, 2013, p. 87). For instance, David Campbell’s (1992) famous book *Writing security* focuses on how the construction of a national identity (*Self*) is affected and thus directly dependent upon the existence of *an enemy (the Other)*. Campbell (1992) claims that the strive for forming one’s identity through opposition to the other is in the core of the United States’ foreign policy and illustrates that on the era of the Cold War. He states that: *“Foreign policy (conventionally understood as the external orientation of pre-established states with secure identities) is thus to be retheorized as one of the boundary-producing practices central to the*

*production and reproduction of the identity in whose name it operates”* (Campbell, 1992, p. 75).

However, some of the afore-mentioned scholars, most notably Ken Booth and Richard Wyn Jones, have become keen critiques of post-structuralism per se, even though the differentiating line between their work and the post-structuralist view might be sometimes difficult to draw (Collins, 2013). Moreover, the latter mentioned scholars have also called for a distinction of themselves from the Critical Security Studies and have bounded their views within the *Welsh School*. Since distinguished scholars such as Ken Booth, Richard Wyn Jones and Andrew Linklater – who are considered to be key persons of the school – have been conducting their researches at Aberystwyth University, the approach is also referred to as the *Aberystwyth School* by some scholars, such as Steve Smith (Collins, 2013).

## **5.2. Emancipatory Realism**

*The Aberystwyth school* revolves around the necessity to deepen and broaden the understanding of security, whilst also analysing the socially constructed perception of threat, as seen as a relation between *Self* and *the Other* (Waever, 2004). Richard Wyn Jones (1995) notes that it is necessary to challenge the currently prevailing *regimes of truth*, as Foucault called it, regarding what is security and who needs to be secured, since the narrow understanding of threat as posed by an interstate war and a military armament is no more the primary cause of insecurity. *“It does mean, however, that proponents of Critical Security Studies, by placing 'the poor, the disadvantaged, the voiceless, the unrepresented, the powerless' at the centre of its agenda, recognize that for most of the world's population, apparently 'marginal' or 'esoteric' concerns - such as environmental security, food security and economic security - are far more real and immediate threats to security than interstate war”* (Wyn Jones, 1995, p. 309 – 310).

The central theme in the *Aberystwyth school* is thus the concept of *emancipation*, which is according to Ken Booth *“the heart of a critical theory of world security”* (Booth, 2007, p. 110). Booth conceptualizes emancipation as a will to free from any form of restraint and claims that: *“emancipation seeks the securing of people from those oppressions that stop them carrying out what they would freely choose to do, compatible with the freedom of others”* (Booth, 2007,

p. 112). Christopher S. Browning and Matt McDonald (2011) note that the *Aberystwyth school's* strive for reorientation of the critical security studies towards emancipation is “*underpinned by a belief in the mobilizing potential of security*” (Browning, McDonald, 2011, p. 239). This is the reason why the proponents of the *Aberystwyth school* are often seen as scholars of *the emancipatory realism* (Booth, 2007, Aberystwyth University, 2013).

Despite the fact that Booth (2007) notes that the emancipation shall be “*compatible with the freedom of others*”, other scholars prove that it does not necessarily need to be the case. For instance, Oluwatoyin O. Oluwaniyi (2010) notes that such emancipation could be perpetrated also in a violent way, as the author shows in her analysis of the youth militias in the Niger Delta region. The youth's impoverishment and deprivation due the oil exploration by multinational corporations in the region have led into its marginalization and radicalization, often resulting into kidnappings of Shell workers, attacks on the oil fields and other forms of violence, further destabilizing the region. Oluwaniyi (2010) notes that: “*the environmental degradation resulting from oil exploitation for over 50 years, and clamour for resource control, autonomy, and improvement in socio-economic lives, are at the heart of youth militancy in the oil-producing communities, and the resultant internal instabilities. The inability of the government and oil companies to readdress these problems culminated in the graduation of community youth from mere engagements of sporadic protests at the community level to more popular engagements worsened by the formation and activities of militant groups*” (Oluwaniyi, 2010, p. 321). This shows how the ability of the governments to provide security to the citizens have transformed from securing armament to the provision of the citizen's wellbeing, embracing also economic and environmental security. Vice – versa, the inability of the local authorities to do so might result into violent *emancipation* of the people, willing to get what they strive for – no matter what the costs are.

However, the deprivation of basic needs and the rooted inequalities within a society, or the division of *Self* and *the Other*, do not necessarily need to lead to an emancipation of the actors, but could also result into the creation of a *Protracted Social Conflict* (PSC). Edward Azar defines a protracted social conflict as a group of “*hostile interactions which extend over long periods of time with sporadic outbreaks of open warfare fluctuating in frequency and intensity*”

(Azar, Jureidini, McLaurin, 1978, p. 50). The author claims that these conflicts occur when communities' basic needs stemming from their communal identity are not fulfilled and such deprivation is linked to the role of the state and other conditions, such as historical setting, multi-communal nature of the society or a colonial heritage (Azar, 1990). In his view, such conflicts are thus caused by structural inequalities rooted in the social stratification and the relative differences of political power held by various socio-economic groups. *"The structure of inequalities implies cleavages and divisions between nations and/or social groups, while competition over access to scarce resources and the interplay of power relations implies contradictory interests. Herein lies the potential for conflict"* (Azar, Farah, 1981, p. 327).

Ronald J. Fisher (2001) has also added to the definition of protracted social conflicts that they relate to "hostile interactions between communal groups that have deep-seated racial, ethnic, religious, and cultural hatreds and which persist over long periods of time with sporadic outbreaks of violence" (Fisher, 2001, p. 308). Thus, the primary mover of the protracted social conflict is usually a pursuit of a national distinctive identity, social recognition of the identity of a community and participation on the decision-making processes, regarding the determination of identity and security, which have been previously denied. "The real source of conflict is the denial of those human needs that are common to all and whose pursuit is an ontological drive in all" (Azar, 1985, p. 50). In order to study these conflicts, the unit of analysis shall be the identity of the community (Azar, 1985). Other researchers, such as Ronald J. Fisher (2001), Jay Rothman and Marie L. Olson (2001) have also argued that the role of identity shall be studied in order to understand the protracted social conflict to the greatest possible extent, rather than the other factors, such as the strive for self-interest and resources (Fisher, 2001; Rothman, Olson, 2001).

Lene Hansen (1997, 2010), a scholar from the University of Copenhagen, uses the Foucauldian post-structuralist understanding for the studying of security and identity formation. Hansen (2010) notes in one of her academic articles that: *"Foucault's concept of genealogy, which pointed to history as produced through practices of exclusions (...) was also employed to show how key principles like diplomacy and security institutions like NATO were (...) forming understandings of Self and Other (...) National security for instance was not*

*something that could be assessed through an analysis of which threats a nation confronted, but rather a process through which “the nation” came to be produced and reproduced with a particular identity”* (Hansen, 2010).

Similarly, this thesis stems from the post-structuralist Foucauldian understanding of the creation of *Self* and *The Other* through political practices, culture, language, discourse and security, which will be further assessed. This thesis thus finds theoretical grounding in post-structuralism and Critical Security Studies, since its aim is to analyse the current security measures which are in effect in order to prevent and counter radicalization and violent extremism in Bosnia-Herzegovina in its entire complexity. In order to do so, it is also important to take notions of the construction of the identities of the ethnicities living in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the national identity. The awareness of the complexity of the ethnical problem in the region will help us to further evaluate the extent to which the security measures, which are currently in effect, are sufficient for the prevention of radicalization in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and also to propose other measures, that could be applied by local authorities in order to increase the security.

Moreover, similarly as the *Aberystwyth School*, this thesis assumes that the conflict bound within the country is stemming from the lack of fulfilment of the people’s needs, whether in terms of the recognition of their identities or in terms of their political representation, which can lead to their perception of inequality, underrepresentation and marginalization within the society. This can thus lead to their *emancipation*, which can, as Olowanyi (2010) claims, have also serious security implications, further destabilizing the region.

### **5.3. Protracted Social Conflict Theory**

However, since such emancipatory forces might not lead to a real change, the conflict can remain bounded within the society over a long period of time, which is, according to this thesis, the case of Bosnia-Herzegovina. The conflict can be thus viewed upon as a *protracted social conflict*, as defined by Edward Azar (1985), since it meets all the necessary criteria: the historical setting, the multi-communal nature of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the lack of the determination of the identities of local population have led into structural inequalities within

the society. These conditions have consequently contributed to the emergence of a hostile environment, filled with sporadic outbreaks of violence and warfare, which have, even though with diverse intensity and periodicity, persisted until these days.

The aim of the thesis is thus to assess the radicalization in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the security measures for its countering through the lenses of the *emancipation*, as described by *the Aberystwyth school* and of the Azar's theory of a *protracted social conflict*, aiming to answer the research questions about whether the current security measures are sufficient and if not, what steps could be made for the improvement of the security situation in the country.

## 6. Methodology

The aim of this thesis is to answer the research questions, regarding what are the security measures to counter radicalization in Bosnia-Herzegovina, currently in effect (Q1), whether these measures can be considered as sufficient and to what extent (Q2), and if not, what are the specific recommendations that could be implemented in order to improve the current security status quo (Q3). To do so, the practical part of this thesis is divided into two sections:

- a) the first one is dealing with the review of the security measures to counter radicalization that are currently in effect in BiH, which allows us to answer the first research question, and a comparison of the security measures, which are in effect in other countries, in order to be able to draw specific recommendations for BiH, which enables us to provide answers to the second and to the third research question
- b) the second one consists of a **coded transcription of semi-structured interviews with experts on BiH and its security situation**, conducted for the purpose of this thesis, which will provide us with valuable insights into the topic and allow us to further answer the latter two research questions, as perceived by the experts.

Considering that the knowledge about the security measures and the degree of potential necessity for their improvement is generated through the research, and it is either bound in the review of literature and the available BiH's official documents related to the security measures and the state of security, or in the opinions expressed by the security experts on BiH during the semi-structured interviews, it can be stated that this research uses an inductive approach. Since the gathered data are mostly qualitative, this entire thesis could be also considered as a qualitative research. This allows the researcher to consciously evaluate the contextual factors that might a quantitative or a statistical approach omit to a certain degree. Moreover, this thesis can be considered from a formal point of view as a single case study.

The conceptualization of *a case* and *a case study* has been contested for multiple decades and no consensus has emerged from the researchers' heated debate on the issue. However, Harry Eckstein (1975) describes a case as a "*phenomenon for which we report and*



*interpret only a single measure on any pertinent variable”* and Jack Levy thus understands a case study as *“an attempt to understand and interpret a spatially and temporally bounded set of events”* (Eckstein in George, Bennet, 2005; Levy, 2008, p. 4). For the purpose of this thesis, the selected case is the radicalization in BiH and the security measures, which are currently in effect to counter this negative phenomenon. The case study approach allows the researchers to closely examine the individual case from a broader perspective, and to achieve high conceptual validity in the process (George, Bennett, 2005). Moreover, a case study allows for a more structured and focused analysis, leading to an empirical inquiry on a particular phenomenon (Levy, 2008).

### **6.1. Review of Security Measures**

Since it has become common for researchers to use multiple methods, in order to come up with their findings and draw conclusions from them, this thesis will also combine several distinctive approaches that are described in-detail through this methodological part of the thesis (Goertz, 2016).

Firstly, this thesis provides an overview of the security measures to counter radicalization in BiH, that are currently in effect. This is done through a thorough exploration of the relevant documents and reports relevant to the state of security in BiH. The main documents that are analysed in the process are summarized in the following chapter. The first part of the practical section of this thesis could be seen as an *atheoretical/configurative case study*, since its aim is to provide an overview of the security measures, which are currently in effect in BiH (George, Bennett, 2005). Jack Levy (2008) describes this idiographic type of case study, as following: *“The aim is to describe, explain, interpret, and/or understand a single case as an end in itself rather than as a vehicle for developing broader theoretical generalizations”* (Levy, 2008, p. 4). Even though this does not necessarily cumulate or contribute to a theory, such approach provides a valuable insight into the current status quo, which further serves as a corner-stone for assessing the sufficiency of the security measures and for recommendation of other measures that could elevate the levels of security in BiH and further help the stabilization of the region. Moreover, this will provide us with the answer to the first research question (*What are the current security measures to counter extremism in Bosnia-Herzegovina?*). These

*atheoretical case studies* are often reproached to be highly descriptive and lacking theoretical framework fostering the empirical analysis (Levy, 2008). In order to compensate this descriptive part, which is though necessary for the research, this thesis continues with more interpretative and empirical parts.

Secondly, this synthesis will thus further lead to a comparison of the measures, which are currently in effect in BiH, with the security measures that are in effect in other Balkan countries, such as Croatia, Serbia or Macedonia, or in other Western European countries that had to face severe problems with radicalization resulting into strengthened security measures in the past decade. This comparison will allow us to evaluate whether there are any additional security measures, which are in effect abroad, that could be applied in BiH. Thus, the research takes in this part a form of a cross-case study. *“Cross-case analysis is a research method that facilitates the comparison of commonalities and difference in the events, activities, and processes that are the units of analyses in case studies”* (Khan, VanWynsberghe, 2008). Such approach can enhance the understanding of the relations between the individual cases, and further compare the origins, background and the consequences of the distinctive cases. *“This provides opportunities to learn from different cases and gather critical evidence to modify policy”* (Khan, VanWynsberghe, 2008).

However, such comparison needs to be perpetrated in a structured and a focused way. *“The method is “structured” in that the researcher writes general questions that reflect the research objective and that these questions are asked of each case under study to guide and standardize data collection, thereby making systematic comparison and cumulation of the findings of the cases possible. The method is “focused” in that it deals only with certain aspects of the historical cases examined”* (George, Bennett, 2005). Generally, cross-case studies often involve also a certain form of so-called typologisation – a creation of clusters or families of similar phenomena that are categorized according to precise patterns. In the end, such categorization can be used for rebuilding an ordered whole according to the previously gathered knowledge (Khan, VanWynsberghe, 2008). This thesis will thus analyse the security measures, as identified in BiH and other countries and further group them into various clusters for greater clarity. This approach will provide us with the answer to the second and research

question (To what extent can the extremism-countermeasures be improved?), based on the finding whether there is room for improvement and whether the gap could be bridged by the implementation of security measures, which are in effect in other countries. However, this is already closely related to the third research question.

Last, but not least, this will lead to the formulation of specific security-related recommendations of measures that could be applied in BiH, based on the synthesis and analysis of the security measures to counter radicalism that are implemented in other countries. This can be understood as an *interpretative case study*, or as a *discipline-configurative case study*, depending on whether we embrace the equivalent used by Arend Lijphart or by Harry Eckstein (Bennett, 2012). Generally, disciplined configurative case studies are used to explain a historically important case, or in order to provide an exemplification of a theory for pedagogical purposes. *“A disciplined configurative case can contribute to theory testing because it can impugn established theories if the theories ought to fit it but do not, and it can serve heuristic purposes by highlighting the need for new theory in neglected areas”* (George, Bennett, 2005). This last step will serve to answer the third research question (*What are the specific recommendations?*).

## **6.2. Interviews with Experts**

The second section of the practical part in this thesis further contributes to the research with other valuable observations from the point of view of distinguished experts, enabling us to formulate more elaborative and insightful answers to the second and the third research question, about whether the security measures preventing radicalization and countering it, which are currently in effect in BiH, are sufficient, and if not, what specific measures could be implemented in order to increase the level of security in BiH. In order to do so, the author of this thesis conducted three interviews with three experts on the topic of security, radicalization and violence in BiH and the counter-measures. The method of *intensive interviewing* allows us to explore a particular event or topic in its complexity and profoundness. *“The in-depth nature of an intensive interview fosters eliciting each participant's interpretation of his or her experience. The interviewer seeks to understand the topic and the interview participant has the relevant experiences to shed light on it”* (Charmaz, 2006, p. 25).

There are several fundamental principles, which need to be maintained, in order to make an interview a valuable asset to the research:

- The interviewer is there to listen, the respondent should do most of the talking,
- The interviewer shall enhance the respondent in talking by asking him broad and open-ended questions,
- The interviewer shall ask non-judgemental questions and remain objective for the entire interview,
- The interviews shall consist of semi-structured questions and the questions shall repeat in the respective interviews, in order to be able to compare the answers to those questions,
- The interviewer should listen carefully and ask the respondent to provide him further details on the topic that particularly interest him, the interviewer shall be able to skip through the parts of the interview which seem to deal with other phenomena that are not in the objective of this thesis and “setting” the respondent back on track, if necessary,
- The questions shall not include the interviewers’ pre-existing assumptions, since this could set the definitional frame and influence the responses in a way that might elicit biased and misrepresented data.

(Adopted and modified from Charmaz, 2006, p. 23 – 36)

These interviews were conducted online via Skype during a two-week period, between July 5<sup>th</sup> and July 18<sup>th</sup> 2018. During the interviews, the author attempted to maintain the above-mentioned principles, in order to gather unbiased and valid data. Despite the fact that some researchers proceed further only with coding their notes that were taken during the interviews, this thesis will code the entire transcribed interviews, since it will allow greater complexity and enhanced understanding. Such approach is endorsed also by Kathy Charmaz (2006). *“Coding full interview transcriptions gives you ideas and understandings that you otherwise miss. Thus, the method of data collection not only forms your materials, but also*

*frames your codes. Coding full transcriptions can bring you to a deeper level of understanding*" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 70).

In order to further work with the data, the interviews are thoroughly coded after the transcription. In the first stage of coding (*initial coding*), each segment of data is coded for the purpose of gathering the greatest amount of codes, necessary to capture the ideas of the respondents in their complexity. *"Initial codes are provisional, comparative, and grounded in the data. They are provisional because you aim to remain open to other analytic possibilities and create codes that best fit the data you have"* (Charmaz, 2006, p. 48).

During the initial coding, the researcher will attempt to use *open-codes*, aiming to deduce codes from the text and to avoid subjectivity and interpretation at this point, since this could spoil the data (Charmaz, 2006; Rivas, 2012). If possible, the researcher will attempt to use also the slang and metaphorical expressions used by the respondents (*so-called in-vivo codes*), in order to be able to capture the slightest nuances in their statements, and not missing any important hints (Rivas, 2012). This is followed by thorough reading of the codes, allowing the researcher to "dive" into the data and to understand the respondent's point of view as thoroughly, as possible. There are several options on how a researcher can approach the coding, it can be either *a word-by-word coding, a line-by-line coding or a incident-by-incident coding*. This thesis will further elaborate with the *line-by-line coding*, since it is the most common used method in the initial part of the coding (Charmaz, 2006). Charmaz (2006) also states further advantages of this particular approach to coding: *"Line-by-line coding works particularly well with detailed data about fundamental empirical problems or processes whether these data consist of interviews, observations, documents, or ethnographies and autobiographies"* (Charmaz, 2006, p. 50). During the coding, it is important to maintain the codes close to their initial meaning (*in-vivo codes*), keep them simple and precise, and also short, if possible. In addition, coding as quickly as possible can enhance the precision and intuitiveness and avoid misinterpretation of the data, which could be a result of deep contemplations over which code to assert to the specific line (Charmaz, 2006; Rivas, 2012).

In the second stage of coding, the researcher is able to distinguish the most frequently used codes and to synthesize, integrate and select them in order to further group them into

categories. This stage is so-called *focused coding* and is considered as a more direct, conceptual and selective part of coding (Charmaz, 2006). This shall be done until the point of a *thematic saturation* is reached, meaning that no further codes/categories/subcategories are emerging from the text (Rivas, 2012).

The third stage of coding is called *axial coding*, allowing the researcher to link categories with subcategories. In this stage, the aim of the coder is to bring back together the previously separated data and to integrate them into a coherent whole (Charmaz, 2006).

In order to be able to provide certain levels of traceability and transparency to the coding, the researchers are often advised to create detailed memos, in which they shall provide reasons for each of the analytical steps they decided to make. These memos shall be sorted out according to their relevancy and further re-written until they emerge into the first draft. Kathy Charmaz illustrates this process, which she uses for the construction of *grounded-*

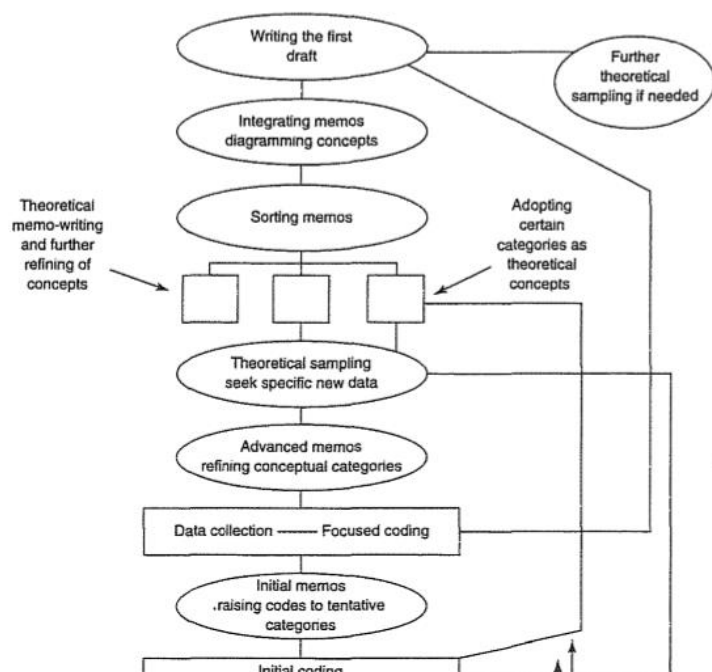


Figure 4: The process of coding and writing memos in a research. Source: Charmaz (2006, p. 11)

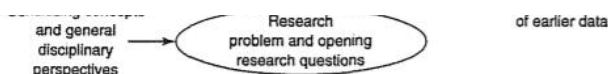


FIGURE 1.1 The grounded theory process

theory, in the following diagram.

This thesis will further on work with the writing of initial and advanced memos, which will be used in order to integrate the codes into a coherent unit. In the end, the final codes (categories of codes/themes) will be used in order to draw a conclusion from them, providing us with the experts' views on whether the security measures applied in BiH are sufficient and what could be done to improve the security situation in the country.

However, it is also important to bear in mind that the experts' responses do not necessarily need to reflect the reality, since they serve merely as their perception of what they consider as real. Charmaz (2006) puts it simply: "*The result is a construction-or reconstruction-of a reality. Interview stories do not reproduce prior realities*" (Charmaz, 2006, p. 27). This constructivist understanding is crucial, since it is not possible to draw definite conclusions from these interviews and they rather serve as a complement and an enhancement to the answers to research questions, provided by the synthetical overview of the security measures, which are currently in effect and the comparison with measures that are implemented in other countries, rather than answers to the research questions per se.

On the other hand, the experts' views stand on their extensive knowledge on the issue of radicalization and violent extremism in BiH and are often bounded in their empirical experience, which provides us with very insightful information that could not have been obtained by any other quantitative or qualitative research method.

### **6.3. Hypotheses**

This thesis assumes that the security measures, which are currently in effect in BiH, are not sufficient and further measures could be implemented, in order to further support the deradicalization and vice-versa stabilization of the region. The specific measures, which could be implemented in BiH, might be inspired by the security measures existing in other Balkan and Western European countries, that are also dealing with the increased level of radicalization and are seeking strengthened security measures to counter this negative phenomenon, as it is in the case of BiH. This thesis thus works with the following hypotheses:

H1: "The current state of security measures countering extremism in Bosnia-Herzegovina is insufficient.

H2: "There is much room for implementing other specific measures."

In order to either confirm or disprove these hypotheses, the above-mentioned methods will be used. The results are summarized in the following chapters.

#### **6.4. Limits of the research**

The above-mentioned methodological approach has also its limitations, which need to be addressed. First of all, the overview of security measures, which are currently in effect in BiH, is perpetrated by thorough analysis of official state's documents, and the findings are further grouped into categories. However, it is possible that some of the measures were adopted recently and cannot be found in any official document or that these documents have not been translated to English yet. The language barrier and the lack of the translated security documents might lead to missing up some of the crucial information. This thesis thus aims to work also with official documents that can be found only in Bosnian language. Since the author of this thesis does not possess the knowledge of the Bosnian language to a satisfactory level needed to thoroughly understand these documents, available interlingual translator tools will be used, targeting to grasp major security measures stated and/or discussed. However, the author is aware that this can inherently lead to several flaws, which cannot be further limited, and can be only discussed during the interviews with experts, in order to provide more clarity and insights into the measures that are currently in effect.

Moreover, the comparison of the security measures, which are in effect in other countries, lacks further internal validity, since there is no precise key in choosing the countries, which will be evaluated. This thesis takes rather a selective and measures-oriented approach, meaning that it is necessary to admit the possibility of a selection bias in this part of the research. On the other hand, it is not the aim of this thesis to provide a thorough comparative study, but rather to detect and further point out specific security measures, which are in effect abroad, and that could help to enhance the security levels in BiH, if implemented. For this reason, the selection bias is not considered as the greatest hindrance of the research. Also, it is possible that the official documents in other Balkan countries will not be translated to English either, thus the author of this research will aim to translate them in the process, if necessary.



Finally, it is necessary to address the limitations bound in the last section of the practical part of this research – the interviews and their coding. It is not surprising that coding is as a method inherently subjective, which is another shortcoming of a qualitative research perpetrated in the form of intensive interviews. Kathy Charmaz (2006) formulated this limitation of the method, as following: *“We construct our codes because we are actively naming data-even when we believe our codes form a perfect fit with actions and events in the studied world. We may think our codes capture the empirical reality. Yet it is our view: we choose the words that constitute our codes”* (Charmaz, 2006, p. 47). This can be countered by writing thorough memos, putting down the precise reasoning beyond every analytical decision and re-reading these notes, in order to maintain the greatest possible level of objectivity and consistency. Despite the fact that the author is not aware of any major and intentional subjectivity or inconsistency within the codes, these limits are certainly bound within the method and thus need to be bore in mind.

What can be suggested for further research is to continue with the findings of this thesis and to further evaluate, whether the detected specific measures actually helped to decrease the levels of radicalization, instability and violent extremism in other countries, what was their precise effect on the population and what costs did these measures come up with. It was beyond the scope of this initial research to deal with precise measurements and statistical inference stemming from the causal relationships between the concrete security measures and the security levels in the respective countries. Further analysis would help to build upon the knowledge generated by this thesis and complement it, helping to evaluate whether the proposed specific recommendation would truly help, if implemented in BiH.

## 7. Security Measures in Bosnia-Herzegovina

This chapter provides an overview of security-related measures, such as extremism-countering, radicalization-preventing or deradicalization measures, which are currently in effect in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Summary of the analysed documents is available below. Excerpt of the sources used in order to collect information on the security measures is listed below:

- Strategic documents and Action Plans available in English on the website of the Ministry of Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina,
- Council of Ministers' of BiH Strategy of Bosnia and Herzegovina for Preventing and Combating Terrorism 2015 – 2020, 2020,
- Zakon o OSA-OBA BiH,
- Reports of the Prosecutor's Office of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Tužilaštvo Bosne i Hercegovine),
- United States, Department of State, Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism: Country Reports on Terrorism,
- Council of Europe: Committee of Experts on Terrorism Profiles on Counter-Terrorism Capacity,
- Library of US Congress: Treatment of Foreign Fighters in Selected Jurisdictions: Country Surveys,
- Her Majesty's Government.

Further notions about newly passed counter-extremism laws and other security measures were collected from press releases and press reports, available either on the website of the Ministry of Security of Bosnia and Herzegovina, or in online media, such as Reuters, Balkan Insight, and local media, such as Večernji.hr and Vijesti.ba.

Later on, this chapter includes an analysis of the security measures, which are in effect in other Balkan and Western European countries, that were implemented in the last decade and that were fighting with increased levels of radicalization and thus threats to security. Last, but not least, this chapter merges the security measures, which are in effect in the other analysed countries, and suggests which of them could be implemented in BiH, in order to increase the levels of security in the post-war BiH.

## 7.1. Security Measures Currently in Effect in BiH

Level of security has increased over the past years, which could be also thanks for several new laws passed by the Parliament of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Most of the new laws, regulations and security-related measures are summarized in the table below. The security measures, which are currently in effect in BiH, were divided into ***domestic security measures*** and ***international security measures***.

The specific measures were also divided accordingly to the area they cover, whether it is in terms of law enforcement, helping internally displaced people or dealing with the foreign fighters. The specific measures are further on divided into categories, for greater clarity.

The most commonly mentioned security measures include legal amendments, such as speeding up the trials and more severe incarcerations seem to be working. The Atlantic Initiative report, obtained by the Reuters, noted that the number of Bosnian fighters, that fled to Iraq and Syria, estimated at 188 in the three-year period to end-2015, had dramatically decreased to 91. The others were either killed in the battle or returned to the country (Sito-Sucic, 2016). Daria Sito-Sucic (2016), a reporter from The Reuters, stated that: *“Departures from Bosnia and returns from Syria had almost completely stopped by early 2016 because Bosnian authorities were prosecuting more aspiring fighters as well as those who returned”* (Sito-Sucic, 2016). The other security measures, which are currently in effect in BiH and are considered as successful, are related to a more thorough approach towards smugglers with illegal weapons flowing in and out of the country, which is dangerous in both ways.

For instance, it is assumed that there are currently about 750 000 illegal weapons in BiH, held by local citizens, mostly as “left-overs” from the war. This number seems even more outrageous compared to 145 000 weapons held altogether by all state agencies in Bosnia-Herzegovina (UNDP, 2015). Moreover, these are an export article, which many experts consider as a security threat to the rest of Europe, as well. The ammunition that was used in a terrorist attack on a French journal Charlie Hebdo in 2015 was produced in Bosnia-Herzegovina, in the Igman Ammunition Factory in Konjic (UNDP, 2015). However, some experts think that much more progress should be made on this issue, which is later on mentioned in the specific recommendations.

**Domestic security measures:**

| Year | Category            | Security measure   |
|------|---------------------|--|
| 2003 | Legal               | Criminalisation of participation in terrorism, acts of terrorism and their financing   |
| 2005 | Legal               | Constitutional amendments that allowed the government to strip of citizenship those who obtained the citizenship in a fraudulent way   |
| 2006 | Legal               | Establishing Citizenship Review Commission (CRC), which helped to get rid of foreign fighters from Afghanistan and Middle East, that remained in BiH after the end of the war  |
| 2008 | Legal               | Adopting a police reform, resulting into greater supervision of the police force and coordination between local and federal police support agencies  |
| 2014 | Legal               | Extending the maximum time of imprisonment for convicted terrorists to a maximum of 10 years (later were increased to 20 years), and establishing new minimum prison sentences for terrorists' recruiters (5 years) and foreign fighters (3 years)                                   |
| 2015 | In-field efforts    | Combating illegal transfers of weapons to terrorists in Western Europe, arresting the suspects on the borders  |
| 2015 | In-field efforts    | Creating a team of experts tasked specifically with identifying and destroying smugglers of illegal weapons in and out of the country  |
| 2015 | Legal               | Creation of the first complex plan to counter terrorism in the Balkans, so-called Strategy for Preventing and Combating Terrorism  |
| 2016 | Preventive measures | Preventive effort of the Islamic Community, calling upon the possibly radicalized members of the para-jamaats (Salafists) to either join the official Muslim communities or to face legal charges, which was an attempt to have a certain control over the imams and their preaching |

Figure 5: Examples of domestic security measures in BiH. Sources: Council of Europe; 2014; US Department of State, 2005; US Department of State, 2006; Library of Congress, NA; Global Legal Monitor, 2008; European Commission, 2016; UNDP, 2015

On the other hand, the successes are halted by multiple international reports, which suggest that the coordination amongst local police and other authorities is missing, which is caused mostly by personal, political and institutional rivalry of the concerned agencies and

persons. US Department of State (2005, 2006) thus noted that this led to the *“insufficient sentencing for terrorism suspects, and poor investigations into recruitment and terror financing”*. In 2016, European Commission issued a Report on Bosnia-Herzegovina, in which it praises that Bosnia-Herzegovina made considerable progress in the fight against organized crime, mostly due to the improved cooperation amongst the concerned agencies (European Commission, 2016). However, other legal imperfections and drawbacks were emphasised. The European Commission (2016) noted that: *“The financial investigations need to be stepped up. Fighting organised crime remains fundamental to countering criminal infiltration of the political, legal and economic system of the country. Bosnia and Herzegovina still need to meet international standards on anti-money laundering and countering the financing of terrorism.”*

The following table provides a brief overview of the international security measures, which are in effect in BiH. Majority of them is related to the increased cooperation of Bosnian agencies and institutions with neighbouring states, most notably Serbia and Croatia, and also with the international institutions, such as UN, OSCE and EU agencies.

**International security measures:**

| Year | Category                  | Security measure   |
|------|---------------------------|--|
| 2015 | International cooperation | Bosnian agencies cooperate with Interpol, based in Sarajevo, with other UN, US, and EU agencies  |
| 2015 | International cooperation | Bosnia’s cooperation with neighbouring countries (Serbia and Croatia) and their law enforcement agencies is improved, US report says   |
| 2015 | International Cooperation | Peace-keeping and peace-building by OSCE continues to improve the situation  |
| 2016 | International Cooperation | De-radicalisation of youth and identifying their motivation for joining radicals, a joint action of Bosnian and Serb security services |
| 2016 | International Cooperation | Bosnia is helping the international coalition to fight ISIS, donating more than 570 tons of ammunition                                 |

Figure 6: Examples of international security measures in BiH. Sources: Council of Europe; 2014; US Department of State, 2005; US Department of State, 2006; Library of Congress, NA; Global Legal Monitor, 2008; European Commission, 2016; UNDP, 2015; Reuters, 2015

**7.2. Security Measures in Effect in Other Countries**

This chapter will continue with an overview of the security measures in effect in other European countries. This overview could serve as a possible inspiration for BiH's future security measures implementation. This thesis does not by far aim to list and/or analyse the full portion of the respective countries' security measures, moreover, it does select those that might be of relevance for the case of BiH. The selected countries include those possessing similar characteristic traits to BiH (multi-ethnic society) as well as countries which are in a completely different setting regarding counter extremism and counter terrorism, though represent a prime example of efficient implementation of security measures in today's world. Measures are categorised according to their character and/or main purpose for their implementation.

They repeatedly include working with the youth in order to prevent radicalisation, as well as other forms of prevention of the spread of both far-left and far-right extremism. Special category is dedicated to the measures countering Islamist extremism/Jihadism, with the emphasis on engaging the Islamic communities present in the respective countries. For the full list of selected measures, see Figure below.

|                  |   |   |
|------------------|---|---|
| CRIMINALISATION  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhancement of border security and surveillance</li> <li>• Criminalisation of activities related to terrorism, such as acts of terrorism, financing of terrorism, recruiting and training of terrorist actors</li> <li>• Introducing a law enabling to deport legal residents from abroad, which have been suspected of engaging in terrorist activities, without a formal ruling or charge</li> <li>• Programme rewarding citizens for coming forward with information about suspected terrorist activities</li> <li>• Criminalisation of instances of leaving the country to commit "terrorist activities, war crimes or crimes against humanity" ("Patriot Act")</li> </ul> | Albania<br>Albania<br>Belgium<br>Turkey<br>France |
| ISLAMISM-related | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engaging the Islamic Community in combating security threat posed by radicalized Muslims</li> <li>• "Stop-Djihadisme" campaign – measures related to education, prison systems, legislation and law enforcement</li> </ul>   | Albania<br>France                                 |

|                    |   |   |
|--------------------|---|---|
| STRATEGIC MEASURES | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishment of Centre against Violent Extremism and the office of a “national coordinator” combating violent</li> <li>• National Counter-Extremism Strategy – focusing on four areas: education, engagement with religious leaders, economic opportunity and research</li> <li>• a complex and thorough strategy for countering terrorism – prevention, protection, stoppage and mitigation of (acts of) terrorism (CONTEST)</li> <li>• A task force created in order to establish a national counterextremism and counterterrorism strategy</li> <li>• Establishment of the Joint Counter-Extremism and Terrorism Centre (GETZ) – with the aim to counter both far-right as well as far-left extremism and terrorism</li> </ul>   | <p>Albania</p> <p>Albania</p> <p>United Kingdom</p> <p>Belgium</p> <p>Germany</p> |
| PREVENTION         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prevention of home-grown radicalisation in order to help launch community-based initiatives</li> <li>• Censuring far-right racist rhetoric as well as jihadist propaganda by creating a task force consisting of government agencies, industry associations, technology companies as well as activists in order to combat online hate</li> <li>• Light weapons and small arms amnesty and destruction</li> <li>• Preventing the impact of propaganda and extremism by approaching the potentially affected communities as early as possible – Turkish National Police programme and Directorate of Religious Affairs (Diyanet)</li> <li>• Government’s coordination with app. 3000 institutions (schools, universities and religious organisations) in order to reach and monitor as many individuals as possible</li> </ul> | <p>Germany</p> <p>Germany</p> <p>Serbia</p> <p>Turkey</p> <p>United Kingdom</p>   |

Figure 7: Security Measures in Effect in Selected Countries. Sources: Alliance for Peace Building, 2016; Bogdani, 2016; Sehmer, 2016; Mejdini, 2016; U.S. Department of State, 2015A; U.S. Department of State, 2014; Schreuer, 2017; Lowe, 2016; U.S. Department of State 2016; Coolsaet and Struye de Swielande, 2007; Consulate General Istanbul, 2015; U.S. Department of State, 2015B; Bender, Schechner, 2015; BBC, 2015; Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz, 2012; Scholz, 2015; Her Majesty’s Government, 2017; Her Majesty’s Government, 2011; Her Majesty’s Government, 2016; Her Majesty’s Government, 2015

### 7.3. Specific Recommendations

As shown in the overviews in the first two parts of this chapter, it is obvious that there is much room for implementing further security measures in BiH. The measures to be

implemented should cover extensive range of issues, from prevention of radicalisation, extremism and terrorism, further and stricter criminalisation of terrorist activities, engaging Islamic communities as well as more systemic measures – of more long-term and strategic character. Proposals of specific security measures recommendations can be found below, together with the reasoning and current issues that need to be tackled.

| <b>Proposed security measure</b>   | <b>Issue to be covered</b>  |
|--|---|
| Reinforcing border patrol and surveillance   | Uncontrolled migration waves; influx of potential extremists, terrorists                |
| Further reintegration of state structure in terms of increasing security, countering terrorism, extremism and radicalisation | Vast decentralisation   |
| Conclude specific security/police reforms  | Stagnation of the EU/NATO integration   |
| Nation-wide small arms and light guns amnesties and destruction  | Excess of uncontrolled arms distributed in the society                                  |
| Engage Islamic communities   | Tensions among ethnic groups  |
| Coordinate with schooling institutions in order to monitor and educate the youth   | Long-term threat of rising radicalisation and extremism                                 |
| Create task force in order to establish a nation-wide counterterrorism and counterextremism strategy                         | Unsystematic, decentralised and/or missing counterterrorism/counterextremism programmes |

*Figure 8: Specific security measures proposals. Source: Author*

The security measures proposals both reflect the current measures in effect in BiH and are inspired by the measures from other countries analysed above. It is advisable if, once being implemented, these measures were all incorporated into a comprehensive, complex and thorough nation-wide strategy.



## 8. Results of the Interviews

In order to be able to cover experts' perspective on the security situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina and to outline the areas which could be improved, possibly even recommending specific security-related measures that could help to elevate the security situation in BiH, the author of this thesis conducted three interviews with three experts, who provided many valuable insights. This chapter provides a brief background to the interviews, summarizes the main findings and content of the interviews and further on explores the process and results of the coding, which enabled to provide additional answers to the previously asked research questions. This chapter ends with several specific security recommendation, as formulated by the experts.

### 8.1. Background

The interviews were firstly scheduled via e-mail throughout June – July 2018 and were later on conducted via Skype in the two-week period between 5.7. – 18.7. 2018. The respective respondents did not have access to the questions before the interview, in order to gather more authentic and independent responses. All of the respondents were offered the possibility of authorization of the interviews and none of them chose this option.

The interviewees names and positions are stated below:

- Denis Hadžović, PhD., Director of The Centre for Security Studies in Sarajevo
- Iva Svobodová, PhD., Programme Support Officer, People in Need, Sarajevo
- Jasmin Hasić, PhD., National Director of Humanity in Action Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo

The table below summarizes the dates the interviews were held, the precise time of the beginning of the interviews, as well as the duration of the respective interviews.

| Interview | Name           | Date       | Beginning | Duration         |
|-----------|----------------|------------|-----------|------------------|
| A         | Denis Hadžović | 5.7. 2018  | 10:57     | 20 min., 41 sec. |
| B         | Iva Svobodová  | 16.7. 2018 | 20:04     | 25 min., 36 sec. |
| C         | Jasmin Hasić   | 18.7. 2018 | 20:03     | 29 min., 34 sec. |

*Figure 9: The overview of the interviews and their parameters. Source: Author*

These interviews consisted of semi-structured questions, which were prepared before the interviews, although, as Kathy Charmaz (2006) suggests, there was no point in sticking only to the prepared questions and the author of this thesis rather followed the thoughts expressed by the respective respondents and encouraged them to continue, if they were still providing insights into the topic of this thesis.

The transcription of the entire interviews can be found in the appendices, although an example of the questions that were asked during the interviews is provided below:

- What is the current state of security in Bosnia-Herzegovina?
- Do you see any specific reason for the improvement of the situation?
- Do you see any imminent security threat in the current Bosnia-Herzegovina?
- You've mentioned that one of the major concerns of Bosnians is that they live in a fragile environment. Where do you see the origin of that?
- What, in your view, might be the overlying principal root of creating the environment that provides for a state of insecurity in Bosnia that you've just described?
- Do you have any specific recommendations for security measures to be implemented in current Bosnia-Herzegovina?
- What is it that makes it so much more difficult for Bosnia-Herzegovina, when compared to other countries of the former Yugoslavia?
- Where do you see the reason for the rising trend of nationalism and far-right movements?
- What is the reason for the lack of state and legal security? What might be done in order to improve the situation?
- Why is the government unable to tackle the current migration crisis?
- Is there anything that can be done from a broader perspective?

The respondents' answers to the questions overlapped considerably, often portraying the same point of view on the same/related issues, such as political instability, unwillingness and inability of the local politicians to stabilize and elevate the situation, or the migration crisis,

even though all of them focused pre-dominantly on the topics they considered to be the most important – and these were rather different in all of the cases.

Denis Hadzović (interview A), stated that the state security measures are sufficient, which could be supported by the most recent data about criminality and the numbers of foreign fighters leaving for Iraq and Syria, both steadily decreasing over the past period. On the other hand, he noted that there is not much improvement in reconciliation and that the overall situation in BiH could be considered as fragile, which is caused mostly by the political elites. Hadzović claims that the politicians find the current situation convenient and they further spread nationalism and emphasise ethnic differences in order to help themselves in the elections. Later in the interview, he focused on the lack of the support of international community and on the lack of politicians' efforts to enhance the BiH's Euroatlantic integration, concluding with a firm statement about the Dayton peace accord being outdated and should be replaced by some other arrangement closer to the Brussels' idea of a functioning state.

Iva Svobodová (interview B) focused in her answers mostly on the underneath tensions which are still present in the Bosnian society and that can anytime cause serious turmoil in the country. Svobodová also focused on the migration crisis, stating that the recent increase in the numbers of the undocumented migrants is not being sufficiently handled by the government, since the refugee camps are not prepared for such high number of migrants. Moreover, this crisis poses in her eyes a "silent threat". The expert focuses also on the socio-economic aspects of the malfunctioning in BiH, such as the high unemployment rates, high corruption levels and the inequality rooted in the society due to its post-Daytonian administrative decentralization. This could be, in her eyes, eliminated also by an enhanced attempt to join the EU. Svobodová, unlike the other two experts, focuses also on the possible foreign influence that might other countries, such as Turkey and Saudi Arabia's Wahhabi regime have in BiH. The author demonstrates this on the financial flows from these countries, which often take the form of a support to children in low-income families, and might possibly result into attempts to shape their upbringing in a certain way, favourable to the foreign ideology.

Jasmin Hasić (interview C) also stated that the maintenance of the security in the post-war country can be seen as successful, since there were no any major nation-wide conflicts

ever since the end of the war. On the other hand, the expert acknowledges other negative societal interactions, such as between the locals and the migrants in Bihać and Velika Kladuša. The situation is according to him mishandled and this is caused both by the unwillingness of the political elites to invest into solving the issue, as well as by the confusion of what are the competencies of the local authorities and the police and what could be done – this is also a negative inheritance of the Dayton peace treaty and its complicated implementation. Hasić also assumes that an accession to EU and NATO would help to solve the situation, even though he also criticizes the international community for the lack of interest in the long-lasting peace in the region, and accuses the actors of pursuing mainly the goals which were favourable for themselves alone.

The full transcripts of the interviews can be found in the appendices, since they include many insightful ideas, that could not have been grasped by the brief paragraphs, that were stated above as an illustration.

## **8.2. Coding Process**

Interviewees' responses were processed as described in the chapter 5 of this thesis, which deals with methodology. The interviews were thoroughly transcribed and edited, in order to be able to be coded manually, according to the guidance provided by Kathy Charmaz (2006). The initial stage of coding used open codes, which stemmed from the precise wording used by the experts (in-vivo codes). The initial coding, which was perpetrated as a line-by-line coding, generated 190 open codes, 67 of them in interview A, 67 in interview B and 56 open codes in interview C. In the second stage of so-called focused coding, the author selected the most frequent codes and grouped them into categories. In the end of the second phase of coding, the author grouped the codes into 19 different categories and since no other categories could have been created, nor stemmed from the gathered data, this was considered as the point of a thematic saturation and thus the categories are considered as the final codes, sometimes called as themes (Rivas, 2009).

The following chart provides an overview of the most often used categories of codes and of the number of assigned codes:

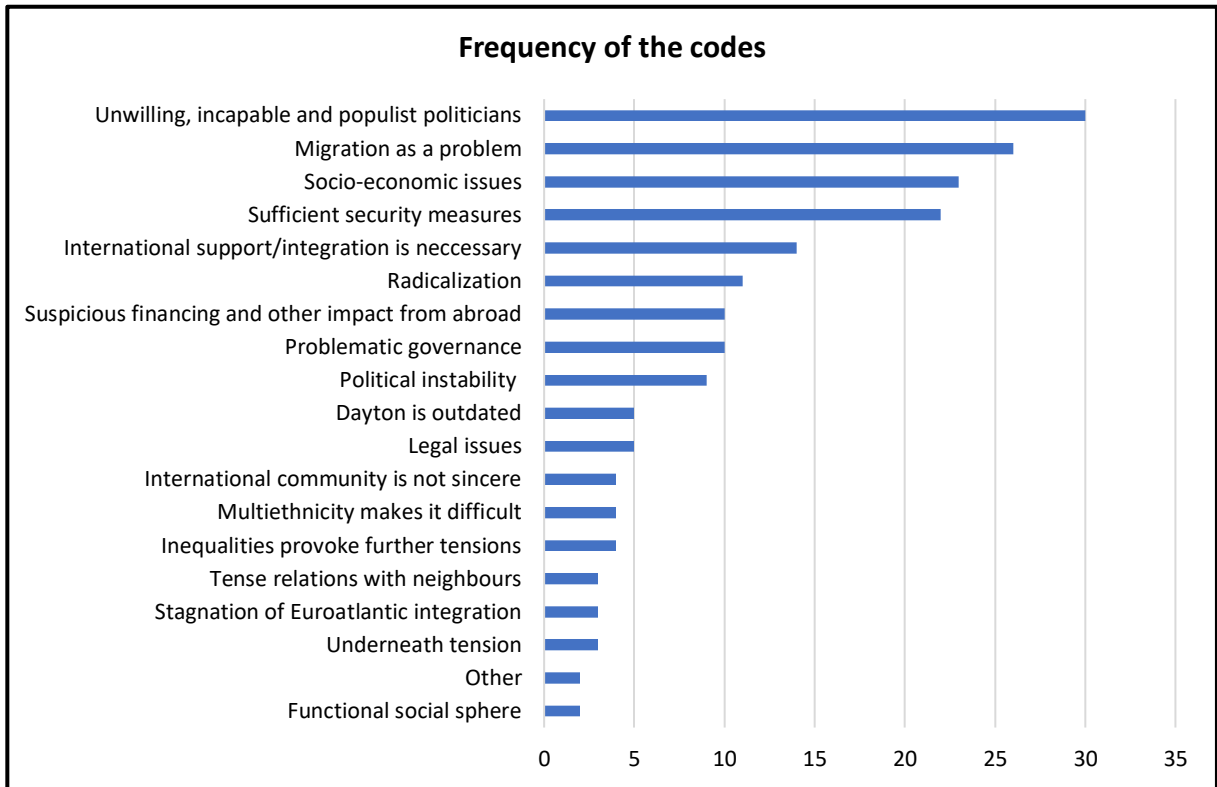


Figure 10: The overview of the frequency of codes developed from the interviews. Source: Author

The graph shows that the codes used most often by the respondents, in reference to the security situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina, were related to the perception of the local politicians as unwilling to tackle the situation, to solve the migration crisis, to rather integrate the country into the EU and NATO and to help to bridge over the tensions in the multi-ethnic nation. Instead of that, the politicians often emphasize the differences, re-iterate the division between *the Self and the Other*, seeking to stay in power. As the experts mentioned, this nationalistic rhetoric is obviously often used shortly before the elections, when they count on the citizens' votes. Moreover, the post-Daytonian ethnic division of administration, which created the overly complex and often redundant bureaucratic apparatus, is very convenient for them, since the country's union could mean for them losing their well-paid governmental jobs. As Iva Svobodová noted in the interview: *"The country is very decentralised, there are more than 150 ministries in total, and the jobs in government are very well paid. One of the obvious reasons is to do everything to keep these positions, by creating the need for separation of the ethnicities and nations"*.

The second most common code was migration as a problem – an issue addressed by all three respondents, who perceived the current crisis as a pressing issue, and the governmental inability and unwillingness to tackle it as a challenge to the country's security. Hasić described the situation with migrant as *“very disturbing”*. Most of the migrant are according to him located in two cities – Bihać and Velika Kladuša, that are not further than approximately 70 kilometres from each other. Hasić noted that: *“Walking on the streets of Bihać in the past three days, I personally felt more secure during the war. It's a completely uncontrolled area of migrants being left on the streets, there is absolutely no police patrol, migrants are walking around in groups, there have been multiple reports of attempted rape, theft and murder”*.

The third most commonly used code for the experts' answers were *socio-economic issues*. All of them agree that the economic situation of locals is poor and high unemployment rate, mostly among the youth, often reaching 50%, is not helping the situation, at all. The words that the experts use to describe the life situation of the people include *“general frustration”*, *“lack of perspective”* and *“no possibility to progress”*. Iva Svobodová put it blatantly: *“Many people just get this feeling that there is no one who cares for their rights and is willing to fight for them. In such an environment, obviously, these populist, nationalist parties seem to have the right answers for these problems”*. Answers of the experts suggest that the sole implementation of enhanced security measures will not be sufficient to improve the country's situation and that this needs to be accompanied with a real political effort to increase the standard of living of the people. This means guaranteeing them jobs, social security, legal security, proper education and other aspects which are a must in a democratic state of the 21st century, and thus providing them with a sense of hope for the future, possibly preventing their radicalization or the creation of further tensions in the society.

### **8.3. Conceptualization of the categories of codes**

In order to understand the codes properly, this sub-chapter provides a thorough conceptualization of the 19 categories, each one of them respectively, which were assigned to the 190 codes. The conceptualization includes examples of the most specific codes that were included in the corresponding categories. The categories are lined-out according to their frequency (as seen in the bar chart above).

- **Unwilling, incapable and populist politicians** – The most frequent category of codes includes all the notions about the unwillingness of the Bosnian politicians to tackle the issues that the country is suffering from, whether it is a migration crisis or an unsuccessful reconciliation. Moreover, this category includes codes referring to the populism of local politicians, who tend to spread fear and emphasise ethnic differences amongst the population, in order to distinguish *the Self* from *the Other* and to gain more political support in the elections. These notions are, for instance: *politicians want to establish insecurity, politicians are not willing to improve the situation, the political level is not willing to settle improvements in the common BiH*. In addition, this category also includes codes regarding the lack of professionalism and incapability of politicians to deal with all kinds of issues, being represented by references, such as the following ones: *the approach of BiH's authorities is unserious, the incompetency and the unwillingness of the authorities with the migrants' situation, BiH's authorities are not capable to continue with the reforms*. This category also includes notions about the *immaturity of the politicians*, which is in direct opposition to the presumption of the Dayton peace accords, which assumed the mature and forward-thinking politicians would be able to navigate the country through the upcoming decades into the Euro-Atlantic community – which is still far from becoming a reality.
- **Migration as a problem** – The codes revolving around the migration crisis in BiH were grouped under the umbrella category “*migration as a problem*”, since all of them have a negative connotation – whether in terms of the security implications, or in terms of the governmental inability to tackle the crisis. Some of the codes used: *migration undermines security situation, the influx of migrant causes insecurity, migrants pose a silent threat, the situation with migrant is very disturbing and that the locals are afraid of migrants or that the people are afraid to go out in the streets because of migrants*. However, some of the other codes include also notions about mistreatments of migrants, the lack of healthcare and security they are entitled to

in BiH and also about the inhuman conditions in the overcrowded refugee camps in Bosnia.

- **Socio-economic issues** – This category of codes embraces most of the codes related to the current issues that the citizens in BiH are dealing with, whether the issues refer to economic instances, such as *low standard of living, unemployment (among youth), sky-high corruption or to the fact that corruption level in BiH is the same as in Somalia*. Other codes refer to social issues, such as to *religious intolerance, social security, general frustration of the public and the lack of perspective*.
- **Sufficient security measures** – This category was used for codes, which implied that the security measures, which are currently in effect in BiH, are sufficient and/or have simply contributed to the elevated and stabilized levels of security, which the country is witnessing. These codes included notions that: *“the level of crime is moderate”*, also that *“there is no imminent terrorist threat”* and that the *“security intelligence agencies control returnees from Iraq and Syria”*, not to forget the elementary statements that the overall security is sufficient, good or simply satisfactory.
- **International support/integration is necessary** – The codes referring to the necessity of the support of the international community, often being represented by NATO and/or EU. The experts often openly expressed how important the international assistance and even pressure is for the future of the country, which can be understood from some of the codes: *we need support from the international community, progress can't continue without the international support, we will not be able to resolve (the conflict) without the international assistance*. Other notions referred to the need to speed up the process of the country's integration into EU and NATO.
- **Radicalisation** – This category consists of multiple codes related to youth extremism, radicalisation as a root for tensions, Wahhabism, foreign fighters, but also increased nationalism and far right movements. Such radicalisation is currently in the centre



of the interest of the international community, when it comes to BiH, which is also reflected in some of the codes.

- **Suspicious financing and other impact from abroad** – This category includes suspicions from foreign attempts to get influence in BiH, mostly in the form of financial support of local camps, activities, or in the form of investments in Bosnia. These financial flows are not properly monitored, despite the fact that the vast resources, coming from Turkey and Saudi Arabia, might possibly be used to finance radicalisation and the activities of local radicals.
- **Problematic governance** – This category of codes includes notions about the post-Daytonian complexity of the administrative multi-ethnic structure of Bosnia-Herzegovina, which creates all sorts of problems. These include codes, such as: reforms are difficult to manage due to complex constitutional structure, *reforms take more time compared to other countries with clear constitutional structure*, *peace accord created structures that are not easy to be implemented*. This category also includes codes about how the local authorities feel the lack and unclarity of their competences, and how these competences often overlap in the complex structure of the Bosnian governance.
- **Political instability** – This category contains references to the fragility of the political situation in BiH, as well as how such instability seems to be convenient to politicians, who benefit from it (or at least attempt to do so). Moreover, this category includes notions about the legal instability stemming from the political one – such as the code saying *the laws are constantly changing*, contextually suggesting that this leads to the increased dissatisfaction and frustration of locals with the life in Bosnia-Herzegovina.
- **Dayton is outdated** – The title of this code could not be any clearer. The experts expressed multiple times the idea that the peace accord from Dayton, Ohio, is simply outdated, no longer reflecting the Bosnian efforts to move from its post-war vulnerability and to reintegrate as a country. This category was also used when the

experts expressed the opinion that Dayton should be replaced, or that some of its arrangements should be moved to Brussels.

- **Legal issues** – The experts often mentioned the lack of legal aid available to Bosnians, but also how this function of the state is often substituted by the NGOs. This category also includes very simple references stating that the legal security in the country is insufficient, or that it could be improved.
- **International community is not sincere** – This category fosters multiple codes mentioning how the Bosnian people feel about the international community's efforts to help BiH only in order to contain the war in the region and to prevent it to spread across the continent to their respective countries. This category was also used for codes expressing that the international community, whether meant in general, or in relation to the EU, is securing its own goals, rather than seeking a long-lasting peace in the Balkans. Such negative connotation could be also found in relation to the EU's efforts to keep the migrants in Bosnia and prevent them from passing through the Croatian borders – entering the EU.
- **Multiethnicity makes it difficult** – This is a category for codes mentioning how difficult it is for Bosnia to deal with its current issues, mainly due to its multiethnicity, which, in contrast to other Balkan countries, such as Kosovo and Macedonia, consists not of two, but three ethnicities.
- **Inequalities provoke further tensions** – This category of codes involves references to the inequalities amongst various ethnicities, social classes or administrative units, which provoke further tensions. One example for all: this category includes a reference about the inequality of state aid provided to war victims and war veterans in Republika Srpska compared to the federation.
- **Tense relations with neighbours** – The codes that referred to tense relations with BiH's neighbours, most particularly with Serbia and Croatia, were assigned this category. It was also used in the case when these countries were compared in the interview and the result was a certain negativity on the side of BiH, whether it was

lagging behind the other two (socially and economically), or simply when the countries had negative predispositions towards BiH.

- **Stagnation of Euro-Atlantic integration** – This category was assigned to those codes, which were referring to the lack of the politicians’ interest in the topic of BiH’s integration into EU and NATO, or to the concrete measures preventing such integration, e.g. technical details, which were mentioned in the interviews.
- **Underneath tensions** – This category of codes consists of references to hidden or underneath tensions, which are present in the society, but are not specified any further, and thus could not have been merged with other previously states categories of codes.
- **Functional social sphere** – Even though this is not a frequent code, some of the experts noted that the media, NGOs and the entrepreneurs often cooperate and are integrated, which could be assigned the code of a functional social sphere. Moreover, this code was used in the cases, when the hostility between people, neighbours and multiple ethnicities were dismantled and overbridged, and those differences were seen as outdated.
- **Other** – This category was used for general, often obvious statements that were coded separately, but did not have any overarching theme and their inclusion into the previous categories would not make much sense, such as the notion that: *“Dayton will be in place in the next decade”* or that *“It is hard to tell what will happen in the next five years”*.

#### **8.4. Drawing Conclusions from Codes**

This thesis aimed to provide additional answers to the research questions also from the experts’ point of view. This sub-chapter briefly summarizes the main findings which could be drawn from the results of the interviews.

**Q1: What are the current security measures to counter extremism in Bosnia-Herzegovina?**

With regards to the first research question, the experts do not, obviously, provide an exhaustive enumeration of security measures, which are in effect in BiH. On the other hand, they often mention some of them. The aspects that are currently contributing to an elevated security situation in the country, and the most important security measures, which the experts mentioned, are summarized below:

- There is a decrease in the people fleeing the country to join foreign fighters in Iraq and Syria;
- The foreign fighter returnees are either detained, or are monitored by security intelligence agencies;
- The regulations and laws against foreign fighters are much more severe and the trials occur more often;
- The situation with organized crime and overall criminality has decreased over the past years;
- There is no imminent threat of a terrorist attack;
- Peacebuilding was relatively successful – the country has not regressed back to violence and/or open warfare;
- Hard measures, such as demilitarisation and demining programs are considered as a contribution to the success as well;
- UNDP in the country is considered as a precautionary measure.

**Q2: To what extent can the extremism-countermeasures be improved?**

The experts agree on the fact that the security situation is not as aggravated, as one could think, since as the statistical data show, the level of crimes has decreased. On the other hand, they were able to identify several areas during the interviews, which they consider as ignored or simply not given the deserved attention, since they might have serious security implications. These areas for improvement are summarized below:

- Local nationalism and rising far-right movements shall be monitored, as well, not only the Islamic radicals;
- Underneath tensions should be monitored more closely, for preventive purposes;
- Police reform is not finished yet and other important security-related reforms are awaiting, too;
- Migration crisis remains unaddressed;

- There are inequalities in the state aid provided to the citizens, such as war victims and war veterans in different cantons, depending on the laws in all decentralized units;
- There has been no investigation and insufficient coverage of the foreign financial flows into BiH from countries like Turkey and Saudi Arabia.

**Q3: What are the specific recommendations?**

In order to bridge over the gaps identified in the previous questions, several measures were mentioned by the experts during the interviews. These measures are directly related to the increasing security situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina and are very diverse both in the areas they cover, as well as their complexity – ranging from a recommendation to finalise the latest police reform to speeding up the Bosnian integration into the EU and NATO.

- Centralization of the cantons and administrative units at least to the level that would enable to tackle migration crisis and that would clear the confusion about specific competencies of the respective authorities;
- More thorough control of financial flow into BiH, investigating where the money comes from and whether it is not used for supporting radicalisation;
- Monitoring far-right and nationalistic movements with the same precision as the religious communities;
- Monitoring youth extremism, mostly with regards to Wahhabi movements;
- Increasing the standard of living for the people, focusing on social security and economic security;
- Increasing the levels of political stability and legal security, more enhanced imposition of the rule of law;
- Provide the people with more accessible legal aid sponsored by the state, rather than the NGOs;
- Narrowing down the inequalities of the state aid provided to the people, uniting the rules across different cantons;
- Finishing the police reform and other security-related reforms, approval and implementation of which have previously been stagnating;
- Attempting a legal perfection, approaching with the regulation closer to the EU standards;

- Tackling migration crisis, increasing the help provided to the migrants and creating asylum centres and/or increasing the capacities in the current refugee camps, so that the squatting of migrants in the cities is prevented and the refugees can have at least a decent temporary residency in the country;
- Fighting corruption within the state apparatus;
- Fighting religious intolerance;
- International community should provide further assistance to the country (financial, legal, technical, educational);
- Re-considering the specific requirements of the Dayton agreement;
- Speeding up the Euro-Atlantic integration.

## Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to analyse the security measures currently in effect in Bosnia-Herzegovina, countering local radicalization, extremism and to preventing further destabilization of the country that was torn by war only two decades ago. This thesis aimed to contribute to the previously perpetrated research on the topic of Bosnian-Herzegovinian security situation, providing insight into the topic with a more contemporaneous perspective. This thesis posed three research questions, aiming to explore current security measures to counter extremism in Bosnia-Herzegovina (Q1), to further analyse to what extent can the extremism-countering measures be improved (Q2) and what are the specific recommendations for measures that could be implemented to elevate the country's security situation (Q3).

In order to find the answers to these questions, this thesis chose a two-folded approach. Firstly, an analysis of security-related documents was carried out, whilst the most important security measures currently in effect were chosen, followed by a similar analysis of security measures from other European countries, such as Albania, Belgium and the United Kingdom, which enabled to evaluate whether there is a room for improvement in the case of Bosnia-Herzegovina, compared to the other concerned states. This analysis then allowed to formulate several security-related recommendations, build upon the previously discovered best-practices from the above-mentioned countries.

Secondly, this thesis aimed to seek for the answers to the research questions also in intensive interviews with three experts on Bosnia-Herzegovina, who have hands on experience with the security situation of the country and could thus provide us with more authentic and informed insights into the topic. Their answers were processed through a method of coding, consisting of multiple steps, firstly creating in-vivo codes and continuing with creating further groups of the codes until this process led to a thematic saturation and no new categories of codes stemmed from the analysed text.

Both of the approaches have generated very interesting results. The review of the security measures, which are currently in effect, showed that the country has adopted stricter

measures, in terms of persecuting radicals and extremists. The period of their incarceration was considerably prolonged to 10 and later to 20 years, the period of those radicalising them increased, as well. The authorities started to persecute foreign fighters more thoroughly, penalizing them both financially and legally, which led to more trials, charges and imprisonments. This could have been also the reason why the number of foreign fighters fleeing Bosnia-Herzegovina and joining ISIS in Iraq and Syria has dropped considerably over the past period, together with the collapse of the caliphate itself, obviously. Moreover, the authorities strengthened their combat against illegal transfers of weaponry, arresting more suspects on the borders and destroying smugglers trying to get the weapons in and out of the country. The local authorities have also started to work more closely with religious leaders of local Islamic communities and to call upon their integration, monitoring those members of possibly radicalized para-jamaats, who opposed such action and sought to spread their violent views on the religion. The country has also started to cooperate more thoroughly with other state agencies and intelligence services in the neighbouring countries, such as Croatia and Serbia, and also with other institutions of the international community. This has provided us with the answer to the first research question (Q1).

However, the analysis of the security measures also discovered that there are several areas which could be improved, as it was previously suggested by the United Nations or the European Commission in their reports on the progress in Bosnia-Herzegovina. These include the necessity to improve the investigations of terrorist suspects and of suspected financial flows possibly ending up in the pockets of the radicals. This has helped to clear the answer to the second research question, about whether the currently working security measures could be improved, and if so, to what extent (Q2). The analysis of the security measures, which are in effect in other countries showed that there are plenty of best-practices abroad, and not being implemented in Bosnia-Herzegovina. For instance, Albania established a Centre against Violent Extremism and appointed an office of a “national coordinator” combating such violence. Serbia holds functional amnesty on small arms and light weapons, in order to collect as much weaponry “left-overs” from war times, as possible and to destroy them. Turkey has launched a program rewarding citizens for coming forward with information about terrorist



suspects. France has pushed through a nation-wide educational “Stop-Jihadism” campaign. Germany established a Joint Counter-Extremism and Terrorism Centre, combating both far-right and far-left extremism and terrorism in all its forms. This could be particularly useful, since Bosnia-Herzegovina is often reproached that its counter-extremism measures are mostly aimed at countering Islamic radicalisation and leaving the rising threat of nationalism and far-right movements unremarked. The case of Germany and its combat against all forms of extremism could be an inspiration for Bosnia-Herzegovina, as well. Moreover, Germany is also successful at censoring far-right, racist and jihadist rhetoric online. The country created a special task force composed of governmental agencies, technology companies and industry associations, all committed to preventing the online hatred from spreading over the society. These particular measures, named above, could be also considered as a set of specific recommendations for increasing the security situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina, which also provides us with the answer to the third research question (Q3).

Additional insight was provided by the experts: Denis Hadžović, PhD., Director of The Centre for Security Studies in Sarajevo; Iva Svobodová, PhD., Program Support Officer, People in Need, Sarajevo and Jasmin Hasić, PhD., National Director of Humanity in Action Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo. The coding of their interviews provides us with more insightful answers to the research questions.

With regards to the first research question (Q1), the experts mentioned multiple security measures currently in effect. The experts have agreed that the security measures imposed by the state, such as the adoption of more severe laws against foreign fighters and returnees from war, and the more thorough investigation, trials and incarceration of the suspects and convicts, has contributed to the increased level of security. Similarly, the detention and monitoring of other returnees from war and their surrounding has the same positive effect. The experts further mentioned several hard security measures, in terms of demilitarization, demining or UNDP Programs, which have contributed to the improved security situation in the country.

However, when it comes to the second research question (Q2), the experts were able to identify several areas, in which the improvement could, according to them, to the increased

levels of security. Most of the experts agreed that more attention shall be given to nationalism and far-right movements, which shall be monitored with the same precision as local Wahhabi communities. The experts also agreed that the government shall monitor also the underneath tensions, so that the remaining division amongst the multi-ethnic composition of the country does not break out to another conflict, as the theory of a protracted social conflict would suggest. The other areas, that the experts identified as crucial for improvement, was the legal justice, the equality of the state aid to all ethnicities and to citizens of all administrative units of Bosnia-Herzegovina, conclusion of the police reform and other important security-related reforms, as well as more thorough investigation of the financial flows coming to the country from Turkey, Saudi Arabia and other countries. This is also the common suggestion that stems from our analysis of the security documents in BiH and abroad, and from the interviews with experts. Since this notion overlaps in both of the parts of the thesis, this is considered as an important gap in the security, which shall be taken by the local Bosnian authorities seriously. Last, but not least, the experts identified the current migration crisis in the country as a potential source of instability and insecurity.

What could be the specific measures that would help to increase the security situation, as suggested by the experts (Q3)? The professionals have formulated multiple proposals, such as the centralisation of the post-Daytonian tripartition division of cantons and administrative units, which would help to clear the confusion about the concrete competencies of the respective authorities and possibly enable the authorities to tackle the migration crisis more effectively, monitoring youth extremism, Wahhabi movements, far-right and nationalistic groups and suspicious financial flows from abroad, finishing the police reform, increasing the levels of legal security, accessibility of the legal aid and enhancing the rule of law.

Interestingly enough, the experts saw the greatest obstacle in the stabilisation of the country to not be the lack of security measures – all three of them even assessed the security situation as satisfactory and overallly improving – but the populism and immaturity of local politicians, who still spread hatred, nationalistic ideas and create the division between “their” ethnic group and *the Other*, mostly in times when it is politically convenient for them. Moreover, the experts also noted that in order to increase the security in the country, it is not

necessary only to fight extremism, but also to tackle the despair and hopelessness that the local population lives with. The aim of the government should be thus increasing the socio-economic conditions of the people, fighting poverty, unemployment, corruption and providing them with a sense of prosperity and perspective for the future. The experts also agreed upon the fact that the Dayton agreement, that was accepted in order to help the country to reconcile, is outdated and shall be replaced by a new constitutional arrangement, one which would more accurately reflect the country's current situation. In addition, the experts also emphasized the importance of the international assistance and support of EU, UN and NATO in the reconstruction of the country and reconciliation of its citizens and suggested that the country's accession into the Euro-Atlantic organizations shall enhance its advancements.

To summarise, it is no overstatement that this thesis provides a multi-layered view into the security measures currently in effect in Bosnia-Herzegovina, evaluating the gaps in the security, that could be overbridged in order to increase the security and also suggesting concrete security measures to do so.

This thesis has worked with two hypotheses: *"The current state of security measures countering extremism in Bosnia-Herzegovina is insufficient,"* and that *"There is much room for implementing other specific measures"*. Since this thesis managed to discover possible room for implementing further security measures, it is fair to conclude that the first hypothesis was validated throughout the research. This thesis argues that there is a considerable room for improvement and for implementing further security measures, which were identified in the respective chapters of the research.

It is the hope of the author of this thesis that it has contributed to the field of studying contemporary security situation and measures in Bosnia-Herzegovina, providing a structured and comprised overview of the security measures and its possible enhancement, as well as valuable insights from the experts, with plenty of personal experiences from the country. The author of this thesis believes that this research might provide further insight to other researchers into the topic, possibly encouraging them to continue and build upon the previously existent knowledge.

To conclude, the author believes that it is important to study the past, in order to understand the present, but to the same extent also to be able to liberate oneself from it, in order to be able to build a more prosperous future.

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## **Appendices**

### **Appendix A – Interview with Denis Hadžović, PhD., Director, Centre for Security Studies, Sarajevo – 5<sup>th</sup> July 2018, 10:57; 20min41sec**

#### **What is the current state of security in Bosnia-Herzegovina?**

I would say that from the state security approach, the situation is quite good, related to terrorism, organised crime and so on. If you take the human security perspective, there are huge problems related to the political stability and the socio-economic issues. Those are the main concerns of the citizens. They feel they live in a very fragile situation, with lack of perspective, very huge unemployment rate, crimes and other. From the perspective of the state, and according to the statistics, the situation is good, there is decrease in the statistical data on crimes, there is no imminent terrorist threat. There is also a decrease in the number of people that went to Syria and Iraq – there are not that many problems with returning of the foreign fighters. Right now, migration undermines the security situation, it's not dramatic, but it exposed some problems of the government to deal with this issue. It's not dramatic, but some parts of Bosnia are much more affected by this problem.

#### **You've said there is no imminent threat in Bosnia right now, there have been some armed incidents in the past few years, though, with casualties among the police force and civilians injured.**

There is no terrorist threat now, the people that are here from Iraq and Syria are under control, most of them are already tried and detained, and the rest are under control of the security intelligence agencies. I would say it's quite well covered, there have been no incidents in Bosnia the last two years, I think the last terrorist attack was in 2015, there have not been any incidents in the last two-three years from the terrorist groups nor the individuals.

#### **Do you see any specific reason for the improvement of the situation?**

A law was imposed against the citizens who went to Iraq and Syria, it is much better regulated by the law, which caused a lot of investigations and trials against those people. Also, the situation in Iraq and Syria, there is no place to go – the general approach is that ISIL is defeated,



there is no need for the people to go there. The other reason for the decrease of number of people going to Syria to fight is, I think, that the ISIL network is undermined, like elsewhere.

**You've mentioned that one of the major concerns of Bosnians is that they live in a fragile environment. Where do you see the origin of that?**

There is not that much improvement in reconciliation, political elites are creating a very fragile situation – that there is still hostility between the people. In reality, it's not the situation: ordinary people, NGOs, media, businessmen and others are quite well integrated and cooperate among themselves, but from the political level, and what is mainly exposed in the media is that there are still tensions and they are not willing to see the improvement in the common vision of the Bosnia. They [the political elites] are just creating ideas of the nationalism, particularly before the elections, since it is much easier for the political elites to have the state on this level and to cover their own territory without merging their ideas. There are three separate foreign policy issues, there are three independent internal policies, which creates the situation that people don't see the perspective and they are aware of the political instability that has lasted for almost ten years. That is the reason for the stagnation of the euroatlantic integration, which is not a top priority for the politicians, who are quite well situated in the current political instability. All that affects our economy, which is still very much behind compared to the pre-war period – we are at 73 percent of the GDP in comparison with the pre-war, that's a problem. There are very complex constitutional arrangements of Bosnia-Herzegovina, with all the different powerful players within thirteen different governments and thirteen independent constitutions. For each decision, you need to find a consensus, which is a problem, especially with the immature politicians and the ongoing pressure from our neighbours from Belgrade and Zagreb, who still have some negative predisposition towards Bosnia, creating a situation which is not in favour of Bosnian development.

**What, in your view, might be the overlying principal root of creating the environment that provides for a state of insecurity in Bosnia that you've just described?**

Well, in Dayton, a very complex state structure was created. It was assumed that after ten to fifteen years, the situation will be improved and the structure would be normalised, due to our

intentions to be integrated in NATO and EU. After the robust intervention of international community till 2005, it seemed that there would be a possibility for future prosperity and development of Bosnia. When it was decided to have the non-intervention policy in 2005, and to allow local politicians to take the responsibility for the future, unfortunately, some political leaders did not decide to follow the integrative path – they started their way of ethnic and nationalistic rhetoric. This caused Bosnia-Herzegovina to fall behind other countries in the region – before that, it was one of the leaders in the region when it came to the integration processes. All those factors influence the current situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina – people aren't satisfied, there is no possibility to progress. People sense these facts very negatively in all social, economic, political and security aspects of living in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Simply said, the expectation was that the progress will continue, but without the international support, it was just not possible – due to many reasons, one of them being that the politicians are quite conformed with the current status, not willing to improve the situation, to impose the rules of law and other dimensions because it would affect their policies.

**Do you have any specific recommendations for security measures to be implemented in current Bosnia-Herzegovina?**

It was shown that with the support of international community, the situation was improved in the overall security dimensions. Ten years after that, and the international community's decision to stay away from the processes, it seems that Bosnia is not capable to continue with the reforms and processes that are needed, as it requires to achieve huge level of compromise and dialogue between the politicians. We would again need at least some support from the international community related to the internal affairs. There have been some reforms, which are finalising quite well, but other, like the police reform are still not finished, and I am not quite sure local politicians will be able to transform other reforms and processes according to the Bosnian needs and the needs for the future integration to NATO. I don't think that in the near future, we will be able to resolve all the situations without the international assistance. There is huge amount of issues that need to be improved and resolved, but local politicians make it even more difficult by politicising each and every one of them in order to serve their political purpose. If you take into consideration just one requirement from NATO related to

the activation of the member action plan for Bosnia, it's a small, technical issue, but you can see that almost eight years after that decision was made by NATO, Bosnia is still not able to fulfil the technical conditions, and it's becoming a huge political problem in the country.

We will need reforms in political, social, economic and security area, which will be very difficult to manage, due to the current very complex constitutional structure. The reforms take much more time compared to other countries in the region – Montenegro, Serbia – where the constitutional structure is very clear. It's a very difficult situation – especially without the international support – for an underdeveloped country, with the complex constitutional structure, taking the post-conflict transition into consideration as well.

**What is it that makes it so much more difficult for Bosnia-Herzegovina, when compared to other countries of the former Yugoslavia?**

Well, there is the ethnic aspect – and that's not only in Bosnia. You can notice a very similar situation in Kosovo or Macedonia, with the intervention and the international peace accord. It is a little bit more complicated in Bosnia due to the conflict and much more ethnicity within the country – with the three sides, in Macedonia and Kosovo it's only two sides. The main purpose of the peace accord was to stop the war and to stop the conflict, but alongside, it has created structures that are not easy to be implemented in real political life – it was not easy to find a compromise and to make the right decisions. That's a reflection of the peace accord, which was created with a huge international support, with the main purpose to stop the conflict. On the other hand, they are also intended to create structures that will be changed in the near future, counting on the maturity of the local actors – politicians, that they will be able to implement different constructions. In reality it's not that easy, bearing in mind all the circumstances and all burdens that lie on some countries. The main problem is the connection between the expectation and practice.

**Is Dayton simply outdated?**

Dayton is outdated and should be replaced. With Dayton still in place, the political elites are not taking the whole segment, but just pick parts which are in favour of their political options and policies. We are still coping with the same regulations and constitutions which are part of

the Dayton agreement. It should be replaced and moved much more to the Brussels arrangement.

**Appendix B – Interview with Iva Svobodová, PhD., Programme Support Officer, People in Need, Sarajevo – 16<sup>th</sup> July 2018, 20:04; 25min36sec**

**What is the current state of security in Bosnia-Herzegovina?**

There are two levels when it comes to the security situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina. First, there is the 'general' state – what can be perceived on the streets, how people feel in everyday life. Even though Bosnia is still often considered a post-war country, there is no immediate risk of personal safety. Also, according to statistics – the level of crime is quite moderate, not higher than the rest of European countries, maybe only when it comes to the petty crime. On the other hand, there is the less visible side – the all-time present, underneath tension which might constitute a security risk. It may be connected to radicalisation, but I'd rather call it tension, which might escalate quite quickly – even at peaceful events like football matches or civil code demonstrations. For instance, there was the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Srebrenica massacre at the memorial in 2015 – a very peaceful gathering, which started with people praying, suddenly – due to the presence of one of the politicians – escalated into people throwing stones, shouting 'kill him, kill him'. That's the illustration of the underneath tension, and it definitely needs to be monitored with big caution.

**Do you see any imminent security threat in the current Bosnia-Herzegovina?**

Well, the attention of international community is mainly turned to the problem of youth extremism and Wahhabi movements, which might be the present security threat. There have been couple of incidents in the past 2 years, followed by investigation, charges and a few people accused of terrorism. However, they seem to be isolated incidents – people gathering ammunition and flags of ISIS, and according to police planning terrorist attacks. There have also been few hundred people leaving the country to join ISIS, which is quite disturbing as well. On the other hand, it seems that the main concern of the general public is the social security and the economical state of the country. There are also deeper issues that need to be followed and focused on, not only the Islamic movements or religious extremism, but also local nationalism and the rising far right movements. Another thing is definitely the big increase in undocumented migrants in the country – to my knowledge, in 2015 there were couple of

dozens of cases, while currently from the beginning of 2018, the intake of refugees is around 6000. The state does not recognise this as a threat, there is insufficient care of the people, even the refugee camps are not prepared for such a big number of refugees. Since its clear these people are just transiting from Serbia to Croatia, the state is simply willing to go and leave them to their own fates, people are therefore squatting in the cities. So far, it's been more of a silent threat, without major incidents, but that's only a matter of time and therefore much more attention should be put to this. Lastly, in the past years, there have been instances of suspicious financial flows coming from different countries. There are reports about increasing number of properties being bought by companies and private persons from countries like Saudi Arabia and Turkey, with largely questionable legality of these transfers. These instances lead to suspicions of white horses or fake companies, all of which is very questionable and might pose a possible threat. So far, there has been no investigation into this whatsoever, and not sufficient coverage. Islamic development bank is also very active in the country, supporting local banks. Different flows of foreign money into Bosnia is often very hard to follow, and the purpose is unclear and questionable. What is certain, however, is that these investments influence how the country looks and possibly functions. New investments in hotels and supermarkets in Sarajevo are rapidly changing the dynamics of everyday life in the city centre, how people spend their free time – there are quite a few restrictions on how to behave around the new properties, for example.

**Is there a direct connection to the citizens' security in this sense?**

Especially with the financial flows, you never know. It always raises questions why certain parties are financing specific development projects. There have been Saudi organisations which have been focusing on summer camps for children of low-income families, which of course is a very honourable thing to do, but on the other hand it might raise questions on how much they are trying to influence the upbringing of children from these families. Also, it's very difficult to verify, but some people argue that some low-income families are paid money to wear certain types of clothes, showing more affection to religion. These huge investments cause a lot of question marks on the effect they might have on the future situation in Bosnia.

**Where do you see the reason for the rising trend of nationalism and far-right movements?**

One of the biggest reasons is the behaviour of the political elites. They are trying to justify their positions by creating fear and deepening the divisions among different ethnicities. The country is very decentralised, there are more than 150 ministries in total, and the jobs in government are very well paid. One of the obvious reasons is to do everything to keep these positions, by creating the need for separation of the ethnicities and nations. Another thing is the general frustration, which is quite visible. People are simply searching for an answer for their life situation – there is 50 percent unemployment rate among the youth, 30 percent overall. When it comes to corruption, according to the freedom house report, the corruption index is on the same level as in Somalia. There is very low level of legal security – the laws are constantly changing. Even if people make their best to stay in the country, to start a business or get active in the civil society, there are all these boundaries that are slowing you down. Many people just get this feeling that there is no one who cares for their rights and is willing to fight for them. In such an environment, obviously, these populist, nationalist parties seem to have the right answers for these problems. This then leads us to the precautionary measures: on one hand, the hard measures – demilitarisation – UNDP programs, demining programs; but on the other, I feel this very much needs to be done on the social security level as well, and then the legal security level. Much more work needs to be done with the civil society on the level of municipalities, since there is such a big decentralisation in the country. Especially the development sector sees that the municipalities are the players that are the easiest to work with, and which have direct impact on civil society. They are also not that dependent on the constant changing dynamics in the political parties. When it comes to the legal security, there is currently quite a big lack of legal aid. According to the law, the state is obliged to provide you with free legal aid, but in fact this is provided in a very limited sense, and mostly by the local NGOs, substituting the role of the state.

**What is the reason for the lack of state and legal security? What might be done in order to improve the situation?**

When it comes to the state services, the decentralisation is what makes it so difficult – especially in the federation, where each of the ten cantons has the right to create its own laws. Often when it comes to overall improvements in the social security, even though there might

be a new draft of law on the state level, sometimes some cantons oppose it, arguing they don't need it. The overall economic situation is not ideal, people have quite a low standard of living, and with these inequalities in the state aid, quite a lot of tensions between the people arouse. The inequalities are caused by the way how different cantons and entities are administered. One of the examples is how the war veterans and the war victims are treated in the Republika Srpska when compared to the federation, which again, creates serious tensions among the people.

**What is the reason for these inequalities? What could be done in order to offset them?**

It all starts with the Dayton treaty and the way how decentralised the country is. There are some new laws in place, for example the law on the victims in the criminal procedure, which have been based on the EU legislation – having all the necessary EU standards. Accession to the EU, I think might be one of the ways how to tackle the decentralisation. Obviously, many laws need to be changed before the accession, in order to comply with the highest EU standards. This needs to be implemented in the whole country, on the very state level, not only in some cantons. This can speed up the process of accession. We'll still probably have the Dayton agreement in place for the next decade, or maybe even more. We as well do not necessarily have to just take the treaty away right now, the pressure from the EU might help to solve decrease the centralisation and in turn offset the inequalities.



**Appendix C – Interview with Jasmin Hasić, PhD., National Director, Humanity in Action Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo – 18<sup>th</sup> July 2018, 20:03; 29min34sec**

**What is the current state of security in Bosnia-Herzegovina?**

In terms of security, as overall maintaining the post-conflict stability, it's satisfactory. There hasn't been a one single incident since 95, that has been severely jeopardising the current Dayton structure and the post-conflict social standards of exchange, peacebuilding and reconciliation. The country has never been truly in a state where it could regress to violence. In this sense, the state of security is satisfactory. In a political sense, considering the violence in non-physical, non-mental imminent threat to population, the security situation is not satisfactory, as there are many other related issues in the post-conflict Bosnia-Herzegovina that could be considered as insecure. We're obviously talking about the sky-high corruption, unemployment – especially among youth, various forms of nationalism and extremism, chauvinism, religious intolerance. These things have been oscillating, and are not very cyclical, so it's hard to tell what's going to happen in the next five years. It's usually very dependent on the different political actors that control the political system and want to establish certain fields of insecurity, that others do or do not respond to. It's usually controlled, and in my opinion, there is a high risk that this will not be controlled in a way that the elites want it. An example of this is the 2014 protests, where the mass gatherings of citizens in various mainly in the federation but also some in Republika Srpska, have responded to this manipulation by elites and tried to take the situation in their own hands and to establish control over what's happening.

Security in the military traditional absence/presence of violence sense is still satisfactory – in this sense, we can consider the Dayton Peace agreement in Bosnia as a successful one, because we've never regressed to violence and war. On the other hand, it is very hard to call this situation satisfactory, if we take in consideration all the other negative societal interactions and structures that are present.

**Do you see any imminent security threat in the current Bosnia-Herzegovina?**

I don't think there is an imminent threat of war, due to a number of reasons. However, there is a danger in some smaller radical, extremist groups being, as the Croatian president says, trained somewhere in unknown locations around Croatia and in the middle of Bosnia. But there have not been any serious accounts of these groups, literally, there is no publicly available evidence of these groups being active in what they're trained for, what is their goal, and so on – it's still in the sphere of speculations, in my view. Until we see concrete evidence of these things being happening, I don't think there is imminent threat even in the smaller groups of violent extremists, that are potentially being mobilised.

**What is the current biggest concern to the security in Bosnia-Herzegovina?**

Well, the situation with migrants is currently very disturbing. Two cities, Bihać and Velika Kladuša have become two spots where all the migrants coming from Serbia, Montenegro and elsewhere, going towards Croatia are being grouped. They are approximately 70 kilometres away from each other and are closest to Zagreb and Croatia, all the influx of migrants from Serbia and Montenegro are ending up in these two cities. To put it bluntly, walking on the streets of Bihać in the past three days, I personally felt more secure during the war. It's a completely uncontrolled area of migrants being left on the streets, there is absolutely no police patrol, migrants are walking around in groups, there have been multiple reports of attempted rape, theft and murder. Two men, coming from two different ethnic groups from Afghanistan or Pakistan, were deported after being accused of murdering one of the other migrants. There is array of different crimes happening in these two cities, the police are completely aware of what's happening, and of the potential imminent threat and are not organised to get these people in one place, to provide them with medical help and security in an organised, systematic way, either on a cantonal or federal level of government. The situation is not sustainable, people are afraid to go out in the street, many of them just go to work and straight home, everyone is behaving as in crisis management, not leaving their houses. My point being, the police and local government are not organised well-enough to prevent something that is there, that they can see and feel as an imminent threat in the two communities that they are aware of; therefore, how would they react to something that they are not even seeing or that

they are not even able to track – I mean the potential threat posed by the alleged terrorist groups.

### **Why is the government unable to tackle the current migration crisis?**

There are many various overlapping competencies in the complex structure of governance in Bosnia. As an illustration of how unserious approach is taken towards the issue by the authorities, let me quote one of the cantons' minister of internal affairs, who said, with regards to the current migration crisis in Bihać "when the first head falls, I'll resign". There was this case of obvious attempted rape, which the police, unable to do anything, reported as a break-in. Following further investigation, one of the reasonings that surfaced in an informal conversation was that there has been a political mandate not to overblow the situation because it might lead to a crisis situation that could not be handled financially, as additional resources would have to be put into it. There are also other, more dubious reasons, that are just nothing else than plain excuses why they do not tackle the situation. There is also the ethnic component – the state minister of security is a Serb, coming from the Republika Srpska; the Republika Srpska already said no to any migrants. They can't go there, they can't go to Croatia, so they end up here, in the Muslim part of the federation in the Una-Sana canton, where the municipalities are 99% Muslim. There is this automatic tension that the state minister, since he's from Republika Srpska, doesn't want to help them; the locals are not able to organise because they feel the lack competencies in what's happening and what's not – they only feel competence in the internal affairs, but not when dealing with the foreign, undocumented migrants. Thus, if something happens, they are not able to arrest them, the prosecution office has no means to indict them, even if there is a crime, because they do not have any address – since according to the Bosnian law, in order for the person to be indicted, they have to have an address and has to be documented... Lot of constitutional troubles, perhaps some ethnic misunderstandings on who is going to share this burden of migration crisis, obviously, the incompetency and unwillingness of people to deal with the situation.

### **What could be done in order to alleviate the situation?**

Not much. No community in Bosnia, as elsewhere, would be super willing to accept all the migrants, that's one thing – and obviously, the local communities are never consulted about this. Firstly, with the elections being held in October, the government has to make a tough cut. Everyone is afraid of losing and would avoid actually selecting the location where the migration centres will be placed – they are by the way widely called 'temporary', but everyone knows in their heart they're going to be permanent ones. Secondly, the European Union is, as elsewhere, very invested in not allowing migrants to cross to Croatia. The border patrols have been strengthened, the migrants often come back to the centres beaten, angry, needing medical assistance. The locals are, obviously, afraid of these angry, undocumented, usually men, travelling in packs – I have to call it packs, they're literally seven to fifteen people walking in the streets, never alone or in pairs. European Union provides money for the 'temporary' centres, but it's obvious the local communities do not want this. The local community perspective is to take up to several hundreds of migrants and then, when the new contingent comes, to send them somewhere else. They'd build the temporary asylum centres, everyone who has the right to be protected under international law as a refugee or asylum-seekers are welcome. The locals understand the situation, they were refugees in the past, but they cannot take everyone, and they will not take everyone.

### **Is there anything that can be done from a broader perspective?**

Theoretically speaking, an immediate accession to the EU and NATO would obviously help. And there is something to the fact that if Bosnia stays in this deadlock situation, it might, sooner or later, turn to the east, rather than to the west. This is something very theoretical, but it's going on in the public discourse. Most of the people in Bosnia-Herzegovina feel, that the efforts coming from the international community have never been truly sincere, truly aimed at establishing long-lasting peace – it's just been a tool to pursue other interests. That's how people feel about security, regardless of whether it's true or not, the fact is that no one has ever done anything really serious to stop the insurgency and the conflict – it was only done to prevent it from spreading to other countries.