

Understanding the Complexities of Violent Extremism

In Kosovo, Tunisia, and Kenya

Capstone Paper

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Important Disclaimer:

In compliance with the request for confidentiality from our client, the International Republican Institute, sections within this research paper regarding the details of our Assessment Tool and Recommendations have been removed. Nonetheless, all references have been left for the readers' review and utilization.

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Introduction

In 2015, terrorist attacks resulted in a worldwide average of 2,361 deaths and 2,943 injuries monthly (U.S. Department of State, 2016). More than half of the attacks targeted private citizens and property. These statistics are not only disheartening, but reveal the need for greater study on the causes and attractions of violent extremism (VE), along with methods targeted toward the prevention of violent extremism.

This report originated as a Capstone Project Proposal at the Humphrey School of Public Affairs submitted by the staff of the International Republican Institute (IRI), one of four nonpartisan democracy institutes that receive funding from the National Endowment for Democracy to support aspiring democracies worldwide (International Republican Institute, 2017). In accepting this research proposal, our team of five graduate students were commissioned by IRI to explore the web of interdependent factors that contribute to VE within three particular contexts of Kenya, Kosovo, and Tunisia. Additionally, the research proposal called for the recommendations of potential resources, programs, and tools that IRI could leverage for future programming designed to decrease societal and individual susceptibility to VE. Our approach to investigating violent extremism is encapsulated by Douglas Leonard, who states:

Intolerance takes root and spreads in failed states where security is lacking, where balances of power are realigning and where fierce competition puts pressure on societies to create inflexible and impermeable alliances defined around the markers of human identity, whether ethnic, religious, linguistic or tribal.... Intolerance is a human tendency in any context of scarcity, whether religious or secular. (Leonard, 2015)

As a means of systematically assessing susceptibility to VE across all three contexts (Kenya, Kosovo, and Tunisia) we developed an Assessment Tool that allows the user to identify vulnerable populations within a society. Although we are confident with the assessments made, we recognize that there are limitations to desk research. We believe that using our assessment tool in the location being analyzed alongside local experts will provide practitioners the best systematic means to uncover and assess a society's susceptibility to VE at the national, local, and individual level.

Our research examines the reasons behind the sudden widespread existence of violent extremism within areas of Kenya, Kosovo, and Tunisia. In doing so, we examine the context of each country and of the localities most severely affected by VE. We then build a tool through which factors contributing toward support for VE can be analyzed. Each country is examined according to that tool. Programming recommendations are made on the basis of that assessment tool. Overall findings and general guidelines for programming to reduce VE serve as the conclusion to this report.

Defining Key Concepts

Literature surrounding violent extremism is contentious, with little content that can be agreed upon by various academics and practitioners from diverse sets of backgrounds. Therefore, none of the key terms used in the literature have universal definitions. This causes great confusion and misinterpretation of analyses and recommendations. In order to alleviate some of this tension, it is essential to define some of the key concepts that exist within the scope of this research paper prior to the analysis section.

One of the biggest reasons for the division amongst violent extremists researchers stems from the targeting of Muslim communities in the literature on violent extremism, radicalization, terrorism, countering violent extremism, and related preventative programming (Nasser-Eddine, Garnham, Agostino, & Caluya, 2011). However, it would be a mistake for any organization, government, or community to take such a narrow view of what violent extremism and what subsequent acts of terrorism might look like.

Jason Striegner illustrates the demarcation in the following manner:

An individual who justifies the use of violence in pursuit of ideological goals, typically does this once they have moved through a process of radicalization that leads to the adoption of VE as an ideology; where terrorism is solely the act of violence carried out in pursuit of these goals. (Striegner, 2015)

Therefore, to ensure a cohesive understanding of the complexities surrounding countering violent extremism, key concepts must be defined prior to engaging with research.

Violent Extremism

The use of the term “violent extremism” (VE) has become popular in the post-9/11 world, and in that context, the majority of research has been focused on Islamic communities. However, limiting VE research to the Islamic context creates a fallacy. The potential for VE extends beyond recognized terror cells to any individual committed to a cause. Additionally, of the more than 300 American deaths from political violence and mass shootings since 9/11 to 2013, only 33 have come at the hands of Muslim-Americans (Cline, 2013). We discovered that the US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) defines VE as “encouraging, condoning, justifying, or supporting the commission of a violent act to achieve political, ideological, religious, social, or economic goals” (FBI, 2017). This definition is helpful but not sufficient. Definitions for VE in academic literature generally agree on two required two elements:

1. Actual or threatened violence against civilians or persons not actively taking part in hostilities, and
2. Implicit or explicit purpose of the act being to intimidate or compel a population, government or organization into some course of action (Nasser-Eddine et al., 2011).

Through extensive research and discussion, our team adopted J.N. Maogoto's definition of violent extremism detailed in the Australian Government's *Countering Violent Extremism Literature Review* that uses:

A willingness to use, support or justify the use of violence to further particular beliefs, including those of a political, social or ideological nature. This may include acts of terrorism. (Nasser-Eddine et al., 2011)

In addition, Jason Striegher states that the purpose of violent extremism is to provoke the target into a disproportionate response, radicalize moderates, and build support for its objectives in the long-term (Striegher, 2015).

Countering Violent Extremism

By basing our analysis in the ideological nature of VE we can better understand the drivers that create both cognitive and behavioral violent extremists. In studying ideology in the context of VE, our team has found that ideological rhetoric serves as mechanism of recruitment to a cause rather than the root of extremism. As Striegher articulates, efforts to counter terrorism do not resolve violent extremism (Striegher, 2015). Therefore, countering VE requires the removal of the other root causes while working with local communities to develop an ideology which promotes peace and stabilizes the failed state.

Ideology

Ideology is a system of ideas and ideals, especially one that forms the basis of economic or political theory and policy. Typologies of violent extremism have significant breadth and are generally categorized as either ethnic, religious, and issue-oriented ideological belief structures (Striegher, 2015). In the three specific country contexts considered in this analysis, we deal primarily with the religious and issue typologies.

Cognitive versus Behavioral Violent Extremism

The purpose of terrorism is to degrade the capabilities of the target institution, group, or state in order to further the group's goals (Nasser-Eddine et al., 2011). Separating the physical act of violent extremism from violent extremist beliefs make it possible to differentiate between terrorists and supporters of violent extremism, allowing each to be targeted with appropriate and specific programming. Therefore, we can identify these two interrelated phases of violent extremists into two categories:

Cognitive violent extremists: individuals who agree with the use of violence to further an ideology; they may encourage, inspire, and propagate terrorists acts by others, but do not actively engage in violent acts (Macdonald & Waggoner, 2017).

Behavioral violent extremists: individuals who hold and act upon a violent extremist ideology through the use of violence (IRI, 2016).

Possessing radical views does not mean that an individual will commit to a lifestyle of radical or violent behavior. The linkage between an individual's views and their potential behavior are complicated (Striegher, 2015). Although the endorsement of, and subscription to, a violent extremist ideology is a necessary first step for terrorist behavior, its status as merely a viewpoint may not necessarily cross the threshold to behavioral violent extremism (Striegher, 2015). This analysis, and resulting recommendations, addresses the drivers of both cognitive and behavioral violent extremists.

Radicalization

The FBI defines “radicalization” as the action or process of causing someone to adopt radical positions on political or social issues. Dalgaard-Nielsen uses the term *violent radicalization* as “a process in which radical ideas are accompanied by the development of a willingness to directly support or engage in violent acts” (Nasser-Eddine et al., 2011). Despite the inability to establish consensus on defining radicalization, most experts can agree that it is a process (Nasser-Eddine et al., 2011). They are unable to agree upon the causal factor that begins radicalization. Explanations range from marginalization, to lack of economic opportunity, political repression, to lack of community awareness.

The term radicalization places priority around the VE recruiter and the strategies used to promote cognitive and behavioral VE. This is necessary to identify because we do not focus on the recruiters - rather the vulnerable populations that VE groups target for recruitment.

Levels of Society: Micro, Meso, Macro

Most of the literature on drivers of violent extremism identifies three levels of consideration: the macro, meso, and micro. The definition of each is not universal, but for the purposes of this analysis, we have identified the three levels as follows:

- *Macro-level factors of VE*: factors that are primarily at the supranational level (i.e. national, regional, and global)
- *Meso-level factors of VE*: factors that act primarily within the sub-national arena (i.e. city, community, and tribal)
- *Micro-level factors of VE*: factors that act primarily at the individual level

Push and Pull Factors

In order to analyze the various drivers of violent extremism (VE), they are categorized as either push factors or pull factors:

- Push factors are “the negative social, cultural, and political features of one’s societal environment that aid in *pushing* vulnerable individuals onto the path of violent extremism” (Hassan, 2012; Mirahmadi, 2016).
- Pull factors are defined as “the positive characteristics and benefits of an extremist organization that *pull* vulnerable individuals to join” (Hassan, 2012; Mirahmadi, 2016).

A complex web of drivers work in concert to drive an individual towards the adoption of VE. Even if there are a host of push factors that are present within a societal environment, in the absence of an influential pull factor (a recruiting organization, a present ideology, or a charismatic leader) VE will likely not propagate itself. Properly distinguishing the various types of push and pull factors present within a societal environment, and determining how they interact with one another, is an important first step in generating effective programming to reduce susceptibility to VE.

Using Definitions to Shape Purpose

The approach and results discussed in this analysis are preventative in nature. They emphasize methods and initiatives whose purpose is to preempt the joining of VE groups or subscribing to VE ideologies whenever possible. In addition, the analysis addresses push and pull factors, drivers of VE at the most vulnerable levels (macro, meso, or micro), and are designed to counter the ideological nature of violent extremism that is deeply intertwined with the process of radicalization and act of terrorism. Reintegration programs for these returning offenders of violent extremism is important prevent future recruitment and propagation of violent extremism within these communities, but will not receive the attention it deserves here due to the limited scope of this paper.

Methodology

Our research had two goals: First, uncover the factors that contribute to making a society, community, group, or individuals susceptible to violent extremism within three unique contexts (Northwest Kenya; the Albanian community of Kosovo; and Kasserine, Tunisia). Second, recommended tools, resources, programs, and strategies that could be leveraged by IRI staff during future programming efforts based on the first part of the analysis. To accomplish these objectives, we utilized a four-part methodology.

Part 1: Literature and Framework

We conducted a literature review of violent extremism of the three country contexts that served three purposes. First, we became grounded in the state of the debate pertaining to the fundamental factors that contribute to violent extremism as well as means to counter them. We used this research to develop our key definitions that allowed for a standardized dialogue from which to dive deeper into our research and analysis.

Second, we understood the fundamental frameworks from which we would categorize and analyze the factors that contribute to VE. We immediately recognized the necessity of systematically approaching our analysis in order to equitably address each context's susceptibility to VE. The specific framework we used to do this is defined as the intersection of three key elements:

1. Levels of Society: macro, meso, and micro
2. Types of Factors: push or pull
3. Dimensions of Factors

The 'Dimensions of Factors' contributing to VE were borrowed from a model used by the *World Organization for Resource Development and Education* in their community-based approach to building resilience against VE within U.S. cities. The model described five dimensions from which factors can contribute to VE: (1) ideology, beliefs, and values, (2) political grievances, (3) economic factors, (4) sociological motivators, and (5) psychological factors (Mirahmadi, 2016). Using the intersections of these three elements as our framework proved useful in facilitating a systematic approach to our research and analysis. Figure 1 provides a visual representation of the intersectionality described in the framework that we used.¹

¹ The red shapes represent the intersection of two of the three elements previously described. Within each red shape there exists both push and pull factors contributing to VE (the third element).

Concept: VE Susceptibility Assessment Tool

Visualization for defining the intersection between three theoretical element. The assessment tool seeks to define which intersection (red shape) within a given context is most susceptible to VE.

- (1) Five dimensions of VE factors (political, Ideology, psychological, sociological, and economic)
- (2) Three levels of society
- (3) Type of VE factor (push versus pull) [not depicted in diagram below]

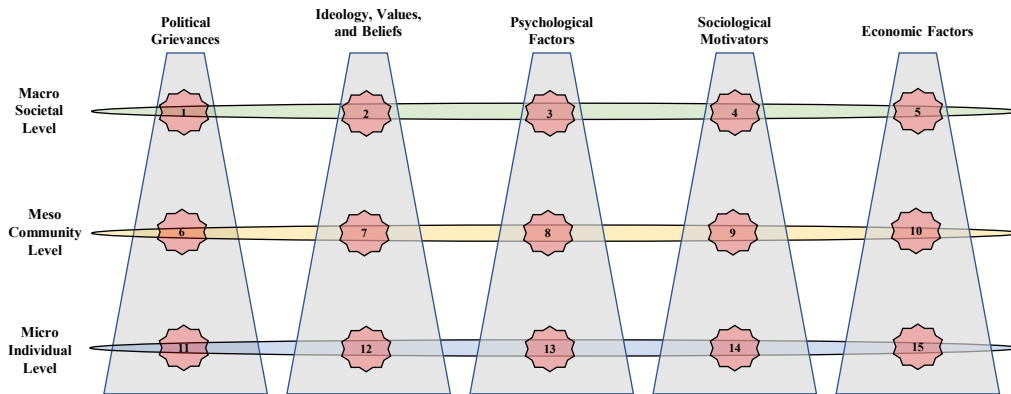


Figure 1: Theoretical Diagram of Intersection of Three Elements

Third, we gained a deeper appreciation for the political, cultural, economic, historical, and social fabrics that comprised each of the three contexts that we sought to analyze.

Part 2: Cognitive Mapping Exercise

The second step within our analysis was a cognitive mapping exercise. This consisted of using visualization in order to better understand all of the factors contributing to VE in all three contexts, and how each interacted with the others.

The cognitive mapping exercise was an exhaustive group endeavor. On colored sticky notes, we wrote specific factors contributing to VE that were discovered during our country context literature review. These were categorized by color for the five dimensions and physically categorized by levels of society. Figure 2 is a picture of team member, Amineh arranging notes during the collaborative cognitive mapping exercise.



Figure 2: Safi contemplating the factors that contribute to VE on February 21, 2017 at the Humphrey School of Public Affairs

After each group member was confident that our efforts reflected the comprehensiveness and complexity of the factors uncovered during the literature review, we digitized our work using a mapping software *Visual Understanding Environment* offered by Tufts University (Tufts University, 2015). The digital version, represented in Figure 3, helped us to visualize the interconnected complexity of the drivers of violent extremism that span across all five factors and through all three levels of society. The five orange nodes along the edges of the diagram represent the five dimensions of factors that contribute to VE, as previously discussed. All other nodes represent specific types of factors that contribute to VE within one or more of the three contexts in which we researched. Pull factors are represented by nodes outlined in red, and push factors are denoted by nodes outlined in green. The intent behind such a visual was to demonstrate that the various factors contributing to VE are complex and deeply intertwined with one another. The nodes annotated are by no means exhaustive, but sufficient for achieving the diagrams intent. The middle space where the nodes connect and interact with one another is the theoretical space in which communities, groups, or individuals become susceptible to VE. This is the space in which we set out to investigate further through the implementation of the assessment tool that we developed.

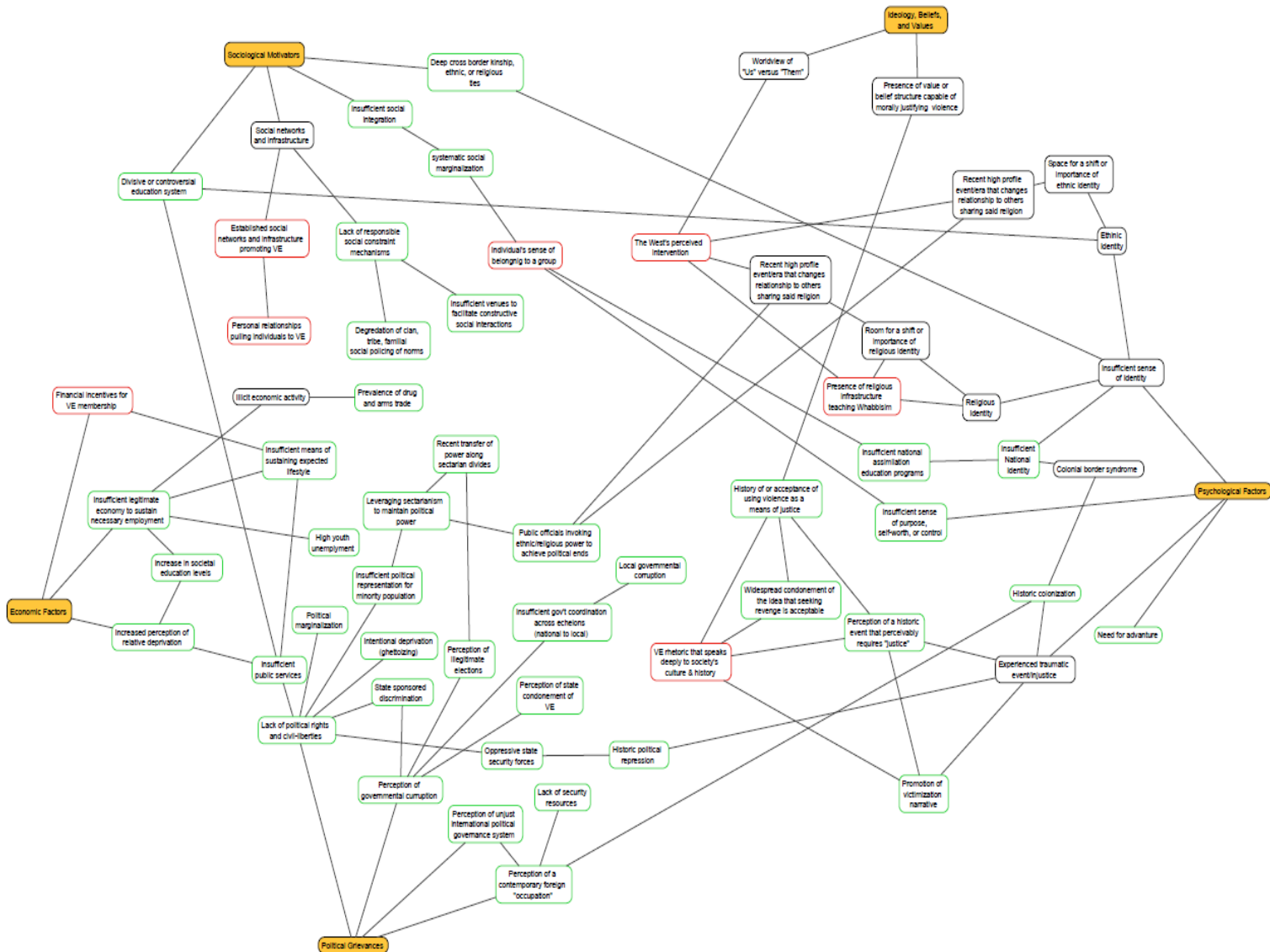


Figure 3: Complex web-diagram displaying the interconnectedness of the various factors

Part 3: Assessment Tool

After analyzing the digitized cognitive map, we built a comprehensive Assessment Tool that would allow local practitioners and community leaders of fragile nation states to identify vulnerable levels of society that are most susceptible to violent extremism recruitment. The approach uncovers specific dimensions that contribute to violent extremism unique to the societal context. The Assessment Tool is meant to be employed by practitioners in the field or by practitioners in conjunction with professionals from the region (i.e. politicians, educators, psychologists, community leaders) in order to maximize accuracy of the local context.

The Assessment Tool asks participants to respond to a list of statements that reflect characteristics of a resilient and stable nation state that is adequately equipped to counter violent extremism recruitment. Each question is coded based on Levels of Society and Dimensions of Factors (see Table 1) and each response is coded using a five-point Likert scale (see Table 2).

Table 1: Coding for Assessment Tool Statements						
		Dimensions of Factors				
		<i>Economic Factors (E)</i>	<i>Political Grievances (PG)</i>	<i>Ideology, Beliefs, and Values (I)</i>	<i>Sociological Motivators (S)</i>	<i>Psychological Motivators (P)</i>
Levels of Society	<i>Macro (MA)</i>	EMA	PGMA	IMA	SMA	PMA
	<i>Meso (ME)</i>	EME	PGME	IME	SME	PME
	<i>Micro (MI)</i>	EMI	PGMI	IMI	SMI	PMI

Table 2: Likert Scale Code for Assessment Tool Responses	
1	Strongly Agree
2	Somewhat Agree
3	Neutral
4	Somewhat Disagree
5	Strongly Disagree

Scoring for each section of the Assessment Tool is dependent on the number of questions assigned to that section. For example, Political Grievances Micro (PGMI) has 4 questions. Using the Likert scale, a participant could score a maximum of 20 points. Therefore, if a participant had a cumulative PGMI score of 15 points they would receive 75% or an average of 3.75 for the PGMI section. The average scores are calculated for each section and used to determine the Level of Susceptibility that exists for each section based on ranges reflected in Table 3. These ranges were chosen by our team based on a preliminary take of the Assessment Tool for our three country contexts: Kenya, Kosovo, and Tunisia.

Table 3: Levels of Susceptibility for Sections of Assessment Tool based on Average Scores	
0.0 - 3.2	Low Level
3.3 - 4.2	Medium Level
4.3 - 5.0	High Level

While recognizing our limitations with desk research, we were able to demonstrate the effectiveness of this tool when we applied it to our country contexts which proved to highlight the greatest risk areas of each country. Further description of this process can be found in Appendix A.

Part 4: Analysis of Assessment Tool Scores

Our analysis revealed that each level of society’s susceptibility to violent extremism stems from a variety of interdependent drivers of VE. Some factors are unique to specific countries whereas others are common across all three contexts. Following an extensive review of existing Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) programs worldwide, we recommended targeted intervention programming for each country context as well as broad aspects of CVE programming that we found to be common amongst all countries. Recommendations in the proceeding sections of this research paper have been tailored to the mission and work of the International Republican Institute.

Country Contexts

Violent extremism has achieved global attention over the past twenty years. Extremist groups have gained notoriety by launching attacks in stable countries, and by toppling the governments of less stable nations. Western governments have responded by redeploying their security apparatuses from interstate war to the monitoring of asymmetric conflicts. The U.S.-led international order is consumed in countering extremist groups and promoting moderate alternatives to radical ideologies without always having a good understanding of the root causes of violent extremism.

The three nations of Kenya, Kosovo, and Tunisia are on the front lines of this new global struggle. While each nation faces unique situations within diverse contexts, their government's endeavors to counter violent extremism (CVE) retain commonalities. Conducting CVE programming in these three nations will be of critical importance for the future security and stability of their respective regions. Such stability will allow for greater political progress and economic prosperity for the people in each of these fragile states.

Factors of violent extremism discussed in this report create conditions that work in tandem to create an environment that allows VE to thrive. In all cases studied for this report, every factor discussed exists in a relationship with other factors that, taken together, create the conditions in each of these countries which renders violent extremism possible. The Factors of VE examined span the macro (national), meso (community), and micro (individual) levels. Despite the presence of similar factors in each country studied, each case is unique and solutions to violent extremism must be designed to fit each unique context (Allan, Glazzard, Jespersen, Reddy-tumu, & Winterbotham, 2015).

Kenya

Context and Background

Kenya came to the attention of CVE experts after attacks in Nairobi and in Mombasa. On April 2, 2015, Northeast Kenya became the center of attention when an attack at Garissa University, in Garissa County, killed over 140 individuals. Since then, several attacks have also taken place in Mandera County. Wajir County, located between the two, has been relatively calm in comparison to its neighboring county. These three counties used to constitute the Northeast Province of Kenya. All three counties border on Somalia. All three are desperately poor, with little infrastructure, and have the lowest literacy rates in Kenya.

Violent extremism in Kenya has increased sharply in recent years. This violence has generally been associated with Al-Shabaab, a group based in neighboring Somalia. While Al-Shabaab used to be composed almost entirely of Somali citizens, its membership spread to Kenyan Somalis

and to non-Somali Kenyans after Kenya pursued policies against Somalia and against Kenya's Muslim population. While this paper will explore recruitment and incidences of VE among Kenyan Somalis, readers should note this is due only to the counties being studied. Al-Shabaab recruits heavily from non-Somali Kenyans as well as from Somali Kenyans (Botha, 2014).

The central government is struggling both to respond to the wishes of its citizenry internally and attempting to deal with a major refugee crisis externally, as refugees from neighboring Somalia have sought relief in Kenya's territory. The success of these twin struggles will be critical in the ongoing effort to combat violent extremism in the Horn of Africa.

Macro: Kenya and Somalia's Complicated History

Kenya

Among sub-Saharan countries, Kenya is generally considered a modest success, having joined the ranking of middle income countries in 2014. As a country, Kenya covers diverse terrains, from coastal to inland, desert to lush forest. Its people are equally diverse, with forty-two tribes living within its borders. Of these, some practice indigenous African religions, others practice various forms of Christianity, while the coastal and northern tribes are predominantly Muslim. Official census data states that 83% of the country is Christian and 11.2% is Muslim. These numbers are questioned by much of the Muslim population, which asserts that it was intentionally undercounted during the census (Throup, 2015).

While Kenyan society is diverse, Kenyan political leadership has not been. Since independence in 1960, Kenya has had only four presidents, representing two of Kenya's tribes. In a country where ethnicity and religion are equated, and where ethnicity dominates political party affiliation, Muslim areas of the country have experienced disenfranchisement and heavy handed repression (Throup, 2015).

The Northeastern region of Kenya was isolated from the rest of Kenya in 1902 by the colonial Outlying District Ordinance, which declared that hostile pastoralist tribes needed to be contained. When Kenya was granted independence, a survey of the area showed that 80% of those tribes favored union with Somalia over incorporation into the Kenyan state. Their interests were ignored. The war that resulted in 1963 was named the "Shifta" or "bandit" war by the new Kenyan government (Ndzovu, 2014; Oded, 2000). The secessionist war resulted in over 4,000 dead and the authorization of extensive use of force over the next several decades. This resulted in a massacre of up to 5,000 people at the Wagalla airstrip in 1984. Another massacre at Bulla Kartasi followed, with at least 3,000 murdered, and many more raped, by Kenyan security forces. The "emergency security measures" of the province were finally lifted in 1991 when any thought of joining the Somali state had become academic (Naimasiah, 2015; Simon, 2015). A Truth and Reconciliation Report created to address the longstanding grievances of this province was written, but its suggestions have not been implemented. The memory of these massacres, however, lives on with the elders of the clans, and the stories continue to circulate. Until an

official peace process is implemented, distrust of the central Kenyan government, and of the Kenyan security forces, will continue (International Crisis Group, 2012; Naimasih, 2015).

In 2010, Kenya adopted a new constitution, which created a new county system. This system created both new opportunities and unforeseen challenges for the northeastern region. The counties of Mandera, Wajir, and Garissa were the result of this devolution. The new structure allows the counties to elect their own leaders, enact policies locally, and raise local revenue for their own development. Additionally, a federal apportionment of development money is now prioritized according to need. While this system would seem likely to end the disenfranchisement from which these communities suffered, the county system is entirely blind to the realities of nomadic movement and politics. The county system allows for voting based on location of residence by ward, a nearly meaningless concept for people who travel over 25 km between water points and hundreds of miles in search of pasture (Republic of Kenya: Garissa County, 2013). Leaders are elected almost exclusively by clan, with the larger clans dominating the political process (Chome, 2016; Republic of Kenya: Mandera County, 2017).

Somalia

The population of the Northeastern Province is almost entirely Somali herding groups of the Darod and Hawiye pastoralist clans. These groups are native to Kenya and are simultaneously the same groups as across the border in Somalia and Ethiopia. Understanding Northeastern Kenya requires understanding the clan organization and political background of Somalia, the country which they so wished to join until that movement's demise in the 1990s. "Somali" designates the tribe, which is then broken down into large clans, smaller subclans, and even smaller diya² groups. These clans are then ranked in a hierarchy, with nomadist clans as the noblest, and trade working clans at the bottom. These clans are Sunni Muslims, with strong ties to Sufism. In the process of building a nation-state, military leader Siyad Barre tried to destroy the clan system in 1969. The effort dramatically backfired, creating civil war between the clans instead (Pham, 2012).

It is in this context that Sharia law gained ground: it was a neutral arbiter of conflicts and a common denominator for agreements. This Sharia law was not the Wahhabi form often associated with Sharia in the West, but the traditional and somewhat more flexible Shafi'i school. It was only as Saudi Arabia gained influence that Wahhabi thought began to gain prominence in East Africa. By the 1980s, a definite shift could be felt. In June 2006, the Islamic Courts Union was established in Mogadishu to create a peaceable existence and end tribal warfare. Ethiopia, however, was displeased by this, and invaded with a coalition of nations, which Kenya eventually joined. Al-Shabaab sprang up as a youth movement resisting this foreign intervention (Pham, 2012).

² The diya is a group of men sharing a common male ancestor, pledged to protect each other and make reparation for one another's actions outside the group.

Meso: The Northeastern Counties

Mandera County in the north is the greatest distance from Nairobi of any county in Kenya. It is bordered on the east by Somalia and on the north by Ethiopia. The prominent clans include Garre, Degodia, and Murule. While the population is listed by census as 1,025,756, this number is in constant fluctuation. Half of Mandera's population will cross over the county borders out of the country to Ethiopia or Somalia in search of grazing land for their herds when the water pans in Mandera dry up (Republic of Kenya: Mandera County, 2017). Since mid-2013, al-Shabaab attacks in Mandera county have become frequent. These attacks have so far targeted members of Christian tribes known to be traveling through or working in the county. The county governor has also been targeted (Chome, 2016).

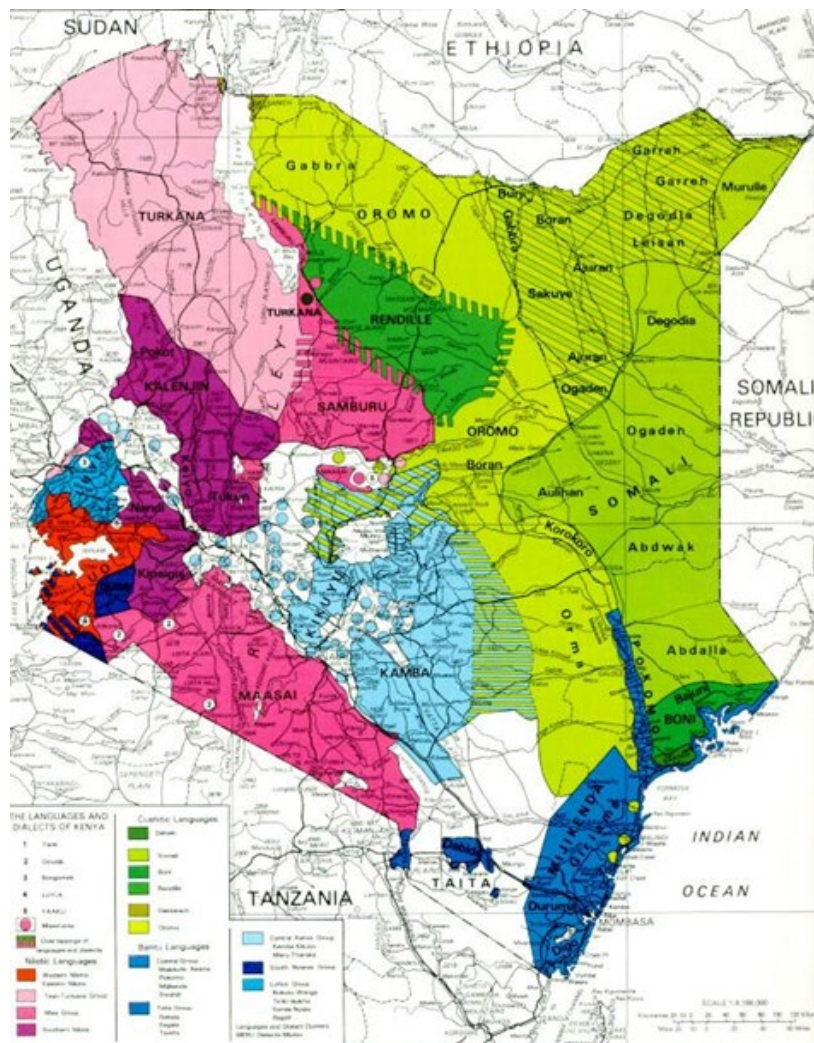


Figure 4: Kenyan Tribal Map (WildGens, 2016)

Garissa County borders on Somalia and is a major crossing point. The Aulihan and Abudwak clans dominate the county. Of these, the Aulihan are not stationary to Kenya, but migrate through Somalia with their cattle herds. Garissa town has seen one of the deadliest single Al-Shabaab attacks, the shooting and hostage situation at Garissa University. Mohamud Kunow, also known as Gamadhare, is thought have been the major orchestrator of this attack. A Wahhabi influenced teacher and principal at Madrasa Najah in Garissa between 1997 and 2000, he later joined the Islamic Courts Union in Somalia. This movement was seen by many in Kenya as a legitimate movement which would bring peace to the chaos of southern Somalia. When the ICU was overthrown, many Kenyan Somalis immigrated to Somalia to join a resistance against the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia. However, this violence did not spill back across the border until after Kenya sent its troops to Somalia in 2011 (Chome, 2016).

Unlike Mandera and Garissa, Wajir County has been relatively calm in recent years. While it shares a border with Ethiopia to the north and Somalia to the east, the border crossings are not extensively used as there are few kinship ties within Somalia. This lack of traffic along with a lack of identification in Somalia's problems seems to have curtailed al-Shabaab's influence in the county. When attacks have occurred or cells have been discovered, those involved were identified as recruited outside of the county in neighboring counties or while in Eastleigh (Chome, 2016).

Factors commonly recognized as driving Violent Extremism in NE Kenya include political development issues with police officers susceptible to bribes and military officers accused of gross misconduct and heavy handed retaliation against civilians. Those interviewed expressed resentment against AMISOM bombardment of Somalia, and a desire for revenge against security forces. Additionally, human development issues such as widespread youth unemployment and lack of public education such that Wahhabi sponsored education is often the only option available create vulnerabilities that can easily be exploited.³ In addition to this, individuals have expressed fear of victimization if they refuse recruitment (Hassan, 2012).

Political

When asked to identify the single most important factor that drove respondents to al-Shabaab, 65% specifically referred to the government's counterterrorism strategy. Comments included: "Government and security forces hate Islam" and "All Muslims are treated as terrorists," to more specific examples: "The assassination of Muslim leaders" or the "extra-judicial killing of Muslims" (Botha, 2014).

³ Education levels among Al-Shabaab recruits, while generally low (47% attended only primary school, and 45% attended secondary school with only 8% having higher education) reflect the same spread as other citizens of Kenya, and are higher, not lower, than the average for the communities of Eastleigh and Northeastern Kenya. However, youth expressed that they lacked the education that would lead to employment or open up alternate career paths.

Of the push factors identified, by far the strongest was the discrimination against Muslim populations in Kenya (Khalil & Zeuthen, 2014). This has worsened under the recent anti-Al-Shabaab operations named Operation Usalama Watch. Between April 4 and April 19, 2014, Kenyan authorities arrested 4,005 Somali-looking individuals, before releasing 3,010 who were ascertained to be Kenyans. Those ascertained to be Somali were deported (Botha, 2014). Following attacks in Mombasa, the security forces knowingly arrested relatives of suspects instead of arresting the suspects themselves (Botha, 2014). Of former recruits interviewed, 69% remembered personally being discriminated against on the basis of their religion (Botha, 2014). In addition to profiling, sexual violence against female relatives by Kenyan forces within Somalia was also cited as a reason for joining Al-Shabaab (Hassan, 2012). Discrimination against, and violent treatment of the Somali community by the Kenyan Defense Force and the Kenyan police has created an unhealthy situation in which citizens feel the need to band together against the government.

When asked to identify their enemy, 49% listed the Kenyan government, while 18% listed other nations including Ethiopia and the US as enemies. Only 4% of those interviewed expressed any trust in the political process, despite 39% having participated in the election. When asked if the government only looked after the interests of a few, 99% agreed. When asked if standing up against the government was justified, only 4% answered negatively (Botha, 2014).

Additionally, political reorganization has caused problems locally, as the demographics can be shifted for the sake of local politics and elections. When Somalia's civil wars drove refugees across the border into Garissa County in 1992, disproportionately large numbers of the Aulihan subclan of the local Ogadeni clan moved into Garissa. They were recognized as kinsman, and welcomed with relatively little grumbling. However, the influx of over 340,000 refugees to a county with 623,000 residents substantially shifted which sub-clan held prominence. Many refugees obtained residence cards over the next decades. Tensions arose during the county elections in 2013, where the influx tipped the election toward the Aulihan clan instead of toward the more established Kenyan Abudwak clan. While these tensions have calmed down, every election threatens to overwhelm the ability to locally manage conflict (Chome, 2016). This confusion regarding who is a Kenyan citizen and who is a Somali citizen is reflective of the internal identity structures of the clans. The Kenyan government has begun to require two forms of identification from anyone to prove that they are Kenyan Somalis, increasing the frustration of local groups.

Economic

Due to decades of punitive measures, the northeastern counties remain generally underdeveloped. Few schools result in high rates of illiteracy. A lack of roads, electricity, and infrastructure results in a lack of industry. Influxes of people from Somalia during times of conflict or drought drain the meager local resources. Almost any goods sold in market can be

obtained more easily through smuggling across the Somali border than through legal means. In this dire economic zone, Al-Shabaab offers relatively generous wages, creating an appealing alternative.

The lack of investment by the government has resulted in the northeastern counties having the lowest literacy rates of any area in Kenya. In Garissa County, the illiteracy rate is 94% among females and 71% among males. This rate is unlikely to alter anytime soon, as there are insufficient primary and secondary schools in the area. Primary school enrollment rates are also low, and are currently falling. A severe drought has resulted in nomadic tribes moving great distances in search of fodder. As this occurs, families have an even harder time keeping their children in school (ReliefWeb, 2017; Republic of Kenya: Garissa County, 2013).

The counties also have very little industry or agriculture, making it difficult to find work beyond pastoralism, even when the herds fail to provide a living. Unemployment among youth aged 15-34 currently stands at 67%. Developing industry in the counties is further complicated by a lack of basic infrastructure. Electrification is minimal, with less than 1% of the population connected to a power grid. Water is scarce, and families may have to travel up to 25 km between watering points. In the three counties, there are a total of 30 km of paved roads (Republic of Kenya: Garissa County, 2013; Republic of Kenya: Mandera County, 2017; Republic of Kenya: Wajir County, 2017).

When the most recent wave of refugees arrived in 2011, they outnumbered the local population and caused a strain on resources. The cluster of camps at Dadaab caused significant strain on both water and wood. Additionally, while Kenya was better off than Somalia, the area around the camp has also experienced drought conditions. International NGOs served the Somali national refugee population, but neither the Kenyan government, nor the INGOs, served the local Somali population. When these conditions became dire, local Kenyan Somalis registered instead as Somali national refugees to receive aid. Not only did registering as a refugee provide access to food, but Dadaab camp also had better health and education facilities than the surrounding areas of Garissa county and the neighboring counties of Mandera and Wajir. The Kenyan government has also embarked on a campaign to resettle as many refugees from the Dadaab camp as is possible back into Somalia. Unfortunately, little attention has been paid to what will happen in Garissa county as the aid that flowed into the refugee camps is phased out. The closing of the camp has been promoted as a counter-terrorism effort, despite the findings of several NGOs that refugees in Dadaab demonstrated little support for violent extremism and in many cases had fled Al-Shabaab (IRIN, 2011; Throup, 2015).

In Garissa Town and Dadaab dropout nomadists have entered smuggling networks and engaged in the contraband trade. This can largely be attributed to a lack of opportunities for work and a lack of legal trade routes for food. Goods smuggled include pasta, cooking oil, rice, and sugar. Sugar smuggling is reported to be the most lucrative and helps finance both al-Shabaab and the

Kenyan Defence Force, which collect bribes to allow contraband across the border. Mandera county also has a noticeable substance abuse problem, with illicit trade across the border. Small-arms trade is also part of the movement of illicit goods across the border (Sheikh, 2013). The porosity of the border is a constant security concern, but closing it would severely compromise livelihoods in an already impoverished state.

The monthly salary offered by Al-Shabaab is very attractive to youth. In 2014, that was reported at \$50 to \$150 a month, putting it at the medium range for employment in Kenya; Reuters reported the average wage in 2013 to be \$76 (Macharia, 2013). Recruits were, at the very least, supplied with free weapons. In some streets in Eastleigh, they were hired by businessmen for security and patrolled the streets openly, incurring visible respect from the community (Khalil & Zeuthen, 2014).

Ideological

While violence spreads in some areas more easily than others, the question remains as to what attracts individuals to join extremist groups and commit violent acts. To answer that question, this paper draws heavily from former research and interviews conducted by other scholars. Annely Botha from the Institute for Security Studies in Pretoria, SC, conducted interviews with 95 individuals associated with Al-Shabaab and with 46 of their relatives. Muhsin Hassan conducted a smaller study of 15 former Somali Al-Shabaab members living in Eastleigh, asking specifically why they had joined and why they had left. Additionally, James Khaliland and Martine Zeuthen studied OTI's VCE program in Eastleigh to note what assumptions had held true and which had proven unfounded. The findings of these studies together paint a picture which can provide insight into the Al-Shabaab recruitment process generally.⁴

Al-Shabaab utilizes anger against African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) military action in Somalia that is seen by residents of the NE as a continuation of the repression and violence they have experienced from Kenyan government forces. This solidarity is utilized by Al-Shabaab, which portrays itself as an anti-government defender of Islam and offers youth an escape from the powerlessness they experience from political and economic repression (International Crisis Group, 2012). However, where the Kenyan government has engaged with tribal leadership and tribal youth, this rhetoric is interrupted and violence is noticeably lower (Chome, 2016).

In order to reach recruits, Al-Shabaab leaders may set up religious classes, often meeting outside the mosque in the leader's home. Up to 34% of Al-Shabaab respondents indicated that they were approached by a religious leader to attend these alternate "classes" (Botha, 2014). Sponsored

⁴ The interviews mentioned took place with youth who had been recruited while in Somalia or while in Eastleigh, near Nairobi. Similarly structured interviews ought to be conducted with youth recruited from NE Kenya to see if the dynamics and recruitment patterns are parallel across locations.

religious classes, and in some cases religious boarding schools, may be the only option for education available to local youth. When the youth leave for these classes, the often illiterate parents find themselves unable to monitor or counter what their children are learning. Meanwhile, these religious leaders may use relatively intolerant strands of Islam, such as the Wahhabi ideology as a mask for promoting the use of violence to achieve other objectives (International Crisis Group, 2012). The process of radicalization involves pulling persons away from their traditional forms of Islam, creating a sense of obligation to an imagined society rather than family norms. The shift of religious identity often results in a period of withdrawn behavior, as noted by relatives (Botha, 2014). In reflecting on the process of radicalization, several former members described it as manipulation and attributed their vulnerability to a lack of other religious education. The introduction of Wahhabism is resented by many local imams as the interference of Saudi Arabian oil tycoons in local matters, but the local religious leaders often lack the means to mount a counter messaging campaign (Throup, 2015). A variety of clerical associations such as the Supreme Council of Kenya Muslims (SUPKEM), the National Muslim Leaders Forum (NAMLEF) and the Council of Imams and Preachers of Kenya (CIPK) have tried to restrict the spread of extremist ideology, but have not succeed as they worked too closely with the Kenyan government or were too moderate to reach their audience. Those clerics who speak out against extremism are themselves targeted by extremist groups (International Crisis Group, 2012; Throup, 2015).

Sociological

While there is no one-to-one correlation between clan violence and violent extremism, there is a tendency for the violence to co-occur, or, conversely, for a population to become resilient against both. An epidemiological approach to violence in these counties would undoubtedly prove insightful for any future work done in the counties.

With few resources, pastoralist clans clash with each other over water rights, grazing rights, and cattle rustling. There have also been clashes between pastoralist clans and agriculturalist clans over water and land rights. Due to a series of local droughts, increased fragility in Somalia, and decreased grazing land in Kenya, Garissa county has seen an increase in urbanization. Residents from counties lacking aid and urbanization may migrate to Eastleigh instead in hopes of finding employment near Nairobi (Chome, 2016).

Several solutions to clan clashes have been attempted. In Mandera, the Garre clan has taken on increasing dominance, clashing violently with the Murule clan. In 2005, the Supreme Council of Kenyan Muslims intervened to secure open access to pasture. This agreement did not last and in 2013, a government initiated effort brought the two top religious leaders from each together to work out an agreement to interclan problems. They in turn brought the elders, resulting in the payment of blood compensation and a temporary peace agreement (Sheikh, 2013). In Wajir, a spiral of violence in the 1990s led to the formation of the Wajir Peace and Development

Committee (WPDC) in 1995, which brings together government officials, elders, women, business leaders and youth to resolve conflicts. When the area transitioned into the county governance structure, the WPDC retained its leadership. Unlike residents in the neighboring counties, residents of Wajir county have expressed faith in their ability to voice their issues and find resolution for their problems (Chome, 2016).

Ultimately, a solution to violence in the Northeast counties will have to go hand in hand with clan related conflict resolution measures. As will later be addressed, peace based messaging and community based conflict resolution strategies are far more effective than programs that target only one kind of violence.

Psychological

Given the history of repression and the ongoing inter-clan violence, it is not surprising that individuals are psychologically vulnerable. Violent extremist groups offer a sense of power, control, protection, and belonging, which might not otherwise be fulfilled. Studies of former Al-Shabaab members revealed that members joined due to a salary,⁵ an improved sense of belonging, a perception of fighting on behalf of Islam, and the promise of receiving paradise. According to one former member, he was approached by a man who offered “to make him an “amir” or prince of his own “men” if he could get three or more of his friends to also join” (Hassan, 2012). Not only were 38% of respondents recruited by friends, but 54% reported recruiting their own friends.⁶ The effects of peer to peer recruitment cannot be overestimated (Botha, 2014). Former recruits identified an increase in their sense of belonging after joining Al-Shabaab. Even though these recruits had since left, 68% still spoke of Al-Shabaab in terms of “us.” A further 32% used the term “us” to the Muslim community. None used the term “us” to refer to Kenya (Botha, 2014). Joining Al-Shabaab creates a sense of identity and community that vulnerable members of society may need.

Adventure seeking, revenge-seeking, and fear of the consequences of not joining all contributed to recruitment (Khalil & Zeuthen, 2014). Revenge was sometimes sought against Kenyan security forces, against a member of the Kenyan public who may have discriminated against or injured them in some way, or against other clans, as an extension of the Somali civil war (Khalil & Zeuthen, 2014).

Ultimately, many of the recruits from Somalia left Al-Shabaab when they had the opportunity for a better quality of life outside of Somalia. For several, this came in the opportunity of education. Others left because of advice from parents who wanted their children out of danger or because

⁵ It should be noted that while ideological recruitment is based on the above factors, 10% identified themselves as joining for economic reasons in equal or greater measure as ideological reasons. In these cases, the label of “Violent Extremism” does not apply well. Mercenary protection unit would be a better description (Botha, 2014).

⁶ A few former members identified their parents as their recruiters, only 21% said that their parents were aware of their decision to join Al-Shabaab, and only 11% informed their parents of their decision directly (Botha, 2014).

their clans split away from Al-Shabaab. While Al-Shabaab has tried to portray itself as a pan-Islamic unifying movement, it has become party to the inter-clan struggles. Youth who realized the participation of Al-Shabaab in injustice or those who perceived that Al-Shabaab was losing credibility and power dropped out of the group. For others, they came to see that commanders were using them as pawns, at which point reputation gained became meaningless, and they left the group (Hassan, 2012).

Kosovo

Context and Background

Kosovo is a relatively new state that currently finds itself thrust onto the front lines of the burgeoning global effort to combat violent extremism. Having just gained its official independence in 2008, Kosovo is struggling to overcome years of ethno-political tensions and conflict to create a unified national identity, legitimate economic opportunity for its people, and an inclusive political environment. It remains largely isolated from greater Europe, and its government is seen by its citizenry as corrupt and unresponsive to their needs and desires. Countering the rise of violent extremism in the country will be critical for Kosovo as it attempts to legitimize itself both internally and externally, both in terms of national politics and in terms of regional and international political recognition and integration.

Numerous interdependent factors that have resulted in a situation in which VE networks, particularly those tied to ISIS, Al Qaeda, and other radical groups, in Kosovo can successfully propagate an extremist doctrine to further their individual goals. The Kosovo War of 1999, and the resulting intervention by the western-led international order on Kosovo's behalf, is arguably a culmination of hundreds of years of Albanian nationalist asymmetric resistance to more powerful ruling states. The independence of Kosovo in 2008 has been seen as a validation of this style of warfare, and the use of violence to achieve political ends. It should be noted that meso and micro factors specific to the Prizren and Ferizaj regions of Kosovo are inadequately addressed through desk research and literature reviews. To effectively understand the factors contributing to VE in those specific regions the model described in this paper should be built upon by gathering primary data.

It is important to note that violent extremism in Kosovo is somewhat unique in that cognitive violent extremists operate within state boundaries in a manner that supports the outward expression of behavioral violent extremism by Kosovo citizens as foreign fighters in conflict zones such as Iraq and Syria. This is not to say that other forms of VE do not exist in Kosovo, but that international recruitment to VE forms the primary concern of the national and international governing bodies as it is the most prominent occurrence of VE within Kosovo.

The following background research and resulting analysis is oriented towards a specific subset of the Kosovo population, Kosovo Albanians, who are predominantly Muslim and form the majority ethnicity within the Kosovo state. The model examines the factors that have contributed to the rise of violent extremism in Kosovo including push and pull factors operating at the micro, meso, and macro levels of society, that intersect to produce a synergistic effect that generates support for VE.

Psychological Factors

Abandonment of traditional ethnic Albanian identity (decreased Serbian influence and formation of Albanian state)



Figure 5: Map of Ethnic Breakdown of Kosovo. (Britannica School, 2016).

After obtaining independence from Serbia in 2008, Kosovo Albanians primary means of identification no longer coincided with, and even conflicted with, political objectives. As recently as their 1999 struggle against Serbia, the Albanian ethnic group has held their Muslim faith as secondary to their decades-long drive for independence (Kastrati, 2015; Koktsidis & Ten Dam, 2008). The importance of ethnic identity before that of religion has been a characteristic of the Kosovo Albanian peoples dating back to the era of the Ottoman empire (Kastrati, 2015). In fact, the ability of Kosovo Albanians to facilitate the coexistence of multiple faiths throughout their history due to the supremacy of ethnic identities was a necessity for their national survival (Skendi, 1967).

When the state of Albania was officially established in 1912, Kosovars continued to share a strong cultural and historical affinity for their Albanian roots. Later that century it was ethnicity that served as the demarcation that separated Kosovo Albanians from the Serbian government from which they experienced oppression. A desire for a “Unified Albania” in the 1980’s brought about protests within Kosovo and the subsequent rescinding of autonomy for Kosovo in 1999 by Serbian authorities, leading to the 1999 war (Koktsidis & Ten Dam, 2008).

However, the establishment of a Kosovo state, which is distinct from that of its ethnic partner state of Albania, has proven to be a divisive force that has contributed to the weakening of the traditional secular ethnic identity (Demjaha & Peci, 2016). While the Albanian ethnic identity, due to its centuries of history in the region, is still the primary method of personal identification for Kosovars, nationalist identity is slowly gaining traction through the development of political institutions and an elected government in independent Kosovo. The failure of the Kosovo political system to rectify the divide between Kosovo and Albanian national identities has pushed Kosovo Albanians towards alternate means of self-identification (Demjaha & Peci, 2016).

Ineffective development of a national identity from a political perspective (international and subnational)

Since the Kosovo national identity no longer coincides with that of a struggle for ethnic independence, politicians largely turned to the narrative of integration into the western-dominated international system as a pillar of national identity. However, recent rejection by the international community, such as exclusion from the UN and EU, have slowed the development of a nationalist identity.

Despite having just gained official independence in 2008, Kosovo has made slow but steady progress in its drive to become a member in good standing in the European community of nations. In 2015, Kosovo signed a Stabilization and Association Agreement with the European Union, which Freedom House says represents “...the first contractual step towards EU membership” (Freedom House, 2016). The political elite within Kosovo, including the two primary political parties (PDK and LDK) generally advocate for integration, or at least engagement with the West, in particular the European Union, thus advocating a Kosovo national identity that is tied closely to the EU (Krasniqi, 2016). However, setbacks towards full acceptance, such as delays in granting visa travel for Kosovo citizens to the rest of the EU, continue to threaten the formation of this collective identity (Pop & Norman, 2016).

Pursuance of purpose, significance, and status

At the micro-level the individual’s pursuance of status, significance, and purpose are largely influenced by a dominant and entrenched patriarchal mindset in which gender norms place very real expectations on young men. “Physical toughness, bravery, and eagerness to fight are often regarded as traditional traits of successful and honorable men” (Shtuni, 2015). These expectation

manifest themselves in ways that encourage youth to increase their social status by displaying such characteristics. “Kosovo’s youth in particular have idolized these values since the 1998–1999 war through a constant flow of narratives and songs about the epic heroes among Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) fighters” (Shtuni, 2015).

Disturbance of the Religious Equilibrium through an influx of Salafi funding

Historically, as a byproduct of both Ottoman rule and later communist governance, Kosovo Albanians did not closely identify with their Islamic religion (Kastrati, 2015). This is not to say that they did not practice Islam, just that they did not primarily identify themselves by their religious affiliation. The 2008 Kosovo Declaration of Independence created a unique space in which Kosovo Albanians could form a new national identity. That same space also provided an opportunity for the formation of a new Islamic identity that arose after the 1999 Kosovo War (Kastrati, 2015).

The Muslim community of Kosovo and most Kosovo Albanians prescribed to the Hanafi School of Islam prior to the 1999 Kosovo War. Hanafi Islam facilitates religious tolerance and was largely responsible for the reliance on a secular ethnic identity and coexistence of multiple religions within Kosovo for centuries (Kastrati, 2015).

After the 1999 war, however, an infusion of Salafist teachers, charities, and madrassas from Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Egypt, and other Middle Eastern countries led to a shift in religious identity in large portions of Kosovo society (Perry, 2016). Many of the new Salafist Imams preached that the Hanafi School of Islam was incorrect, and money was provided for Kosovar Imams to study different strains of Islamic thought in Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Yemen, and Qatar (Perry, 2016). The more conservative brand of Islam has been a consistent force within Kosovo’s civil society ever since.

In addition to supporting legitimate Islamic institutions and charity organizations, select channels of funding from the Gulf states also support the spread of hate literature and other forms of religious intolerance within Kosovo (Gall, 2016; U.S. CIRF, 2012). Such channels of funding has led to a greater sympathy for the Islamic State, among other extremist groups, with 314 Kosovars joining the group in recent years (Gall, 2016). Saudi funding specifically has been tied to attempts to remake the Islamic Community of Kosovo, an organization traditionally focused on pursuing a more tolerant strain of the Islamic religion, into an organization devoted to a more rigid interpretation (Gall, 2016). Violent extremists propagating such intolerance have taken to speaking against the secular government, slowly turning increasing numbers of Kosovars (particularly youth) towards an extreme ideological worldview (Perry, 2016).

Sociological Factors

Segregated and Politicized Education System

Institutionalized intolerance within the Kosovo education system is a likely contributor to susceptibility to VE. The existing education system is largely delineated along sectarian lines on account of linguistic differences. Ethnicity based politics have recently manifested themselves within Kosovo's educational policy (Božić, 2010). Such decentralized educational structures do little to enhance tolerance and national cohesiveness in Kosovo youth.

Political Factors

Political ideology infancy

The leading political parties such as the LDK, PDK, and the AAK were shaped during the resistance to Serbia and the governance by the International Administration in Kosovo following the 1999 war (Krasniqi, 2016). Out of necessity they were more focused primarily on obtaining sovereignty, not necessarily governance. As a result political party cohesion stems more from historic ties and sectarian delineations than from political ideologies.

Historic involvement (or lack thereof) of international community

The volatile political history of Kosovo has been deeply affected by international action, or the lack thereof. The long struggle for autonomy from Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was born out of a philosophy that was anchored on the hope of international intervention. Throughout the 1990's, the Kosovo strategy for resisting Serbian oppression was spearheaded by the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) and its leader Ibrahim Rugova (Phillips, 2012). Rugova believed that the international community, particularly the U.S. administration, would reward their non-violent resistance by advocating for an international intervention on behalf of Kosovo. However, the exclusion of such discussion from the 1995 Dayton Peace Accords dealt a blow to the LDK nonviolent initiative and placed greater reliance on violent means, and birthing the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) (Phillips, 2012). Throughout 1996 the KLA began increasing its attacks against Serbians, thus attracting greater attention from Serbian security forces and the international community, which eventually brought about NATO intervention in the spring of 1998 (Phillips, 2012).

International and regional integration of the Kosovo state

While international aid and support continues for Kosovo, regional and international integration into economic and political institutions have continuously been delayed due to Russian

opposition, lack of urgency by western states, and the uneven growth of the traditional Kosovar economy. Without integration into the European Union and the World Trade Organization, Kosovo can only go so far in its development. Full development to the standards required by the European Union requires recognition and integration into the United Nations structures.

Perpetually slow development of legitimate Kosovo state capabilities

Kosovo Albanians increasingly see their government as corrupt and unresponsive to their needs. Since Kosovo declared independence, it has been attempting to wrestle with ongoing ethnic tensions between the Albanian majority and Serbian minority. Recent attempts to decrease the Serbian government's persistent influence within Kosovo by accommodating the political desires of the Serbian minority have been viewed unfavorably by Kosovo's Albanian majority.

News reports in January 2016 indicated that, "Kosovo is currently seeing the worst case of political unrest since it declared independence from Serbia in 2008. A new European Union-brokered deal that would give the Serbian minority more local powers in the majority-Albanian country has proved to be the tipping point after a long period of dissatisfaction with the government" (VICE, 2016). The demonstrations indicated the frustration that Kosovo Albanians have towards their government.

Economic Factors

Weak legitimate economy and substantial youth unemployment

Kosovo continues to confront an economy with high general and youth unemployment. A well-established underground economy remains an issue of national concern, depriving the central government of tax revenue and constraining traditional economic development.

The last few years have seen reasons for both optimism and pessimism regarding the Kosovo economy. According to the UN Development Program's latest data (2015), the poverty rate in Kosovo stands at 29.7%, the general unemployment rate is 32.9%, and the youth (15-24) unemployment rate is 57.7 percent (UNDP, 2017). Despite these seemingly bleak statistics, Kosovo is only one of four European countries to record positive growth rates every year since the economic crisis in 2008 (World Bank, 2016). The World Bank's mission in Kosovo reported that growth measured at 3.6% in 2015, an improvement over 1.2% in 2014 (World Bank, 2016).

While these numbers are encouraging, the World Bank reports that growth in Kosovo depends on a robust diaspora scattered around the world sending remittances home, access (albeit limited) to the global economy, donations, and a pro-growth budget (World Bank, 2016). The World Bank continues with its analysis of the Kosovo economy noting that Kosovo lacks appropriate fiscal and monetary policy, has weak public administration, few public services, a poor business climate, and is in need of upgraded public infrastructure (World Bank, 2016).

While the previous four years could offer optimism regarding the Kosovo economy, slowed growth, high youth unemployment, and the lack of well-paying jobs for average Kosovars discourage investment in the future of the country. Instead, citizens pursue alternative methods of personal advancement, including moving to a more prosperous country to become a member of the burgeoning Kosovo diaspora, or becoming a member of organized crime groups, including VE groups. Continuing the growth of the Kosovo economy and creating a healthy level of employment will be a powerful tool in countering violent extremism.

Ideology, Beliefs, and Values Factors

Empathy towards Syrian Muslims due to recent asymmetric resistance

The legacy of the KLA's (Kosovo Liberation Army) asymmetric resistance to oppressive Serbian forces during the years leading up to the 1999 Kosovo War is still very much alive and an integral part of the collective memory of Kosovo Albanians (Koktsidis & Ten Dam, 2008). This creates sympathy for the Syrian people, particularly the Syrian opposition. Syria specifically draws Kosovars due to its international and regional prominence, the nature of the conflict itself, and the similarities between the conflict in Syria and Kosovo's struggle for independence against Serbia. As Kosovo society collectively remember similar mistreatment and repression under the Milosevic regime (USAID, 2015). The United States Agency for International Development attests in their report on violent extremism in Kosovo, "Warfare is closely tied to Kosovar Albanian national identity" (USAID, 2015). The opportunity to go to Syria to fight for extremist groups in-country has been seized by youth who compare the fight to Kosovo's own struggle (USAID, 2015).

Such an ethnic history and sympathy for groups engaged in guerilla warfare has been utilized in the recruitment of young Kosovars by ISIS, to make the case for fighting the Syrian regime. It is successful in part due to youth's desire to emulate their parents' struggle against the Serbian regime (USAID, 2015). However, recruitment to Syria rather than other conflicts is also doubtless reflective of the financial incentives and recruitment benefits offered by ISIS.

Albanian historic social propensity for violent rectification of grievances

The Albanian people in Kosovo region have a long history of resisting the rule of powerful empires such as the Romans (59 BC- 395 AD), the Byzantines (395-850), and the Ottomans (1455-1912) (Kastrati, 2015). This resulting "culture of violence" in response to foreign rule is deeply ingrained in the Albanian national history, and has been historically seen as a legitimate ethnic heritage for a people largely denied independence and ruled by more powerful foreign empires and states (Koktsidis & Ten Dam, 2008).

Additionally, the Kanun, or Code of Leke Dukagjini, which has been known to sanction the use of violence to rectify feuds, and avenge their oppressors, is deeply integrated into Kosovo Albanian culture (Demjaha & Peci, 2016; Phillips, 2012). It propagates the use of violence in an

eye for an eye manner that is very prevalent even today. This centuries-old custom causes great concern in government and private social agencies within the region (Finer, 2007). This suggests that the nature of the violent retribution embodied in violent extremist groups could be more likely understood, and possibly accepted by the Kosovo Albanian populace.

Conclusion

The host of contributing drivers to violent extremism (VE) within Kosovo are interdependent in that the factors span micro, meso, and macro levels of traditional models of the drivers of VE.

The Albanian ethnic identity has historically manifested itself secularly with Kosovar-Albanians, while their Islamic religious heritage has remained nominal (Perry, 2016). However, the prolonged and turbulent state building process since the 1999 Kosovo War has lent itself to a manipulation of the historic identity of Kosovo Albanians, creating a vacuum in which new identities have taken root. Coupling this ambiguity in self-identification with a disturbance of the religious structures, and recruitment by ISIS, Al Qaeda, and other VE groups, contemporary national economic troubles, and regional conflicts involving transnational terrorist groups that are leveraging similar ultra-conservative religious ideology, and the potential for engaging in both cognitive and behavioral VE increases significantly. This is seen in the prevalence of Kosovars joining the Islamic State—at 314 recruited between the year 2014 and 2016, the number is the highest per capita in Europe (Gall, 2016).

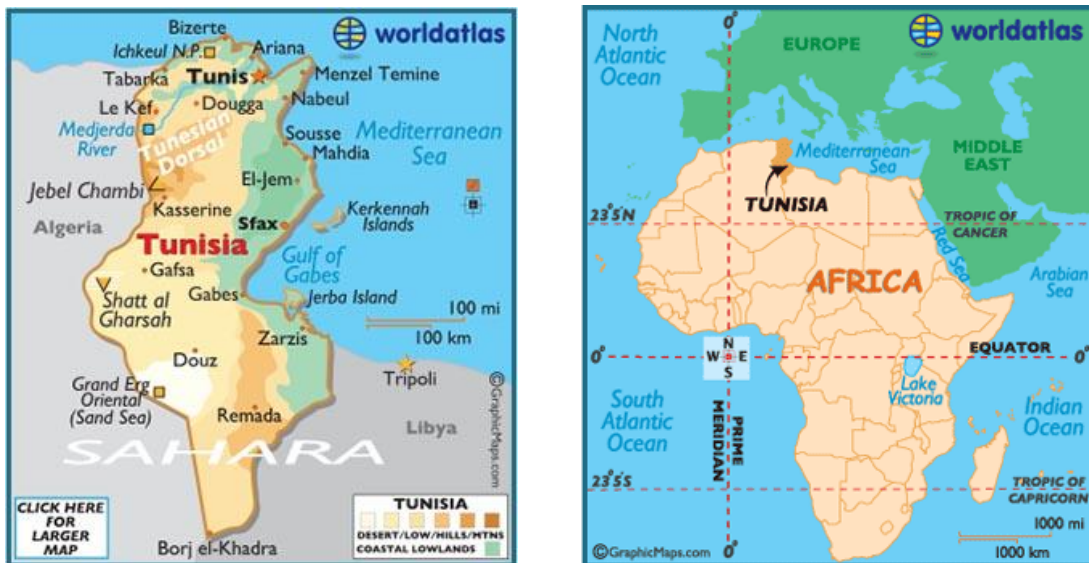
Tunisia

Context and Background

Tunisia emerged from the recent Arab Spring protest movements radically changed. Having overthrown a dictator who had ruled for decades, in exchange for a democratic transition, Tunisia now confronts a precarious geopolitical, governmental, and economic future. In addition, the nation is situated within a region that is consumed by instability and violent disorder. Their current struggle to combat violent extremism at home and within the region will play a critical role in the geopolitical future of North Africa.

Macro Level Context

Tunisia is a nation-state located in the center of North Africa. According to census data, Tunisia has a population of approximately 11 million people (Statistiques Tunisie, 2014). In terms of education, young people ages 15-24 have a literacy rate of over 96 percent (UNICEF, 2017). Moreover, around 80 percent of Tunisians belong to the middle class, and live with a per capita income above \$3,000 (Jakarta Post, 2007). For these reasons, Tunisia is considered to be a prosperous country at the macro level in comparison to other countries in the region.



Figures 6 and 7: Map of Tunisia and World Map with Tunisia (WorldAtlas, 2016)

Tunisia gained independence from France in 1956. Over the past 60 years, Tunisia has had a total of three leaders. First, Habib Bourguiba led the secular nationalist revolution following French control from 1956-1989. His government was autocratic, with limited interest in the economic development of the nation. One of Bourguiba's main political objectives was to weaken and dismantle historically based kinship ties, using family law reforms, to help establish

social solidarity and control over the nation (Haugbølle, 2016). Not only did Bourguiba control the judiciary, he also placed many limits on the press, minimized legislative rights, leaving him to exercise power without restraint (Kallander, 2011).

Bourguiba's successor, Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali led a coup against the Bourguiba administration in 1987, and won the presidency. Ben Ali was even less concerned with human rights, restricting the press and attacking political opponents. His leadership divided the nation, with many conservative Muslims being detained for their outspoken resistance to Ben Ali's poor human rights record. The strong suppression of religious practice, freedom of expression, political opposition, and human rights violations, along with poor economic opportunity, lead to the "Jasmine Revolution" of 2011, and initiated what came to be known as "The Arab Spring."

This revolution began when Mohamed Bouazizi committed suicide after the government shut down his small business fruit cart, cutting off the main source of income for him and his entire family (Al Jazeera, 2015). Bouazizi's public suicide was a cry for help, shocking Tunisian society. News spread of this event and initiated nationwide protests against the poor economic conditions of the country. Eventually, Ben Ali was removed from office as the public cried for justice.

The Tunisian economy has been greatly impacted throughout the rulings of Bourguiba and Ben Ali. Poor economic decisions were made by the government as they sought to increase imports and decrease exports. In 2015, Tunisia had a negative trade balance of \$53 billion in net imports, as compared to 1995 when they still had a negative trade balance of only \$1.95 billion in net imports (Simoes, 2017). Furthermore, in a publication from the World Bank in 2014, extensive corruption was officially reported to have occurred throughout the rule of Ben Ali, something that the general public had known for decades. "Although causality is difficult to establish, the results are consistent with the hypothesis that the Ben Ali clan abused entry regulation for private gain at the expense of reduced competition" (Rijkers, Freund, & Nucifora, 2014).

In more recent years the Tunisian economy, which was heavily dependent on the tourism industry, has been suffering decreased tourism rates as a result of the various travel warnings issued by many European countries, since they make up the largest percentage of visitors to Tunisia. Moreover, the people have been angered by the realization that the now-cheap hotel rates used to be double the price for residents than for foreign visitors and were only priced fairly due to reduced foreign tourism. The preferential treatment of foreign visitors in the tourism industry is an example of the devaluing of the Tunisian people, and the protection of outside interests over their own.

This preferential treatment reinforces the experience of the cultural and political colonization of the Tunisian people at the macro, meso, and micro level. At the macro level, a political system has been enforced that reflects a French governmental structure nationally over one that better reflects the preferences of the populous. At the meso level, groups of people are restricted from

practicing their religion openly within their community (Ghribi, 2016). The city of Kasserine is a prime example of restricted ability to access to the job market leaving many people without the ability to contribute to society (Paton, 2016). At the micro level, individuals are denied the fulfillment of basic desires such as getting married when they lack the finances to do so.

Rising violent extremist groups, like Ansar Al Sharia, have recently been conducting recruitment strategies surrounding the public’s negative reaction to the terrorism laws being developed by the Tunisian government. Developed during communal prayer time in the jails, Sayf Allah bin Hussayn, also known as Abu Iyadh, emerged as the group’s leader upon his release prior to the Tunisian Revolution in 2011. Most of the propaganda used by the group reflects a resurgence of a perverse understanding of religion and political mobilization against the elites. Ayadh has stated, “We bring a new vision of politics for the Arab world, but we know this will take time. After 50 years of Bourguiba and Ben Ali, people have lost their religion and we are feeding it” (Loveluck, 2012). Rhetoric such as this plays further ostracizing the conservative practicing Muslim in Tunisia. Despite these countering messages, the Tunisian government has been transformed over the past decade in its attempt to prioritize civil rights, like freedom of expression, for its people.

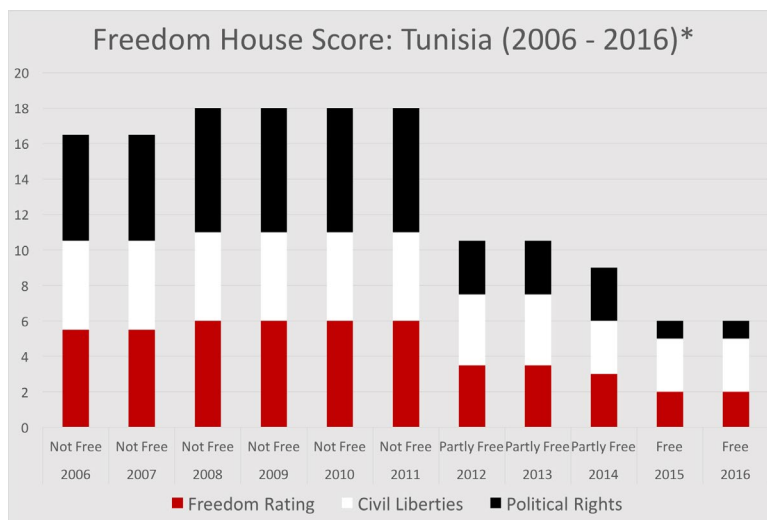


Figure 8: Freedom House Score of Tunisia 2006-2016 (Freedom House, 2015)

Between 2000-2016, Tunisia has experienced major transformations in political structures that have deeply impacted the level of freedoms for citizens throughout the country. In 2014, the first-ever democratic election took place in Tunisia, with Beji Caid Essebsi being named as President. As a beacon of democratic hope for the people of Tunisia following a time of uncertainty and former authoritarian rule, Essebsi chose to form a coalition government that included members of the Ennahda party, the most popular amongst the existing political parties in the country, albeit with rather low support rates (Zogby Research Services, 2013).

Since 2014, the ruling party Nidaa Tounes has faced defections, weakening its political hold (Chomiak, 2016). Nonetheless, critics of the government and the political structure have been more welcomed and protected, allowing for greater public discourse of previously taboo topics. These conversations include the experiences of those tortured in prison and the punishments for opposing government conduct and policies. In the economic arena, advancement has been slow, with autocratic practices still significantly influencing the market.

Meso Level Context: City of Kasserine

As noted in the 2014 census data, the city of Kasserine is home to 439,243 people. It is the city where protests erupted following the death of Reda, a man who turned himself on fire out of desperation over the lack of job opportunities, police corruption and engagement in bribes. Kasserine is an optimal location to better understand the drivers of violent extremism. In addition to the dimensions used in our assessment tool, geographical factors play an important role in increasing the presence of violent extremism in the Kasserine locality.

A significant community level issue is Mount Chaambi, 15 kilometers away, which shares a border with Algeria and provides an entry point for Al-Qaeda militants. With the removal of Ben Ali and the destabilization of the government, border security has weakened. Despite regular drone strikes, helicopters flying over, and bombings during the night in the Chaambi Mountain region, Al Qaeda continues to have strong control (Petre, 2014). These attacks have affected the psychological well-being of residents and increased their sense of uncertainty and control over their future. Thus, the increased access of extremists to the country along with the destruction of valuable property has harmed the country as a whole.

As the highest point in Tunisia, Jebel Chaambi or the Chaambi Mountain was a place that tourists often frequented to go on hikes and enjoy the beautiful views. However, since the revolution, the mountain has been a staging area for violent attacks. The two violent extremist groups based in the region, Okba Ibn Nafaa and Ansar al-Sharia Tunisia (AST), have carried out the majority of the attacks that have successfully targeted the Tunisian military (Counter Extremism Project, 2017). These attacks often took place in the city Kasserine, where Mount Chaambi is located. Some of these attacks include:

- May 5, 2013: 15 soldiers injured by IED
- June 6, 2013: 2 soldiers killed, 2 injured, by car bomb
- August 4, 2013: 2 soldiers killed, clashes with militants
- April 11, 2014: 5 soldiers, 1 civilian injured in explosion
- April 18, 2014: 1 soldier killed, 3 injured by IED
- May 23, 2014: 2 soldiers killed, 5 wounded by IED
- July 16, 2014: 15 soldiers killed, 22 injured in military camp
- November 30, 2014: National Guard abducted and decapitated
- February 17, 2015: 4 National Guard service members killed by AQIM

Micro Level Context

There are three main issues affecting Kasserine residents at the individual level. First, there is a lack of economic opportunity for both educated and uneducated individuals. As previously stated, the unemployment rate is relatively high. What makes matters worse is that educated Tunisians are twice as likely to be unemployed as uneducated ones because the economy creates few professional jobs (Zammit, 2015). This is further illustrated by the fact that a third of recent college graduates are unable to find work. For these reasons, youth in Kasserine refer to living between two types of terrorism the one of those fighting in the mountains and “the terrorism of the lobbies that run the economy” (Packer, 2016).

Second, most resource and assistance distribution is correlated with family and kinship ties (Haugbølle, 2016). Many jobs opportunities are offered based on positions family members hold in government, corporations, and local businesses. Hence, individuals who do not belong to a well-off family are left with very little support. As a result, there are many residents who live off aid provided to them by the national government and international organizations.

Last, Kasserine youth, especially young men, experience a lack of purpose due to limited economic opportunities that hinder their ability to get married, engage in other social activities, and gain respect. It is important to note, that a Tunisian man is expected to have a stable job and be able to provide for his family before he approaches a woman for marriage. As one Tunisian youth said, “an unemployed person is not a person, society itself does not accept him, he is not part of the circle of society. ... Tell me, what use is that person?” (World Bank, 2014). Hence, the poor economic conditions’ impact can be felt in the social and psychological aspects of a person’s life.

Political Factors

In October 2016, the media reported a crowd gathering in front of the Kasserine government building. Banners read “freedom, dignity” above their heads. Many of those participating in the demonstrations were protesting what they believed to be unfair economic and social policies (OSAC, 2016). Furthermore, the government has been failing to provide adequate security to protect the country along the Algerian and Libyan borders near the Chaambi mountain region.

Kasserine has been identified as the “informal headquarters” for jihadist groups due to the region’s “proximity to the permeable border with Algeria” and their dire economy; both of these factors provide “fertile ground for extremist recruitment” (Counter Extremism Project, 2017). In addition, Kasserine was the location of the rebel strongholds during the revolution against Ben Ali’s regime. Years later, the region “is still suffering from marginalization and lack of development” (Fahmi & Meddeb, 2015). In an interview with a member of the Tunisian Parliament, Walid al-Bannani of Kasserine, regarding the future of the country, he responded:

Economic Factors

“Unemployment, a lack of hope, and extremism are the three major threats to Tunisia’s future... All three are present in Kasserine. If we can save Kasserine, we can save the country.” (Luck, 2016)

To have a deep understanding of the economic crisis in Tunisia, one must first recognize and the level of corruption present in the nation. The family of the wife of former president Ben Ali, Laila Trabelsi, had monopolization over the Tunisian economy that made any sort of political or economic change taking place extremely difficult. World Bank researchers analyzed private tax data provided by Tunisia’s Ministry of Finance where they found links to more than 600,000 firms; this equates to over 220 companies that earn 21 percent of all of the country’s private-sector profits between the years of 1996 and 2010 (Amrani, 2011). Ben Ali was able to do this by placing many regulations that were in favor of his family businesses.

During Ben Ali’s time as president, “he issued 22 presidential decrees resulting in 73 amendments to the business code” (Rijkers et al., 2014). Mrs. Trabelsi’s brother was seen as the second most powerful man after the president due to his use of brutal tactics and connections with organized crime to further serve their economic interests. Thus, any effort to improve the economic situation for Tunisians must place more protective measures against corrupt financial practices as well as include the removal of regulations that block entry into the market and allow for more competition to take place.

In 2015, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) published a report on youth unemployment in Tunisia. Researchers concluded that the challenge of youth unemployment in Tunisia is “of paramount significance to understanding the realities of the region” (OECD, 2015). As noted previously, Tunisian youth are highly educated. Yet, despite these skill-sets, a majority of youth are faring poorly in the labor market following the global economic and financial crisis, in combination with the Revolution of 2011. These exacerbated crises have led to rapid economic deterioration of the region, particularly for Tunisian youth.

Unemployment leaves populations unable to contribute to society and find purpose in their day-to-day activities. In 2011, over 200,000 people within Tunisia were jobless (OECD, 2015). Young dissatisfied men have become prime recruitment populations for violent extremist groups within Tunisia since they preach about offering opportunities, purpose, and security. Frustration with the economic conditions of the country can be seen by the increased financial crimes and scams from the year 2013 to 2014 (Ministère de l’Intérieur, 2013). These crimes include pickpocketing, purse snatching, and petty theft of foreigners in large tourist cities.

The youth unemployment rate was just under 30 percent during the six years prior to the Revolution. This rate soared to over 42 percent in 2011. A year later, 78.1 percent of Tunisian youth were unemployed, while the youth unemployment rate in Kasserine was between 44-54%

of the labor force in 2012 (OECD, 2015). While one would expect greater levels of education to mean better jobs, the Tunisian economy currently provides few professional positions for educated youth to fill. In comparison, Turkey and Mexico have similarly high shares of working youth, and in 2012 their employment rates were 31.5% and 43.1%, respectively (OECD, 2015). In addition, educational attainment further deteriorates labor market outcomes for Tunisian youth, a shared feature for many Arab countries.

Psychological Factors

A 2015 study conducted by the Carnegie Endowment included interviews with youth within the region of Kasserine. Their conversation surrounded the topic of radicalization and its intersection with their current economic, political, and psychological situations:

“Tunisian youth have experienced a deep crisis that has two primary characteristics: a socioeconomic crisis characterized by a general uncertainty regarding the future compounded by a profound search for meaning in a polarized society.” (Fahmi & Meddeb, 2015)

University graduates are unable to find social and professional opportunities, leaving them in a state of dissatisfaction and discontent with the current societal structures. Those employed are working jobs for which they are overqualified, suggesting that the education system fails “...to allow young people to climb the social [and economic] ladder, causing the middle class to shrink and feeding social tensions” (Fahmi & Meddeb, 2015). The existence of this large population of dissatisfied youth, while not leading to systemic radicalization by itself, feeds a continued perception that they don’t deserve such low social status. This further fuels societal fractures and invites violence (Fahmi & Meddeb, 2015). Mounting the aggravation is the deficient representation of Kasserine residents in the Tunisian narrative, on the economic, political and social spheres of society (Gall, 2016). These circumstances increase the feelings of lack of purpose and control of youth over their future, weakening their sense of identity and integration in society.

Further exasperating the psychological condition of Tunisians, especially Kasserine residents is the poor access to mental health services. According to research by the World Health Organization and the Ministry of Health in Tunisia, clinics that provide mental health services are only provided at the capital and along the coastline, making access to them extremely difficult (WHO-AIMS, 2008). Considering the constant terrorist attacks occurring in the region, Kasserine in specific, the inadequate provision of mental health services has been detrimental to the well-being and coping mechanisms of residents.

Sociological Factors

Following the end of Ben Ali, the Tunisian public desired to regain their dignity and identity. Despite receiving independence from France in 1956, the Tunisian people in 2011 were still

facing an identity crisis between the ideals of being a European and the values of being a Muslim. This is especially the case, since French media and politicians frame Islamic teachings as something at odds with French culture (Waters, 2016). Ben Ali's rule maintained this French superiority by strongly repressing both conservative Muslims and those with opposing political views.

For decades, the suppression of Islamic expression by the Tunisian government in the political and public sectors provided the necessary platform for extremist sects to prey on vulnerable populations in the society (Gana, 2013). Both Bourguiba and Ben Ali had instituted harsh anti-Islamic laws in the name of national security. In a time when revolution meant a renewed push for freedom and rights, the government lacked the structure to meet the demands of the public.

Soon, many moderate Muslims would be influenced to more violent routes in order to ensure that their voices were heard (Willis, 2012). According to a BBC documentary in 2015, over five thousand Tunisian citizens had left to join ISIS in Syria (Saunders, 2015). A measure to decrease the successful recruitment of Tunisians would be to ensure that the governance structure is shaped by Islamic principles that would more accurately represent the desires of the Tunisian public.

Ideological Factors

The recent influx of new extremist teaching by groups like Al-Qaeda, Ansar al Sharia, and ISIS have emerged throughout Tunisia, and particularly within the city of Kasserine. Their recruitment strategies prey on vulnerable populations in these communities using forms of ideological factors that impact these individuals.

The politicization of religion stemming from French culture further criminalizes conservative Muslims within Tunisia. As a majority Muslim country, for practitioners of Islam, religion is an integral part of life and plays a role in all aspects of their life.

Although religions, like Christianity and Islam, are physically located near one another and followers of these faiths live amongst one another, conservative Muslims continue to be targeted following any hostilities in the region. This association of religion and violence has caused widespread distrust amongst members of the community (Caryl, 2016). When men and women are unable to freely express themselves, especially their religious views, this can have a tremendous negative impact on their own sense of identity.

Furthermore, the role of education varies in priority for families within Tunisia. The family structure has failed to support young adults seeking higher education as they aspire for careers, further alienating this group of people within their communities. Universities are being left behind by the government as well. The share of federal budget spent on higher education and research has steadily decreased since the revolution. In 2010, higher education made up 6.9% of

the budget; in 2015, the share decreased to 4.8% (Jamel, 2015). Officials note that the widespread rise in terrorism has resulted in a disproportionate amount of the federal budget being attributed to security and defense in order to counter violent extremism throughout the nation.

Without the adequate resources, the increasing number of students enrolling in higher education continue to be deprived of basic rights related to education, something that the United Nations has been pressuring Tunisian officials to reform since 2012 (United Nations, 2012). Together, these ideological factors plays an important role in violent extremism recruitment.

Pull Factors

The people of Tunisia see the Islamic governments which preceded French and secular rule as more just than recent authoritarian regimes (Noueihed, 2012). They do not necessarily embrace Islamic government out of religious reasons, but because it is thought to be more in-line with values cherished by the people of Tunisia. These include family values, social conservatism, charitable work, and community service. Due to the deep roots of Islam in the Middle East, a secular approach to running a government in the region has not been in line with, and representative of, the people.

Role of Islam in Politics

Laws in our country should ...

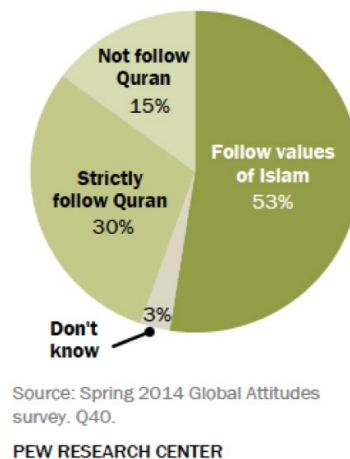


Figure 9: Role of Islam in Politics (Pew Research Center, 2014)

According to research conducted by Pew Research Center in 2014, more than 80% of those surveyed believe that laws in Tunisia should be governed by Islamic values or strictly following the Quran (Pew Research Center, 2014). Islam has been, and continues to be, an integral part of how people identify, as well as serving as a major force in the shaping of Tunisian culture. Therefore, one of the main pull factors is having a place and an environment where people are

allowed to freely practice and express their religious and political beliefs. Considering IRI's mission of striving to foster democracy, ensuring that the practice of governance integrates Islamic principles is critical to increasing stability and social cohesion.

Conclusion

The lack of trust in the government of Tunisia as a result of their history of oppression, human rights violations, and poor economic performance, has led some citizens to seek representation and economic opportunity elsewhere. Moreover, the release of conservative Muslims, after a long time of imprisonment, has created a social divide within the country. People are not used to seeing practicing Muslims with their long beards and wide clothing in the streets, and many have failed to distinguish them from those carrying out violent extremism. Even though many conservative groups have come out against all types of violence and terrorism, they are still treated as being allied with extreme right-wing groups, and as responsible for national economic decline. This leaves them vulnerable to recruitment by extremist groups.

Analysis

Each of the three countries studied lacks, but is making the attempt to develop, the stability and infrastructure needed to create economic opportunity for its citizens. Kenya is continuing the process of democratic state building despite the lack of access for all of its citizens, the presence of a dangerously unstable neighbor, and a massive refugee crisis. Kosovo is in the midst of a homegrown crisis borne out of a martial past and a present defined by a brutal civil war and still-uncertain modern state building project. Tunisia is navigating a delicate democratic transition in an unstable geopolitical environment while simultaneously attempting to deal with its citizens joining extremist groups in region-leading numbers. Having discussed each specific situation and history in detail, we examine to how each state can build upon previous successes, or emulate states in similar situations, to establish its democratic foundation and persuade its citizens to divest of extremism and invest in the state building of their home countries.

In order to provide tools and recommendations for states to successfully counter violent extremism, we created the VE Vulnerability Assessment Tool that analyzes violent extremism through the political, psychological, economic, sociological, and ideological lenses across all three levels of society (micro, meso, and macro). This tool is critical in order to create a quantifiable outlook (through a 1-5 scale) of the status quo in each country, which allows us to pinpoint tools and recommendations that each country either already uses, or needs to pursue, in order to adequately combat violent extremist groups and tendencies. Through this tool, we are able to specify what each country is doing well in the ongoing struggle against violent extremism and what they may need to improve on or include, as well as potentially highlight successful strategies from elsewhere that could be transferable.

Assessment Tool Sectional Summary

Economically, the tool looks at employment opportunities and availability of services and resources relative to nearby areas, as a lack here may provide push factors for adopting VE methodology, especially when coupled with victimization narratives. The tool specifically looks at the breadth (or lack thereof) of private and public economic opportunities for young people, especially young people who have invested in their own educations and expect better-paying jobs as a result. The tool also looks at the feasibility of citizens to start their own businesses, and whether the established national market makes all goods and services necessary for a comfortable lifestyle available to the people at reasonable prices. Finally, the VE Vulnerability Assessment Tool looks at the economic foundations of a healthy state, analyzing the access of citizens. Through these questions and analysis, the tool looks to ascertain the potential for growth and stability of a state's economy, which is critical to prevent extremist groups and ideologies from taking hold in society.

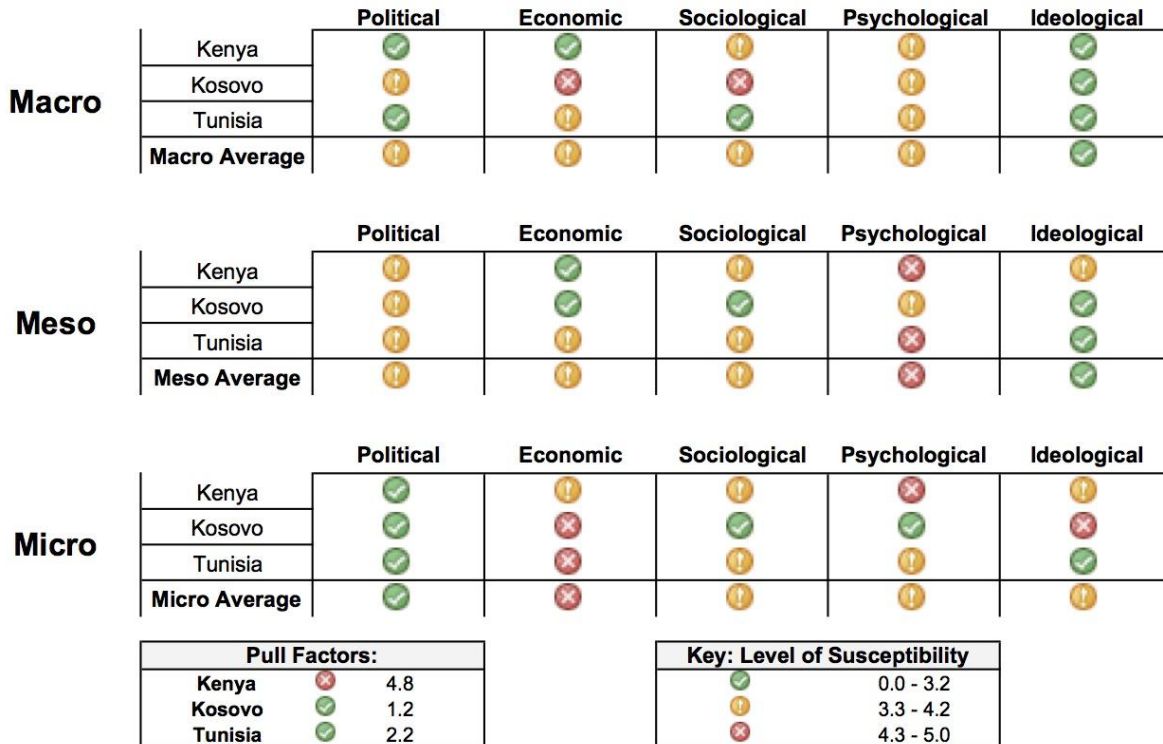
Politically, this assessment tool looks at a country's citizens' perception of grievances unaddressed by the state, including foreign policy, economic, cultural, or social practices sanctioned by the state, weak infrastructure, limited rule of law, inefficient judicial structures, unequal resource distribution, limited political rights and civil liberties, and the repression of opposition groups. It goes on to analyze the independence of critical democratic institutions, such as courts, from political concerns. Finally, the tool analyzes use of due process, officially sanctioned oppression, and militarized state structures, and how responsive public institutions are to the civilians' desires and needs. Through these questions and analysis, the tool looks to ascertain the political health of the state in question, specifically any political vulnerabilities or injustices that extremist ideologies or groups could exploit.

Socially, this tool looks at community relations, group dynamics, social networks, social alienation, and kinship ties (familial, tribal, and peer groups). These networks can exert peer pressure and other means to influence individuals to either support or abandon extremist activities. Lack of protective resources (social and psychosocial factors that can stop, delay, or diminish negative outcomes, such as radicalization) leaves communities vulnerable to violent extremism. The tool goes on to look at both inter and intra-community relations, and the ability of communities to prevent youths from pursuing careers in extremist organizations and work with youth who are evidencing violent behavior. Through these questions and analysis, the tool attempts to investigate the strength of communities within a state, and their potential and capability to both prevent and remove the incentives for recruitment by violent extremist groups.

Psychologically, this tool examines the development of a positive identity, sense of belonging, and purpose. Additionally, it examines the resources available, within the family or community, for individuals in crisis. While no single psychological profile has been, or can be, developed for someone who adheres to VE, the overall levels of self-efficacy and the resources available do determine communal vulnerability (Fernald, 2008).

Ideologically, this assessment tool looks at beliefs and values which justify the use of violence to address grievances and promote intolerance. It looks at family upbringing, and the values instilled in youth by their parents, families, tribes, and ethnic groups. It also inspects the relationship between that ideological upbringing and the youth's perceptions of the state in which they live. This is to better understand the interaction between a belief system and using violent avenues to achieve desired goals. Through these questions and analysis, the tool attempts to measure the success of peaceful and/or constructive ideological viewpoints or worldviews within a society that would naturally counter more extremist belief systems.

Cross-Country Assessment Visual



Country-Specific Summaries

Kenya

Legacies of colonial “divide and rule” policies in Kenya continue to create vulnerability to VE recruitment. Since independence, Kenyan political leadership has been in the hands of Christian tribes, with strong religious bias in their governance structure. Additionally, the borders established during the transition to self-rule left the ethnically Somali northeast in a tenuous position of cross border kinship and migration. Rather than seeking reconciliation with this part of the country, the Kenyan national government has exercised punitive and alienating policies such as limiting travel through the region. Their failure to invest in infrastructure and education have resulted in having the least mileage of paved roads and the lowest levels of literacy rates throughout Kenya. They have engaged in profiling and discrimination against the Somali population, carrying out extrajudicial killings and torture during interrogation of suspected extremists and their families. Because of this, there is widespread animosity toward the central government and suspicion of Christian tribes. Additionally, the low levels of development coincide with high levels of unemployment, particularly acute among the youth. In this gap, the ideology and employment offered by Al-Shabaab is highly attractive. In areas where local government and conflict arbitration processes are strong, the community may have some resilience to recruitment. A recent re-design of Kenyan governing processes, implemented in

2013, unlocks local government solutions as viable options. However, high levels of corruption at local as well as central government institutions have undermined the trust of the public in this transition. Inclusive processes and just rule of law are necessary for reducing levels of support for violent extremism in northeast Kenya.

Kosovo

The situation in Kosovo is one of a newly-independent country, struggling to create a healthy democratic society with a growing market economy in a volatile region with significant infiltration by extremist groups. With the ethnic and religious history of the Kosovar people well-established, the assessment tool allowed us to identify the need for the continued growth of democratic institutions, the tackling of political and economic corruption, and the neutralizing of asymmetric ideologies and belief systems, and to pinpoint adequate tools and recommendations for the creation of CVE programs in Kosovo based on this. In particular, we found that the response of the government to the perception of widespread corruption by public servants will be critical for the improvement of public support and goodwill for Kosovo's still-evolving democratic system. Tandem with this, we found that freedom for the people to protest and bring grievances to their representatives and the full and unfettered inclusion of minority groups and parties in the political process will be vital for the long-term health of Kosovar democracy. Acceptance of Kosovo into international and regional political bodies is also needed in order to fully integrate Kosovo into the established family of nations. On other fronts, the continued growth of the established and public Kosovar economy, and the corresponding decrease in prominence of the underground economy, will be necessary in order for Kosovo to gain complete and unconstrained access to the broader European Market through membership in the European Union and the World Trade Organization. While well-established economies in the western world have not made those countries immune to outside or home-grown VE, a healthy and growing traditional economy does give its people a more potent option to devote their lives to, and makes the temptation to join a VE group less persuasive. To counter the ideological drivers, Kosovo needs to make the identification of extremist recruiting centers posing as charities and the restriction of their monetary flows a national goal in order to shut off extremist access to disaffected Kosovar youth, and prevent extremist groups from gaining a foothold in Kosovo.

Tunisia

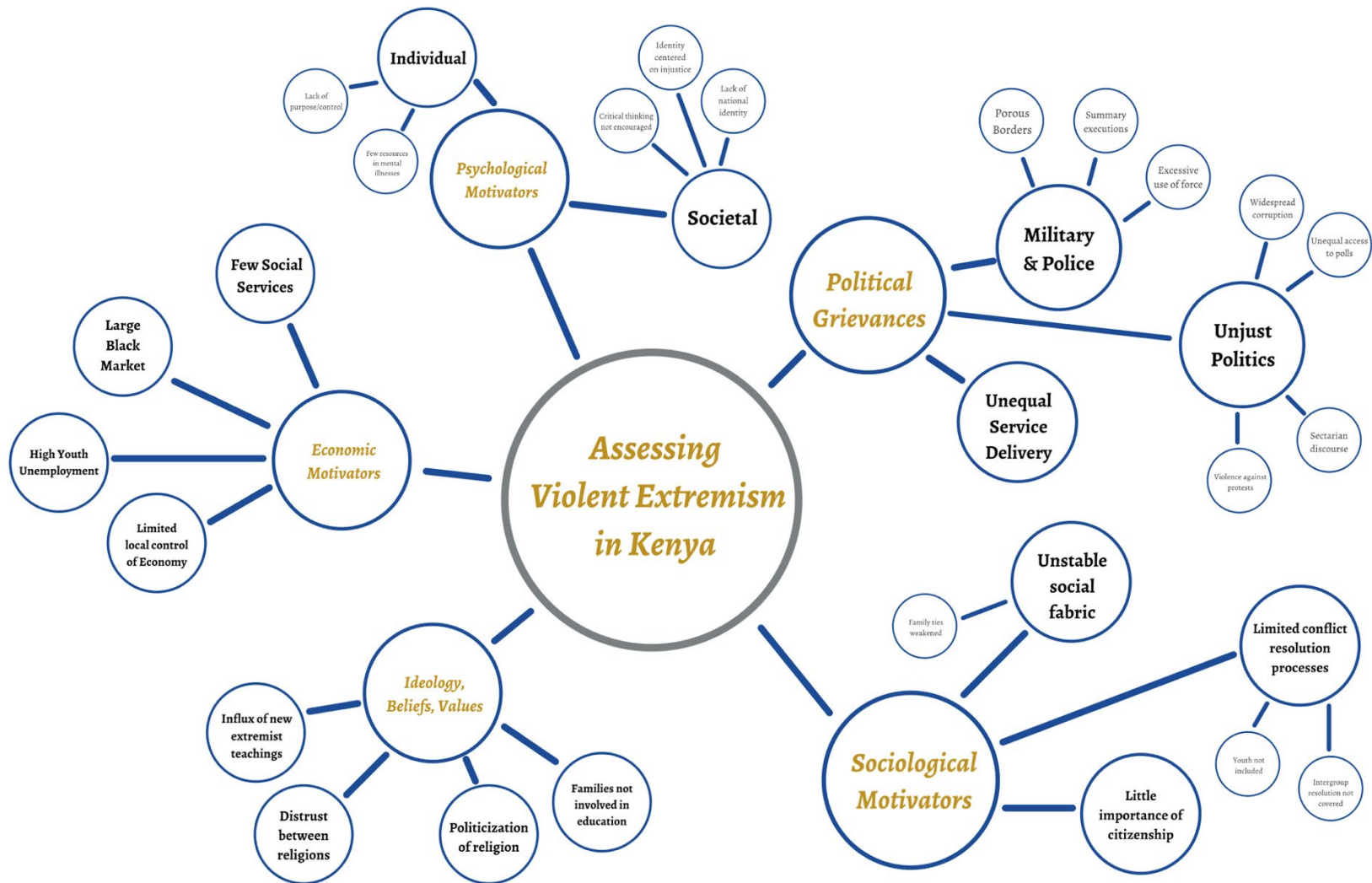
Residual effects of previous French colonization and the autocratic leadership style of President Ben Ali led to increased resistance by the people and the eventual Jasmine Revolution of 2011. Ben Ali's leadership divided the nation, with many conservative Muslims being detained for their outspoken resistance to his poor human rights record. Many practicing Muslims faced imprisonment and discrimination under his rule. After decades of authoritarian rule, Tunisia held its first democratic president elections in 2014. After the election of Beji Caid Essebsi, the release of conservative Muslims into mainstream Tunisian society created a division amongst the public who associated them with the terrorists they were seeing abroad. This clash was further

escalated by the decreased tourism to the country due to the successful ISIS recruitment in Tunisia, further weakening the economy. Poor economic conditions were then linked to the perception of conservative Muslims' participation with ISIS. Terrorist organizations have capitalized on this social division to recruit youth who face minimal job opportunities available to them in the country. In Tunisia, the violent extremist groups' financial incentives exceed that of the legal job market even with highly educated and skilled youth due to the magnitude of unemployment. Tunisian youth continue to be dissatisfied with their government as they are not provided true freedom of speech nor adequate social services. In addition, the military is known for aggressive security tactics that include torture of those suspected of criminal and violent extremist activities. As Tunisia continues to be the top recruitment site for violent extremist groups, programs that offer economic and social opportunities for these youth will be paramount in countering violent extremism within the local communities. Such opportunities must provide a sense of purpose and meaning for these young people who have grown idle in their search to react to the injustice inflicted by their government.

Analysis Visualization

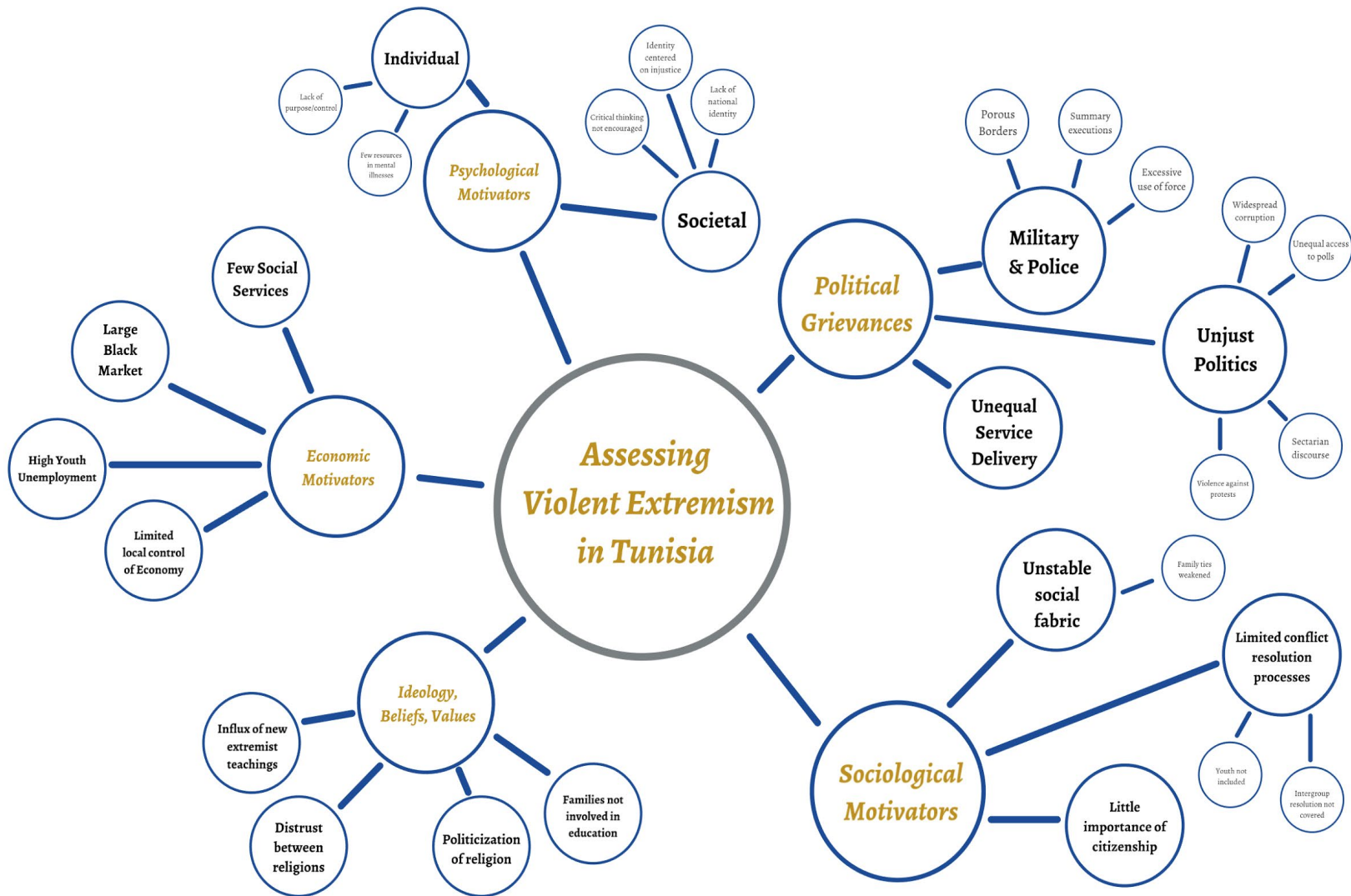
Each country is wrestling with unique situations and scenarios with regards to VE. While there are several tools and recommendations that apply in each context, we also wish to acknowledge the unique circumstances of Tunisia, Kosovo, and Kenya. Each country confronts significant differences in their ongoing struggles against violent extremist groups and state building, not to mention the different sociological and ideological challenges each faces as well. With those contexts firmly in mind, we will discuss country-specific results of the assessment, along with recommended tools and approaches.

Kenya





Tunisia



Conclusion

The issues we have attempted to address in this report are complex and multifaceted. By no means will these tools and recommendations exhaustively address all instances of VE present worldwide. Over the course of several months, through significant research and analysis of the contexts of Kosovo, Kenya and Tunisia, we have identified five major factors that contribute to violent extremism as well as incentives used to attract membership and resources to extremist groups. The political, economic, psychological, social, and ideological factors, taken together, represent potentially fatal threats to establishing national and regional stability. To assist the establishment of preventative violent extremism tools, we have created the VE Vulnerability Assessment Tool that creates a quantifiable set of standards. Through this tool, we have analyzed our country contexts for active indicators of VE, and designed a series of cross-country tools and recommendations that can be used by IRI and other groups to make further gains in the ongoing efforts to overcome VE. Conclusively, the results of our research reveal that resolving violent extremism necessitates cooperation between community, governmental, and international organizations to address the complex issues at hand and conceive and provide a positive, alternative vision for vulnerable members of society. Although this will take many resources and a great deal of time and effort, this is a journey worth taking, and a fight we are optimistic we can win.

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