DeRadicalisation
in Europe and Beyond: Detect, Resolve, Reintegrate

Global Radicalisation Report:
Political Radicalisation Trends in Brazil, India, Russia, Ukraine, and the USA

D11.7 Global Radicalisation Report

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List of Abbreviations

BJP	Bharatiya Janata Party (Indian People's Party)
BLM	Black Lives Matter
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NOD	Natsionalno-osvoboditelnoye dvizheniye (National Liberation Movement)
PACE	The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe
PMC	private military company
PT	Partido dos Trabalhadores (Workers' Party)
RSS	Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (National Volunteer Organisation)

About the Project

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

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

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

Executive Summary/Abstract

This report introduces an innovative analytical perspective to examine radicalisation trends, hotspots, and stakeholders on a global level. The report builds upon a methodological and conceptual toolbox developed within the research project Deradicalisation in Europe and Beyond: Detect, Resolve, Reintegrate (D.Rad). While the D.Rad project primarily focuses on radicalisation processes in the EU and neighbouring regions, this report broadens the research scope to include additional major global actors facing challenges related to radicalisation. It features case studies from the USA, Brazil, India, Russia, and Ukraine.

The main finding of this report, in line with the D.Rad research, is that the processes of political radicalisation should be examined within the context of their social ecosystems and in conjunction with macro- and meso-structural trends. None of the stakeholders of radicalisation identified in the five countries in this report acted as lone wolves. Instead, they are embedded in, and inspired and supported by, their respective social ecosystems. Important macro-structural trends further influence the radicalisation processes within countries, but their impact is more complex and can sometimes also have adverse effects on stakeholders of radicalisation.

The main findings of this report align closely with the empirical insights from the D.Rad research on EU countries and their environs. Echoing the D.Rad findings, the report highlights key macro-structural trends, notably the significant role of social media and the crisis in political representation. In terms of stakeholders and hotspots of radicalisation, the report corroborates the D.Rad findings, highlighting that right-wing radicalisation is the most dominant trend, exerting more significant effects than left-wing radicalisation. Right-wing radicalisation trends were prevalent in all five countries under study, leading to various hotspots of radicalisation ranging from attempted coups to oppressive practices, military adventurism, and war.

1. Introduction

This report introduces an innovative analytical perspective to examine radicalisation trends, hotspots, and stakeholders on a global level. Contrasting with much of the current academic and policy-relevant literature, which primarily situates radicalisation at an individual or group level, this report shifts focus to the social embeddedness of these radicalisation trends and stakeholders. It explores their embeddedness within broader socio-political ecosystems, encompassing social milieus, mainstream political parties, media entities, institutions, societies, and entire nation-states.

The report builds upon a methodological and conceptual toolbox developed within the research project Deradicalisation in Europe and Beyond: Detect, Resolve, Reintegrate (D.Rad). While the D.Rad project primarily focuses on radicalisation processes in the EU and neighbouring regions, this report broadens the research scope to include additional major global actors facing challenges related to radicalisation. It features case studies from the USA, Brazil, India, Russia, and Ukraine. In this analysis, we examine radicalisation trends and stakeholders in these countries and draw comparisons with the main findings from 17 European and MENA countries investigated by D.Rad.

The conceptual framework of this report, including all definitions, conceptualisations and empirical research methods, is based on the D.Rad project. We borrow the definition of radicalisation used in D.Rad's analytical and conceptual framework. It is defined there "as a process involving the increasing rejection of established law, order, and politics and the active pursuit of alternatives, in the form of politically driven violence or justification of violence." (Ishchenko and Varga 2021,, p. 6). Deradicalisation, on the other hand, "denotes the processes countering such rejection at individual (micro), organisational (meso), or societal (macro) levels resulting in a shift from violent to nonviolent strategies and tactics" (ibid). While not every type of radicalisation ends up in violence, the latter is seen "as one of the many strategies employed by the agents of political contention (including the state) as a part of a historically specific repertoire of violent and nonviolent actions." (ibid). Radicalisation trends may manifest as hotspots of radicalisation. Within the D.Rad framework, these hotspots "represent the culmination of general radicalisation trends and provide meaningful insights into their emergence and expansion" (Sawyer and Zinigrad 2021, p. 4). Sawyer and Znigrad define instances of radicalisation as "hotspots" when they encompass: (1) premeditated and potentially scalable acts of (2) extremist violence that have (3) significant duration and are (4) committed by radicalised individuals (5) linked to a radicalised milieu (Ibid, p. 5). This report aims to identify and dissect the hotspots of radicalisation in each country case.

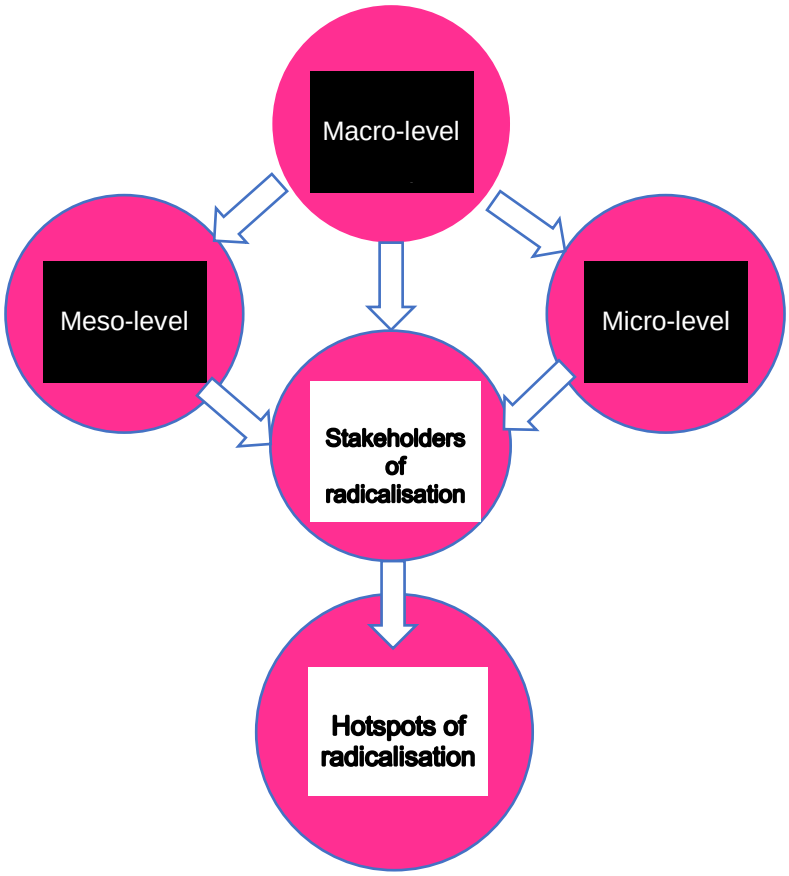
One of the key findings of the D.Rad research is that trends in radicalisation arise both from global macro-structural trends (macro-level) and unique factors specific to individual countries which are analytically located at the meso-level. The dynamic relational analysis model (McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly, 2003) is an essential tool that enables an understanding of how various actors involved in radicalisation and violence are embedded within their "ecosystems" and how their interactions give rise to trends in (de)radicalisation (Ishchenko and Varga 2021). Accordingly, most incidents related to radicalisation are not isolated cases conducted by disconnected lone-wolf actors

but are the products of broad socio-political dynamics, often inspired and supported by state organs and societal actors." Therefore,

> the violent agents should be analysed in the context of their entire “ecosystems” of various relations (e.g., of cooperation, competition, confrontation) with their front-groups, media, social networks of mobilisation, recruitment, and sponsorship, “respectable” political forces and the state institutions (Ishchenko and Varga 2021, 6).

The report follows a multi-level analytical framework to trace the forces behind radicalisation that lead to the emergence of radicalised hotspots and practices: micro factors (the personal background of the individuals responsible for planning, organising, and carrying out violent acts), meso factors (the wider radical milieu – the supportive or even complicit social surroundings – which serves as a rallying point and may be the “missing link” with wider radicalised networks) and macro factors (the role of the at-home and abroad governments and societies in processes of radicalisation) (ibid, p. 5). While all three levels are important, this report mostly focuses on meso- and macro-levels of radicalisation, also to highlight the embedded nature of radicalisation trends and processes (figure 1).

Figure 1: The D.RaD framework for analyzing radicalisation trends



The report begins by examining different types of stakeholders involved in radicalisation across five countries. We identify five such types: social and political movements, religious movements, military actors, separatist movements, and

governments and political parties. The report then continues with an analysis of macro- and meso-level factors. Specifically, it examines how predominant macro- and meso-structural trends infiltrate the political and social milieus of the countries under study and catalyse radicalisation processes. The third part of the report examines different types of hotspots of radicalisation in five countries, including attempted coups, anti-systemic violence, and oppression against minorities. We conclude by discussing how the findings of the report relate to the D.Rad research on radicalisation in Europe and beyond and what this implies for studying global radicalisation processes in the future.

It is crucial to emphasize that while we examine a broad spectrum of radicalisation movements, from BLM and Indian cow protection movements to Russian aggression, we recognize that they are not comparable to each other in terms of their effects and actions. These movements are analyzed in light of the conceptual trends emerging from the D.Rad research but these movements cannot be compared in terms of both the extent and nature of the violence they engage in.

Regarding the methodology, the report employs a combination of desk research and fieldwork. This includes a detailed content analysis of a broad spectrum of primary and secondary sources, covering governmental reports, official speeches, in-depth interviews, and public statements. It also encompasses a comprehensive review of academic literature, research articles, insights from think-tank reports, and a variety of working and policy documents. Additionally, six anonymous semi-structured qualitative interviews were carried out with scholars specializing in radicalisation from the United States, Brazil, Russia, and Ukraine.

Regarding the analytical categories of the report, while there are several dimensions of radicalisation, the report specifically focuses on state- and party-led (political) radicalisation since it seems to be a major driving force behind recent dramatic political developments in the countries under study: the swing of the Republican Party under Donald Trump towards right-wing populism, similar trends in Brazil under Jair Bolsonaro, as well as Russia's regime-driven orthodox conservatism under Vladimir Putin to name but a few. While we focus on state-led radicalisation, we acknowledge the close linkages between state-led (political) and religious forms of radicalisation. Often political radicalisation is fuelled and/or inspired by religious radical discourse and the other way round.

2. Stakeholders of Political Radicalisation

This report focuses on the stakeholders of political or party-led radicalisation, as well as their respective social ecosystems in the five major countries: Brazil, India, Russia, Ukraine, and the USA. The D.Rad analytical framework is useful here in order to screen, categorize, and analyze the main agents of radicalisation. What makes the D.Rad approach novel is that instead of just focusing on individual actors involved in "extremist" and/or "terrorist" behavior, which has been a dominant mode in radicalisation studies, D.Rad adopts a more holistic approach to studying the agents of radicalisation (Ishchenko and Varga 2021, , 18). Engaging in "mapping the social and political surroundings and connections of the main agents of radicalisation," and an "analysis of their dynamic relations networks," helps us see a bigger picture of how

“political violence emerges, unfolds, and escalates” (Ishchenko and Varga 2021,, 18). Below, we identify and explore several political radicalisation stakeholders from the five countries which, while non-exhaustive, provide illustrative examples from different strata of the radicalisation spectrum. These cases cover five countries from different continents to identify and explore some common, macro trends. More specifically, the retreat of liberal democracy, the rise of populists across the globe, and the crisis of political representation that leads to the political radicalisation. The latter, is expressed within the existing cultural and historical or meso context, be it either structural racism in the contemporary US, corruption scandals in Brazil, or tensions between Hindus and other communities in India.

2.1. Social movements

In the case of the US, we can identify several agents of (party-led) radicalisation at both ends of the spectrum, which can be seen as social and political movements. They are closely embedded in their social networks and supported by respective party-political establishments.

A significant stakeholder in political left-wing radicalisation is the Black Lives Matter movement (BLM). It emerged as a response to systemic racism and violence directed at black communities, especially incidents of police brutality. BLM's prominence and visibility surged following a series of high-profile incidents, where black individuals, often in encounters with law enforcement, lost their lives. Although the majority of BLM protests were peaceful, aiming to elevate awareness of racial injustice and push for systemic reforms, a number of these demonstrations devolved into violence, marked by looting, arson, and clashes with police. These escalations were often fuelled by various factors, including the presence of counter-protesters, extremist factions, and opportunistic individuals capitalizing on the chaos to engage in criminal acts (Mansoor 2020).

On the right-wing side the QAnon movement has been one of the key stakeholders of political radicalisation. QAnon, a conspiracy theory suggesting that a satanic, pedophilic elite led by Democrats controls the world, originated in the internet's margins (Ball 2023, 11). It gained traction, endorsed by some U.S. Congressional candidates and allegedly President Trump. Ball (2023) describes it not as a typical conspiracy or cult but a “digital pandemic,” evolving beyond a single narrative or leader and spreading globally.

The movement traces back to a 4chan post about a secret war against the “deep state,” led by “Q,” an alleged high-ranking military officer sharing cryptic messages (Rothschild 2021, 27-28). Followers decode these “drops,” a mix of texts, memes, and images. QAnon intertwines elements of new religions, political doctrines, and online scams. It transitioned from the internet’s fringes to mainstream media, notably appearing on Alex Jones’[1] Infowars (ibid, 84).

QAnon’s appeal lies in its participatory nature. Followers become “digital soldiers,” directly engaging with the movement and amplifying its messages (Rothschild 2021, 39). This interactive element fosters a sense of direct contribution, distinguishing

[1] An American far-right and alt-right radio show host. He is prominent for his promotion of conspiracy theories through The Alex Jones Show

QAnon from other conspiracy theories. The impact of the conspiracy theories spread by the groups associated with QAnon are quite significant. According to Ipsos opinion polls from 2020, 17% of Americans and 37% of Republicans agree with the statement that “a group of Satan-worshipping elites who run a child sex ring are trying to control our politics and media” (Ipsos 2020, 7). The same study also shows that 39% of Americans (mostly Republicans and Fox News viewers) agree with another QAnon tenet, that “there is a deep state working to undermine President Trump” (ibid, 1).

It is also noteworthy that QAnon did not act as a lone wolf actor, but was embedded in and supported by much of the Republican Party. President Trump personally retweeted several hundred Q followers between 2018-2020 and almost one hundred Republican candidates have declared their belief in QAnon (Rothschild 2021, 11). By the end of Trump’s presidency, the movement was covered by almost all the major media outlets and QAnon believers were actively involved in the January 6th attack on the Capitol (ibid, 12). This speaks to the key insight from the D.Rad study of radicalisation in Europe that radicalisation stakeholders in most cases are not lone wolves but are socially embedded with and receive support from political actors, including state authorities and political parties.

The I-GAP method can be instrumental in elucidating the motivations of stakeholders of radicalisation at both ends of the political spectrum. For BLM, injustice is rooted in systemic racism prevalent in law enforcement and, more broadly, the US political system (Ng and Lam 2020). Consequently, they feel alienated and marginalized from the conventional political process, leading them to seek justice in more radical ways, such as taking to the streets and, at times, engaging in violent protests. Slogans like “defund the police” and even the movement’s name, “Black Lives Matter,” underscore the profound level of frustration and alienation they feel towards the US political system (Jackson et al, 2023). Similarly, I-GAP helps to pinpoint what motivates supporters of right-wing conservative Republicans. Analysis show that they are driven by a feeling of alienation as the result of more and more manual labour jobs going overseas (Pew Research Center 2023). In conditions of inflation and rising economic inequality, immigrants and minorities become easy scape-goats, leading to increasing support for ultra-conservative and right-wing actors.

Social movements can also emerge in the context of an authoritarian political system, but in these cases they are usually closely aligned with the ruling regime and propagate pro-regime propaganda. Examples of this are the National Liberation Movement (NOD) and Night Wolves in Russia. NOD is a nationalist, right-wing movement that was founded in 2012. The current leader of the NOD is Yevgeny Fedorov, a Russian nationalist who is also a member of the ruling Untied Russia party and is currently an MP in the State Duma (parliament). The ideology that the group promotes, is very similar to the American QAnon, and shares lots of conspiracy-theory type beliefs. The main ideological line of the NOD is that the United States is secretly controlling the whole planet (except North Korea), and that President Putin is the only person who can liberate Russia from this control and restore it to the borders of the Soviet Union (Vice News 2023). The leaders of the movement host weekly discussions in their office that is also broadcasted live on their YouTube platform. These discussions usually revolve around aggressive nationalism, Russian exceptionalism, and victimhood, talking points that have become mainstream in contemporary Russia (ibid).

NOD members have also been involved in physical attacks and assaults against human rights' activists, opposition leaders or even members of the Pussy Riot feminist protest group.[2] In 2017 the group organized protests in front of the central Russian TV station with slogans "our President is V.V. Putin" in protest against what they saw as Donald Trump dominating the Russian media (Meduza 2017).

Night wolves is another actor that needs to be analyzed when examining stakeholders of radicalisation in modern Russia. The history of the club goes back to the 1980s, when they started organizing illegal rock concerts in Moscow. By 1989, the group became the first official bike club in the USSR. They are considered to be close allies of President Putin, and in several instances serve as a "propaganda arm" for the Kremlin (Snyder 2018). What is especially relevant in the context of groups like Night Wolves, is that they position themselves as defenders of traditional values and even make motorcycle religious pilgrimages several times a year not only within Russia but to other Orthodox Christian countries as well.

The club has very specific ideological views that are in line with the Russian government's narrative. For example, the group engages in the glorification of Stalin, and expresses deep anti-Ukrainian sentiments. Night Wolves subscribe to a dualistic view of the world in which the West is a Satan that needs to be defeated in order to safeguard traditional family values (Parfitt 2015). And in this fight against Western ideology, anti-LGBTQ narratives become the key focal point. However, the war in Ukraine relegated the Night Wolves to backstage as state officials themselves took over the radical narrative.[3]

2.2. Religious movements

Key agents of political radicalisation can often also be religious actors. For instance, evangelists play an important role in driving political radicalisation in Brazil. These influential Christian evangelists are largely present online on various social platforms rather than in actual/physical churches, and supported Jair Bolsonaro during his time in office, actively participating in the attack on Brazil's Congress on 8th January 2023 (BBC News Brasil 2023). The discourse of these online pastors and preachers are very similar to their American Trump supporting peers. They engage in a Manichean representation of the world, in which there is a "demonic conspiracy" against Trump/Bolsonaro.

Similarly, one of the key stakeholders of radicalisation in contemporary India are so-called cow protection movement groups. Some of these groups have up to 5000 members and patrol highways and roads in order to reveal and save cows being exported or smuggled to Bangladesh. These groups have been known to resort to murder if that what it takes (Safi 2016). Although officially the government distances itself from these quasi-militia mobs that use violence against people involved in cow slaughter or the beef industry, they adhere to the Hindu nationalist ideology promoted by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. It is not a coincidence that the number of

[2] A Russian feminist protest and performance art group based in Moscow.
[3] For example, once hailed as the most liberal leader of Russia, former President Medvedev is now one of the most hawkish, threatening the West with the nuclear war https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/putin-ally-medvedev-warns-nuclear-war-if-russia-defeated-ukraine-2023-01-19/

attacks from cow vigilantes have spiked since Modi's victory in 2014. These groups play an important role in politically motivated campaigns against minorities which centre around cow-related iconography and rapidly spread over social media (Farooq 2022). Human Rights Watch even reported that many of these groups are actually linked with the ruling party and largely target Muslim, Dalit, and indigenous communities (Human Rights Watch 2019). The report also notes that there are cases of authorities covering up documented cases of assaults committed by cow protectors. "In almost all of the cases documented, the police initially stalled investigations, ignored procedures, or were even complicit in the killings and cover-ups" – reads the report from the 2019 (Human Rights Watch 2019).

It also needs to be noted that the protection of cows has long been part of the Hindu nationalist narrative and even the anti-colonial struggle. However, it was only Modi's populist government that made it possible in 2017 to achieve a complete ban on slaughtering cows, directly affecting minority communities, especially Muslims, that were involved in the beef production and export industry (Bhardwaj 2017). The radical nationalist narrative coming from Modi enabled a spike in cow-related violence between 2015-2018, in which 44 cow-related deaths were recorded, 36 of which were Muslims (Humans Right Watch 2019).

One of the most notorious cases is that of the chief minister of Uttar Pradesh (the most populous state in India) and Modi ally, Yogi Adityanath, who has referred to Muslims as a "green virus". Some suspects in cow-related murders have been seen attending his rallies (Vox 2019). During one of his rallies, he told the audience that Hindus and Muslims cannot coexist because their cultures are different (Vice News 2019). At the same time as serving as chief minister, Yogi Adityanath is also the head priest of a Hindu monastery in Gorakhpur and the founder of Hindu nationalist organization. some experts believe he could even be in the running to succeed Modi as prime minister (Oxford Analytica 2022). These developments suggest that polarisation and radicalisation in India is going to deepen even more amidst the macro factors of the increasing popularity of right-wing populists and nationalists across the globe.

2.3. Para-military actors

Military actors can also act as stakeholders of political radicalisation. In 2014, with the start of Russia's covert military operations in Eastern Ukraine, volunteer paramilitary armed groups started appearing, fighting on the Ukrainian side. These units can be considered as one of the main stakeholders of radicalisation in Ukraine. One of the key actors was Azov Battalion named after the Azov Sea, which was created in May 2014. It was one of the several semi-regular armed units that emerged after 2014 as a reaction to the Ukrainian government's failure to successfully counter Russia's hybrid warfare in eastern regions of the country (Umland 2019). The founders of the paramilitary group were obscure racist activists (ibid). Yet, most of those who joined such units, including Azov, were Russian speakers (Kuzio 2021). In 2014, Azov was already fighting alongside Ukrainian forces to recapture Mariupol from separatist forces. In November 2014 the battalion was reorganized and officially incorporated into the Ukrainian army.

The main controversies surrounding Azov are linked with its alleged connections to Neo-Nazis and antisemitism. The battalion used the Wolfsangel or Wolf's anchor as its insignia until 2015 which, according to Reporting Radicalism, was widely used in

Nazi Germany (Reporting Radicalism n.d.). Some members of this paramilitary group have links with Neo-Nazis and the group even attracted foreign far-right fighters (Walker 2014). However, the role and perception of the battalion has considerably changed since the Russian invasion. The brave and fearless resistance that Azov fighters put up while defending Azovstal during the Mariupol siege of 2022 made members of the group heroes. That was also expressed in the way the five leaders of the Azov Battalion were welcomed back after being exchanged for Russian war captives (Vincent 2023).

Paramilitary actors of radicalisation are also present in Russia. In August 2022, a paramilitary group made up of Russian emigrants was formed fighting on the side of Ukraine. The group, which is not officially part of the Ukrainian army, is led by a far-right former football hooligan, Denis Kapustin. The aim of the group is to incite an uprising in Russia and overthrow Putin's regime (Kilner 2023). The ideology of the group is clearly ethno-centric and has neo-Nazi leanings. On their website, the group describes themselves as *Russkie* but not *Rossiane*. The first term is usually used to describe the ethnic Slavic population of Russia, while the second is applied to all Russian citizens regardless of their ethnicity. The RVC website argues that Rossiane is a social construct, unlike Russkie that unites people who share the same culture, language, and religion (rusvolcorps n.d.). In the spring of 2023, the group successfully entered Russia from Ukraine, illustrating the former's vulnerabilities and calling on fellow Russians to begin an uprising. With its calls for a military overthrow of the government and its clear neo-Nazi ideology, RVC clearly qualifies as a key stakeholder of radicalisation. Yet, unlike the ones discussed above, this actor is actually in opposition to the state rather than an ally of the current political elite.

The infamous Private Military Company (PMC) Wagner, once controlled by the Russian government, can also be considered an agent of political radicalisation. In 2023, the PMC attempted to organize a military coup and started a march towards Moscow, but ultimately halted the march and negotiated a deal with the Russian government, seemingly guaranteeing the safety of the group's leaders and the company itself. However, shortly after, the leadership of the PMC, including its head Yuri Prigozhin, died in a plane crash under dubious circumstances (Clarke 2023).

2.4. Separatist movements

Secessionist movements can also act as radicalisation stakeholders. An example of this in Ukraine are the pro-Russian separatist movements active in the eastern regions of the country that are directly funded and supported by Russia. Experts have identified Soviet and Russian nationalism as a greater threat to Ukraine's democracy and territorial integrity than the far-right or radical Ukrainian nationalists (Kuzio 2015, 38). And these sentiments as meso factors affecting political and civic stability in the country are the outcome of their instrumentalization by the divided political elite within Ukraine (Zhurzhenko 2014, 250-251).

Analysis of opinion polls before the hostilities broke out in Eastern Ukraine, show that despite the existing regional divisions and a "two-speed" national identity project, under a third of Russian speakers in Eastern Ukraine supported separatism. The discontent was driven mostly by local factors and a feeling of abandonment by Kyiv, rather than by the Russian language or pro-Russian foreign policy goals (Guliano 2018, 158). After the Euromaidan in 2014, local collaborators with Russia in eastern

Ukraine seized government buildings with the help of Russian troops. After gaining de facto control of the administrative centers, through rigged referendums and the help of the Russian military, the leaders of separatist movements declared independence from Ukraine (Tsybulenko and J'Moul 2018). Russia's direct support for separatists led to a protracted armed conflict in eastern Ukraine, culminating in the full-scale invasion in February 2022.

2.5. Governments and political parties

Finally, governments and political parties can also be stakeholders of radicalisation. The presidencies of Donald Trump in the US and Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil are well-known examples of governments acting as key radicalisation actors. The Russian government under Vladimir Putin can also be considered as a main source of authoritarian radicalisation in Russia both at political and societal level.

The current government of India can also be viewed through the prism of political radicalisation. The current ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) was founded in 1980 as one of the successors of the Hindu nationalist party RSS[4] (Chako 2018, 553). The RSS or Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh itself was founded in the 1920s and early leaders of the organization admired Nazism and Hitler for keeping the German race and culture "pure" (VICE News 2019). Since then, the RSS has evolved into the largest voluntary paramilitary organization in the world. The current ruling party BJP is an offshoot of the RSS, and Prime Minister Narendra Modi was himself once the member of this organisation.

The key ideology around which the political agenda of Modi is focused is inspired by RSS ideology and is based on portraying India as an exclusively Hindu state. The BJP challenges the very foundation of the secular constitutional order on which the Indian Republic was based (Ibrahim 2020). As Indian public intellectual Shashi Tharoor argued, while violent incidents between Muslims and Hindus had taken place in the past, unlike the BJP, previous governments remained committed to the constitution that guarantees equality before the law of all religious and ethnic communities. Yet, Modi's strategy can be seen as similar to that of Trump, Orban and other populist politicians (Tharoor interviewed for the VICE News 2019). Modi's policies are clearly targeted against non-Hindu minorities. These policies include the removal of almost 70 million Muslims and Dalits[5] from the electoral roll in 2019 by demanding documentation to prove residency and revoking the autonomous status of Jammu and Kashmir[6] (Ibrahim 2020). The BJP leadership has also been actively using the media and symbolism while bypassing representative institutions (Chacko 2018, 542). Some even argue that, under Modi's leadership, RSS influence over Indian politics has dramatically increased. A good example of this being the ban on cow slaughter by the BJP in every state it has power, something that the RSS had been trying to achieve since 1920 (Jha 2016). This move directly targets Muslims and Dalits who constitute the majority of those involved in this business.

[4] Interestingly, a member of the RSS assassinated Ghandhi over the latter's beliefs that the Indian state should have been inclusive towards Muslims and Anglo-Indians (Ibrahim 2020)
[5] Formerly known as "untouchables"
[6] the only regions in India with a majority of Muslim population

3. Meso- and Macro-structural trends

In order to properly analyse trends in radicalisation, there is a need to understand the meso and macro factors that shape radicalisation processes. There also needs to be an understanding of how these factors lead to the existence of social ecosystems that enable the stakeholders of radicalisation to create radicalisation hotspots. Below we discuss several meso- and macro-structural trends that accompany radicalisation processes in five countries which culminate in hotspots of radicalisation. The list is not exhaustive for the selected countries but includes some of the most dominant trends of the last decades.

3.1. The Crisis of Political Representation

The crisis of (political) representation refers to ”the diminishing capacity of ruling elites to successfully claim representation if the interests of broader social groups and even less so the whole nation“ (Ishchenko and Zhuravlev 2021, 2). It seems to be the single most important emerging trend worldwide including in the cases discussed in this report.

In the USA, the crisis of political representation, exacerbated by anti-immigration sentiment, has led to increased party-led radicalisation and the election of a far-right populist president in 2016. The right-wing populism of the Republican Party, which permeated the entire US political system following Donald Trump's election, has been a defining feature of the party-led radicalisation of US politics over the past two decades. The party-led radicalisation in the USA has been accompanied by, and preceded by, a high degree of societal polarization, another manifestation of the crisis of political authority.

As societal polarization has deepened over the years, the crisis of political authority has become prevalent in both political parties but has been more successfully instrumentalized by the Republican establishment. In both the run-up to the 2016 presidential election and its aftermath, the Democratic Party was heavily criticized for its failure to address the entire population and for alienating the white working class with an over-fixation on identity politics and several niche policy areas. Moreover, some policy ideas, such as ultra-tolerant discourse on border and migration management, seemed exaggerated even to moderate Democrats such as Barack Obama (Lerer 2019). Ultimately, this resulted in the galvanization of the white middle class behind Trump, who successfully weaponised white identity politics by referring to internal and external threats to American society (Berman 2018). Trump exploited several topics, such as the rise of China, growing irregular immigration, and the increasing influence of minorities as threat triggers to galvanize support among white working-class Americans (Berman 2018). His focus on not just on China, but also on Europe as a free-riding consumer of the US security umbrella, as well as on irregular migration over the Mexican border, underscores the embeddedness of radicalisation processes within other global macro-structural trends such as great power competition, irregular migration flows, and power distribution in the trans-Atlantic community.

The crisis of political representation also led to what D.Rad calls “elite group conflicts” in the USA, a feature generally associated with weak regimes (D.3.3, 11). Elite group conflicts usually result in “the perception of lacking powerful political forces that would articulate and pursue the interests of broad majorities, so these are left systematically unrepresented in conventional politics and pushed to explore unconventional, including violent, means” (D 3.3, 11). In the US, both Republicans and Democrats have failed to provide a unifying political project that would serve as “social glue”. As such, the Republicans became a party of white conservatives, while the Democrats turned into a party of minorities.

This crisis of political representation also contributed to the election of Jair Bolsonaro as Brazil’s president in 2018. However, in the Brazilian context this was more connected to corruption, bad governance, and gang violence. For almost 30 years Brazilian politics has been dominated by center-left and center-right political parties and no extreme left or right actors were able to gain significant support. However, according to Chagas-Bastos (Harvard University), with the major corruption scandal, known as the Car Wash Operation, the political elite’s legitimacy across the board was shattered, leading to a long political crisis that facilitated the election of right-wing populist politician Jair Bolsonaro in 2018.

The years leading up to the 2018 presidential election had seen economic crisis, major corruption scandals as well as the peculiar case of one the main candidates, previous president Lula, running from prison, until the court officially barred him from running just one month before election day. This made it very difficult for Lula to transfer his electoral support to his successor candidate (Rennó 2020). These developments, along with promises to be tough on crime and the populist discourse of “corrupt elites” vs. “the people” contributed to Bolsonaro’s popularity. His election campaign also made very effective use of social media and memes (Rennó 2020).

Compared to the United States, there is a lower level of societal polarization in Brazil. The main cleavage in Brazil is economic - the enormous difference between the wealthy and poor. This has enabled leftwing politicians like Lula to maintain popularity, despite being mired in corruption scandals. Similarly, on the other hand, those who vote for more radical right-wing political actors in Brazil, like Bolsonaro, do not do so out of strong conservative ideological beliefs or deep-rooted movements. These voters vote on the basis of their antipathy towards the Workers Party (PT in Portuguese) that has been led for decades by Lula. Hence, political polarization and radicalisation in Brazil, unlike the United States where it is rooted in the political class, stems much from economic inequalities and income redistribution between the rich and relatively white south of the country and the less developed northern regions.

3.3. Geopolitical rivalries

Global geopolitical rivalries can also serve as key drivers of radicalisation. Donald Trump effectively used global issues to galvanize support for him. His “America First” agenda was accompanied by hostile rhetoric towards China, European NATO allies, and irregular migrants alike. In a similar vein, Jair Bolsonaro's foreign policy aligned closely with that of the Trump administration, particularly regarding regional politics (Hirst and Valls Pereira 2022). Under Bolsonaro's leadership, Brazil's foreign policy direction shifted towards opposing globalism, minority rights, progressivism, and

Communism, while embracing religious and conservative nationalist ideologies (Jesus 2022) and conspiracy theories (Guimarães et al. 2023).

However, the political landscape of no other country has been affected as much by war and geopolitical confrontation with other powers as Russia. The full-scale military invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 and the following confrontation with the West served as a turning point for political radicalisation in Russia. War has become a new normal for Russia that many segments of society have accepted, internalized, and in most cases, even supported. The war in Ukraine has transcended both the micro and meso levels of radicalisation. According to Professor Makarychev, parts of Russian society accepted the war in Ukraine surprisingly quickly. As war by definition means violence, conflict, and destruction, it also became a major source of radicalisation. Politicization is a main component here – war politicizes people who did not care about politics – as is securitization, which in this case means the association of Ukrainian symbols with threat. Yet, the source of these changes in Russian political life goes back to at least 2014, when society largely accepted the annexation of Crimea.

A very good indicator of the extent to which war has become a new normal and has been largely endorsed and accepted by Russian society is how popular the symbols of this particular war have become. More specifically, the letter Z can be seen everywhere in Russia, including in high schools, at bus stops, and even in a children's hospice in Kazan, Tatarstan, where the patients and staff, despite the snow and cold, lined up in the shape of a "Z" in the courtyard to show their support for the military campaign in Ukraine (Gessen 2022). It has become a symbol of military aggression, prompting comparisons between Russia's use of Z and the use of the swastika in Nazi Germany. However, there is a major difference which illustrates the extent of societal involvement. While the swastika was adopted as a symbol by Nazi officials and was spread top-down, the case of "Z" in Russia was totally the opposite. In the early days of the invasion, it was spotted on Russian military vehicles. Most likely, the letter was used to ensure that soldiers did not confuse their own equipment with Ukrainian army vehicles. However, since then, various theories appeared in social media about what this letter could stand for. And since then, "Z" became a symbol of loyalty, but a symbol that, unlike the swastika, came from the bottom-up, it was internalized and reproduced by the Russian society in their everyday life. Clothes and accessories with "Z" symbols were merchandized and are widely available for purchase including from the English language media outlet Russia Today.[7] To put it into D.Rad's analytical framework, the macro level radicalisation that is the war in Ukraine has become a source of political radicalisation at the meso (societal) level and the micro/individual level.

Russia's military campaign against Kyiv also brought militarization and war into the politics of Ukraine, increasing the potential for radicalisation and violent incidents. Long-lasting war brings uncontrolled arms, and growing numbers of war veterans with post-traumatic syndromes, increasing the risks.

However, the breeding ground for political radicalisation was created years before the 2022 full-scale invasion. Already in 2014, after what is known as the Euromaidan, Russia annexed the Crimean Peninsula and backed separatist movements in eastern Ukraine. According to MacKenzie and Kaunert (2021), between 2014-2021 more than

[7] The Russian state-controlled media channel that is broadcasting in foreign languages across the globe.

17,000 foreign fighters travelled to the conflict zone in eastern Ukraine. About 15,000 of these were Russians of which 12,000 fought for pro-Russian forces and 3,000 for Kyiv.

The Ukrainian state's failure to successfully resist Russia-backed separatists, resulted in a considerable increase of the role and importance of far-right paramilitary groups.

3.4. Authoritarianism

Authoritarianism can significantly impact political radicalisation. In Russia, another key factor in political radicalisation can be traced to ultra-conservative and far-right discourse emanating from top officials within the authoritarian regime. The emergence of these narratives in the mainstream can be roughly traced to 2012 and Putin's return for his third term as president after serving as prime minister for four years. Some scholars argue that this is a turning point in modern Russian history, when Russia's stated model of *sovereign democracy* was replaced with one of *sovereign morality* (Sharafutdinova 2014, 616). This new narrative cast the Kremlin as a bastion of traditional values and morality and Russia began to more explicitly define itself as being in opposition to Western liberal democracies.

Contemporary Russian politics must be analysed in this context of this clash between "Western" liberalism and "traditional Russian" conservatism. In this dichotomy, several groups have emerged that are either linked to or sympathetic towards President Putin personally that also facilitate political radicalisation in the country. In these narratives victory in World War II and its legacy plays a vital role. And this legacy is directly linked to discursive justifications of the modern domestic and foreign policy of Russia. The Great Patriotic War as it is known in Russian historiography, has become the single point of reference for national identity (Gessen 2020). Hence, it is no accident that the Kremlin is actively casting the current Ukrainian government in the role of Nazis to mobilize mass support for military aggression against its neighbour. The fight against Nazism is used as a justification for all the heavy military, human and economic burdens that the citizens of Russia must bear as a result of the war.

3.5. Use of Social Media

Last but not least, social media has become a key tool within ecosystems of political radicalisation worldwide. Social media allows the key stakeholders of radicalisation to reach the population directly, bypassing filters that exist in traditional media. YouTube played an important role in the events leading up to the January 2023 attack on government buildings in Brazil (BBC News Brasil 2023). Bolsonaro supporting evangelists actively used social media to spread their message. Some evangelist preachers, who contested Bolsonaro's defeat in the elections, were behind the mobilization of the mob. Some of these preachers do not even have even a physical church but preach only through social media (ibid). YouTube, Instagram and Facebook, are very popular platforms among cow-protection vigilantes in India, who share, and livestream videos of violence inflicted upon their victims on their channels (Horwitz and Purnell 2023). Although, major social media channels try to moderate their content and remove those that violate rules, this is not easy for non-English content. It requires vast human resources who are going to review and decide whether the content goes against their standards. Even artificial intelligence would struggle

with this task, considering many languages have a dearth of digitized text data to train these systems (Nicholas and Batia 2023).

Additionally, even if the content gets filtered, there are other platforms that provide space for marginal and radical content. One such notorious website is 4Chan and its offshoot 8Chan. The whole Qanon movement started on 4Chan as it allows users to post anonymously without any content moderation. The website has been identified as a breeding ground for extreme ideas and even inspiration for school shootings in the US (Duffy and O'Brien 2022).

Some studies also show that algorithms used by social media to offer users new content can lead to dynamics that foster further radicalisation. Social networks enable extremist groups to reach larger audiences and target potential recruits (Lara-Cabrera et al. 2017; Ledwich et al. 2022). Social media create spaces where extreme content can rapidly replicate and bypass filters, sometimes even as a meme or a joke with subliminal messages, or as fake news. This is amplified by the fragmentated nature of social media and so-called "echo chambers" that can contribute to further polarisation (Gorodnichenko et al. 2021).

4. Hotspots of Political Radicalisation

Stakeholders of radicalisation initiate processes which, under the influence of their social ecosystems and macro- and meso-factors, result in radicalisation hotspots or "the culmination of general radicalisation trends" (Sawyer and Zinigrad 2021, P 4). Below, we provide several cases of hotspots which are non-exhaustive but cover a wide range of different phenomena characteristic of the five countries under study.

4.1 Attempted Coups

One of the key manifestations of radicalisation hotspots are attempts by stakeholders of radicalisation to change established political and legal orders by non-constitutional, violent means. This sort of hotspot emerged over last decade in the USA, Brazil, Russia and Ukraine. The defeat of Donald Trump in the 2020 presidential race was a major blow to the QAnon movement and the fundamental idea that it was based on. The prediction that Trump would remain in office to defeat the "evil" did not come to pass, leaving many disappointed and feeling betrayed (DW News 2021). On 6th January, two weeks before the inauguration of the new president-elect, Trump's vice-president was presiding over the certification of the election results by Congress, as he is obliged to do under the Constitution. However, Donald Trump urged him not to recognize the results, and called on his supporters to march on the Capitol. He even promised that he would join the march in person, but was not present due to the security concerns of the Secret Services (Ball 2023, 129). The majority of the tens of thousands present at the siege were QAnon followers and symbols of the movement could be seen everywhere. The most notorious participants of the siege were QAnon followers. For example, Jacob Chansley – a man wearing horns whose pictures went viral around the world or Ashli Babbitt – a woman shot fatally during the riot by the police, were both followers of the movement (DW News 2021). Subsequently, more

than 800 people were arrested or charged, at least 138 police officers were injured and five people died (Ball 2023, 130).

Although the siege failed to stop Biden from taking office, the QAnon movement has not disappeared. It remains active and influential among right-wing populists across the globe. With politicians who openly endorse conspiracy theories, like Marjorie Taylor Greene present in the House of Representatives and, as was the case at the time of writing, Donald Trump still the most likely Republican nominee for president, this radical *Manichean* perception of politics as a battle between good and evil is going to stay for years to come.

Similar events occurred in Brazil in 2022, but there were significant differences between the two countries. Although Brazil has quite a polarized political context, radicalisation is less common than in some other countries. Hence the hotspots of radicalisation that are analysed within this report are less rooted in political polarization. And although what happened on the ground in Brazil was very similar to the Capitol siege in the US, the level of involvement of the political elite in Brazil was considerably smaller. According to Chagas-Bastos (Harvard University), interviewed for this report, although the attack and violence were initiated by those supporting Bolsonaro —who did not recognize his defeat in the election—, unlike Trump's direct involvement in the US Capitol siege, initial evidence did not link Bolsonaro personally to this violent incident. However, ongoing investigations throughout 2023 have started to uncover Bolsonaro's personal, though indirect, participation in the planning and stimulation of the attacks on public buildings on 8 January 2023.

On January 8th, 2023, following the defeat of incumbent President Bolsonaro in a very tight presidential race with Lula da Silva, supporters of the former tried to storm various government buildings in the capital (the National Congress, Supreme Federal Court, and the Presidential Palace). Their goal was disrupting the transition of power after Lula's inauguration on January 1st (Mao & Murphy 2023). Rioting and looting of the government building lasted for several hours, but police were able to restore order. Consequently, more than 300 people were arrested and the centre of the capital was closed for 24 hours. Although Bolsonaro himself refused to accept the results of the elections and was not present at the inauguration, he condemned the violence and denied he encouraged it (ibid).

However, the point of similarity with the US example is that the rioters were driven by conspiracy theories and a belief that there was a "demonic plot" against Bolsonaro. Although in the long-run, a QAnon-style movement did not gain further traction in Brazil, there was a role for messianic language propagated by Christian evangelists close to Bolsonaro.

Russia, on the other hand, provides an interesting example of non-state driven trends of radicalisation. This mostly arises from the belief that the only way to change Russia's authoritarian and repressive regime is through military means. As has already been discussed, one such important actor is the Russian Volunteer Corps that aims to topple Putin's regime through armed resistance. Since the war in Ukraine started, they managed to on at least two occasions cross into Russian territory through Ukraine and engage in a shootout with the Russian Federal Security Services. The first such incident occurred on March 2, 2023, in Bryansk Oblast before being pushed back. The incident resulted in the death of two civilians (Aljazeera 2023). On May 22,

2023, the RVC crossed into the Belgorod Oblast, where they allegedly spent 24 hours, captured ammunition, took prisoners and returned to Ukraine (BBC News 2023b). These incidents illustrate the potential for radicalisation that the war in Ukraine has opened up and that it will be very challenging to put this genie back in its bottle.

Similarly, the stability of Putin's authoritarian regime was put to the test in the summer of 2023, during the brief rebellion of the Wagner group. Although the leader of the private mercenary company had close personal links to the Kremlin and supported Russian invasion of Ukraine, tension with the Ministry of Defence remained. As the contribution and the role of the group in the war increased, so did the influence of their leader, Evgeny Prigozhin, who was vocal in his criticism of the Russian military leadership. On 23rd of June he released a long interview, in which he accused the Minister of Defence and Chief of the General Staff of being responsible for failure in Ukraine and the "genocide" of the Russian people (Khaled 2023). In the same day, together with thousands of armed group members, he crossed back into Russia from the frontline and swiftly captured Rostov Oblast and the Southern Military District headquarters. Already in the morning of June 24th, a Wagner military convoy started advancing towards Moscow. Yet, by the end of the day, an agreement was reached that Wagner would withdraw and return to the frontline, while all criminal charges against Prigozhin were dropped, and he was allowed to move to Belarus. However, exactly two months after the rebellion, Prigozhin together with several of his associates died in a mysterious plane crash caused by an explosion on board. This short rebellion demonstrated that the militarization and radicalisation of politics as a consequence of the war in Ukraine has the potential to bring the war home and suspend normal politics.

4.2. Political killings

In terms of hotspots of radicalisation in contemporary Russia, one needs to differentiate between state-driven radicalisation and that aimed against the existing political establishment. Yet, they are still part of a larger, holistic picture that is the consequence of the current ruling elite's two decades of authoritarianism. State-driven or at least Kremlin-backed hotspots of radicalisation are aimed against the opposition and human rights activists and are embedded in the discourse of the defence of traditional values. While hotspots that are aimed against the current establishment are rooted in the belief that the only way to get rid of the current establishment is through an armed uprising.

One of the major hotspots is in the Chechen Republic ruled by Ramzan Kadyrov. He has almost limitless power in the republic and manages to get away with actions that clearly go against the Russian constitution. Already in 2017, reports emerged that concentration camps have been set up in Chechnya where gay people are tortured or even beaten to death (Synergia Foundation 2017). The local authorities have engaged in the kidnapping and torturing of sexual minorities not only in Chechnya, but beyond as well (Reevell 2021). Additionally, Kadyrov[8] has been involved in kidnapping and killing his critics, including 19-year-old Salman Tepsurkaev, who was kidnapped in September 2020. Later it was revealed that he was killed by a grenade placed in his mouth. The European Court of Human Rights found that the Russian authorities were responsible for his kidnapping and torture (Kavkazsky Uzel 2021).

[8] The current head of the Chechen Republic

On February 27th 2015, one of the leaders of the Russian political opposition, Boris Nemtsov, was fatally shot near the Kremlin. Although the Russian authorities have condemned the murder, questions regarding their involvement remains. In June 2019, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) called on the Russian authorities to re-open and continue the investigation as there were serious concerns regarding the outcomes of the official investigation (PACE 2019).

4.3. Repression against minorities

Stakeholders in radicalisation frequently target their policies against minority groups. The Russian government has a long history of suppressing sexual and ethnic minorities.

After the 2022 Ukraine invasion, the Russian military's recruitment of ethnic minorities and the spread of misleading international media narratives vilifying specific ethnic groups have intensified apprehensions among ethnic minority communities towards Russia's aggressive cultural dominance and monolingual policy (Baranova and Darieva 2023). Moreover, a 2022 draft drive disproportionately singled out ethnic minorities in Russia, such as Kalmyks, Buryats, and Tatars, resulting in a marked reduction of the population in several non-Slavic communities (Van Son 2022).

Furthermore, in recent years, the Russian administration has implemented legislation that further ostracizes the LGBT+ community. In 2022, legislation was passed to broaden the prohibition on LGBT+ “propaganda” in Russia (Kottasová and Chernova 2022). This law criminalizes the act of advocating same-sex relationships or implying that non-heterosexual orientations are “normal.” In 2023, Russia's highest court declared what it termed an “international LGBT public movement” as extremist. This ruling risks leading to extensive prison sentences for individuals within the LGBT+ community (Sauer 2023).

We can observe radicalisation hotspots targeting minorities in other countries as well, including those with democratic political systems. For example, since the BJP's 2014 victory in India, there has been a dramatic spike in violent incidents and even mob lynchings of people allegedly involved in beef production or cow trading. According to some estimates, about 90% of cow-related incidents between 2010 and 2017 occurred after Modi’s party assumed power in 2014 (Raza 2022). A Human Rights Watch report revealed that between 2015 and 2018, cow protection groups killed at least 44 people, and more than 280 were injured in over 100 attacks (Marlow 2019). Therefore, these violent occurrences should be seen as hotspots of radicalisation that extend beyond just cows and are directed against non-Hindu communities.

4.4. Anti-systemic violence

Anti-systemic violence as a hotspot of radicalisation shares some similarities with the attempted coups described above, but with the difference that the former does not necessarily call for regime change as its ultimate goal, but rather changes in governance practices to address certain policy issues. From this perspective, anti-systemic violence is directed against real or perceived injustice and the impossibility of achieving change by legal means (such as in authoritarian or repressive systems).

Euromaidan, the Ukrainian protest movement that arose in late autumn of 2013 is an example of anti-systemic violence. It was triggered by a government U turn on foreign policy when, unlike Georgia and Moldova, it succumbed to Kremlin pressure and refused to sign an Association Agreement with the European Union. Yet, behind this immediate response to President Yanukovich's move were structural reasons that had been haunting the country for decades. The country ranked last in Europe according to an index of confidence in the government, with trust in parliament scored at 1.99 out of 10, the judicial system got 2.26, and confidence in the police was just 2.50 (Svheda and Park 2016). These low numbers indicate a crisis of political representation and why Yanukovich's actions in 2013 were a trigger rather than a main cause of the protests that lead to the Euromaidan revolution. The government's crackdown on protesters and its excessive use of force, which left over a hundred people dead, further radicalised the protests.

Another example of anti-systemic violence is the BLM movement. The BLM protests that occasionally turned into clashes with riot police across the US were triggered by several incidents of police abusing their power. However, the underlying reasons for them go beyond police brutality and racial discrimination. It stems from the structural racism salient in the contemporary US for long before the protests. The Movement itself began in July 2013 as a response to the police shooting an African American teenager. From q social media hashtag, BLM turned into street protests and unrest, returning to the headlines again in 2020 when George Floyd's death during arrest caused another wave of protests globally.

In a nutshell, the Euromaidan and the BLM movement demonstrate the intricate relationship between immediate catalysts and entrenched systemic problems in igniting anti-systemic unrest. Although these movements are unique in their geographic and socio-political settings, they both originate from a deep-seated disappointment with the current political and social systems, exacerbated by the actions or inactions of those in power.

5. Conclusion: Ecosystems of Political Radicalisation

The main finding of this report, in line with the D.Rad research, is that the processes of political radicalisation should be examined within the context of their social ecosystems and in conjunction with macro- and meso-structural trends (figure 2). None of the stakeholders of radicalisation identified in the five countries in this report acted as lone wolves. Instead, they are embedded in, and inspired and supported by, their respective social ecosystems. Important macro-structural trends further influence the radicalisation processes within countries, but their impact is more complex and can sometimes also have adverse effects on stakeholders of radicalisation. For instance, the mismanagement of the Covid-19 pandemic had a rather negative impact on the governance of the administrations of Donald Trump and Jair Bolsonaro, and negatively affected their re-election chances.

The main findings of this report align closely with the empirical insights from the D.Rad research on EU countries and their environs. Echoing the D.Rad findings, the report highlights key macro-structural trends, notably the significant role of social media and

the crisis in political representation. In terms of stakeholders and hotspots of radicalisation, the report corroborates the D.Rad findings, highlighting that right-wing radicalisation is the most dominant trend, exerting more significant effects than left-wing radicalisation. Right-wing radicalisation trends were prevalent in all five countries under study, leading to various hotspots of radicalisation ranging from attempted coups to oppressive practices, military adventurism, and war.

On the other hand, the report also sheds light on new aspects within radicalisation ecosystems, including macro-trends such as geopolitical competition and great power rivalries. These trends play a pivotal role in the radicalisation processes observed in Russia and Ukraine, as well as in other countries analysed in this study. Moreover, specific meso-structural trends, unique to individual countries, are identified - for example, bi-partisan polarization and tribalism in the USA, and the effects of gang violence and corruption in Brazil. Crucially, however, all of these newly identified aspects seamlessly integrate into the D.Rad innovative conceptual framework for studying the radicalisation processes as a networked phenomenon (figure 2). This demonstrates D.Rad's utility for screening, categorizing, and analysing radicalisation and deradicalisation processes globally from a novel perspective, enabling a departure from traditional approaches and providing a comprehensive, all-encompassing view of radicalisation as a phenomenon.

Here, the key conceptual and methodological findings of our report align with D.Rad research about radicalisation in Europe. It posits that when studying agents or stakeholders of radicalisation, we need to focus not only on their individual features but also on the dynamic nature of their interactions and their social embeddedness. Insights from the D-Rad research indicate that radicalisation and its violent and non-violent manifestations are not solely driven by individual propensities but often emerge from “dynamic interactions and changing relations between contentious agents, including both extreme and centrist political movements/parties, other segments of civil society, state institutions, and elite factions“ (Ishchenko and Varga 2021, p.6). Therefore, “violent agents should be analysed in the context of their entire 'ecosystems' of various relations (e.g., cooperation, competition, confrontation) with their front groups, media, social networks for mobilization, recruitment, and sponsorship, 'respectable' political forces, and state institutions“ (ibid).

Figure 2: Ecosystems of radicalisation in selected countries

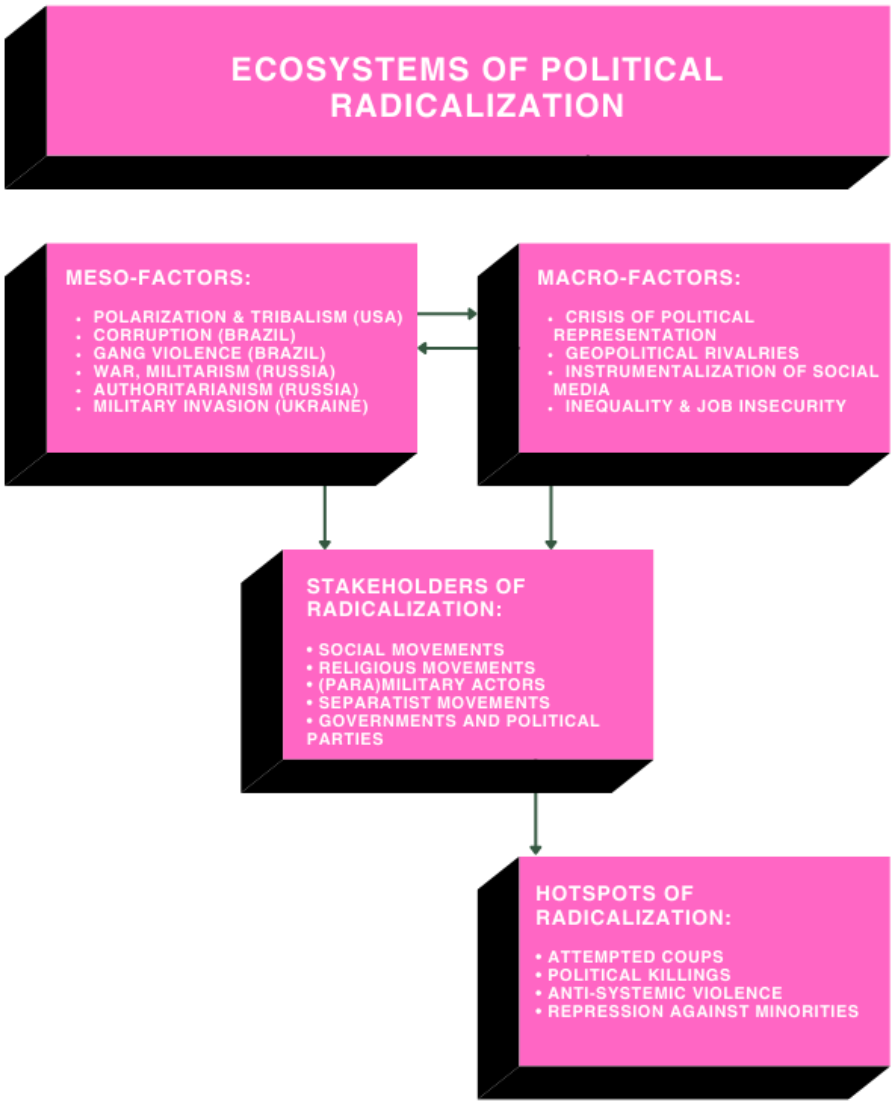


Table 1: Radicalisation and its components in the selected countries

	Trends of radicalisation	Stakeholders of radicalisation	Hotspots of radicalisation	Triggers of radicalisation
USA	Right-wing radicalisation in the Republican party; Left-wing radicalisation in the Democratic party; Bi-partisan polarization.	Qanon; Donald Trump; Right-wing media; Black Lives Matter.	Pizzagate; Assault on the Capitol; BLM protests.	Systemic racism and discrimination; Crisis of job market; Irregular migration; Rivalry with China.
Brazil	Corruption of political elites Economic inequality.	Right-wing populist politicians Christian evangelists.	8th of January attack on government buildings.	Elite corruption; Economic inequality; Gang violence.
Russia	Invasion of Ukraine; Authoritarianism and illiberalism.	National Liberation Movement; Night Wolves; The Russian Volunteer Corps; The Kadyrov Regime in Chechnya; The Russian Government.	Murder of leaders of political opposition; Kadyrov's rule in Chechnya; Russian Volunteer Corp's penetration in Russia.	Perception of geopolitical humiliation; Regime security.
Ukraine	Regional divisions; Russian invasion.	Euromaidan movement; Azov Battalion.	Russia-backed separatist movements	Foreign invasion; Bad governance.
India	Tensions between Hindu and non-Hindu communities.	BJP; Hindu nationalists.	Cow-related violent mob attacks.	Right-wing nationalist discourse of the political leadership.

Annex 1. Interviews

- Fabrício H. Chagas-Bastos, Harvard University, 17th August 2023, via Zoom
- Volodymyr Ishchenko, Free University Berlin, 21st August 2023, via Zoom
- Barry Ames, University of Pittsburgh, 24th August 2023, via Zoom
- Andrey Makarychev, University of Tartu, 24th August 2023, via Zoom

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