



DeRadicalisation
in Europe and Beyond:
Detect, Resolve, Reintegrate



Gender and Sexuality Report

Gender-based violence against women and LGBTQ+ groups

D 3.7

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Tarik Basbugoglu - Glasgow Caledonian University, UK

Roland Fazekas - Glasgow Caledonia University, UK

Mattia Zeba- EURAC Research- Italy

Roberta Medda-Windischer- EURAC Research- Italy

Jasmin Jasarevic- PRONI Center for Youth Development-
Bosnia and Herzegovina

Donika Elshani- Kosovar Centre for Security Studies,
Kosovo

Maria Moulin-Stozek- Jan Dlugosz University, Poland

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Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at: Tarik.Basbugoglu@gcu.ac.uk

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About D.Rad

D.Rad is a comparative study of radicalisation and polarisation in Europe and beyond. It aims to identify the actors, networks, and broader 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) so as to move 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 coming under the influence of “us vs them” identity formulations.

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

With the possibility of capturing the trajectories of seventeen nations and several minority nations, the project will provide a unique evidence base for the comparative analysis of law and policy as nation-states adapt to new security challenges. The process of mapping these varieties and their link to national contexts will be crucial in uncovering strengths and weaknesses in existing interventions. Furthermore, D.Rad accounts for the problem that processes of 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.

Introduction

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) has been the cause of growing concern in Europe and beyond in recent years. The European Union (EU) introduced the Daphne project in order to prevent GBV against females, such as sexual exploitation and human trafficking in 1997 (Montoya, 2009). With that project, the EU sought to establish a comprehensive approach to deal with violence against women and children in European society. The Council of Europe's Convention in Istanbul (2011) on preventing GBV against women and girls was the first legally binding regional instrument to address different forms of violence, such as psychological violence, stalking, and sexual harassment (Bradbury-Jones et al., 2019). Moreover, the EU has also pushed for LGBTQ+ rights for its candidate countries as its enlargement policy (Muehlenhoff, 2019, p.203). In this report, we select EU members, namely Poland, Hungary and Italy and EU Candidate countries including Bosnia and Kosovo in order to express the weakness of EU institutions to prevent GBV whereas they have tried to establish a "feminist" and "queer friendly" policies (Ammaturo, 2015; Latcheva, 2017; Korkut & Ziya-Eslen, 2011). In this case, we analyse why the EU has failed to protect women and LGBTQ+ people from GBV within and beyond its borders (Godzisz, 2019; Mazey, 1998).

Most GBV is perpetrated by men against women in the EU and beyond (Bradbury-Jonas, 2019, p.470; Caragnano, 2018; Bradbury-Jones et al., 2019). To give some examples, in Poland, Agnieszka, a 31-year-old woman, was killed by her husband Naeem Abbas (Interwencja, 2013). According to the relatives of Agnieszka, Naeem killed her because he could not accept her decision to abandon him (*Ibid.*). In Bosnia, a 32-year-old woman (Edina Odobašić) was killed by her husband (Enes Odobašić) in the town of Bihac in October 2022 (Zvijerac, 2022). This event caused outrage within the Bosnian females who protested misogyny, and male superiority (Zvijerac, 2022). Another example of misogynistic sexual violence (shooting) was committed against a 35-year-old woman (Hamide Magashi) while waiting to give birth. The incident took place in front of the Gynaecology Clinic at the University Clinical Center of Kosovo (UCCK) in the capital, Pristina in December 2022 (Bami, 2022). After this shooting, police searched for the suspect, her husband (Sokol Halili), against whom the victim had taken out a protection order from the court of Ferizaj/Urosevac. Furthermore, violence against LGBTQ+ people has also become a very salient issue (Engin, 2015). In Hungary, three men

tried to break into an apartment in Budapest, because there was a rainbow flag displayed on the balcony. The perpetrators managed to flee the scene before the police. Instead of punishing the perpetrators, the police suggested to residents that they remove the flag from the balcony (Telex, 2021). When we look at the Italian case, we can observe how Bruna, a transgender woman, was brutally assaulted by local police officers in Milan (Carbonaro, 2023). In reviewing these international examples, this report highlights how gender focused radicalization committed by men has triggered homophobic, transphobic and misogynistic violence.

One of the focuses of this report is analysing how toxic masculinity triggers GBV against females. In such cases, constructed gender identities play a critical role in terms of encouraging males to be violent against females. As Wikstrom (2019, p.28) states: "The traditional gender expectation of men is that they should be tough, strong (physically and mentally) and not exhibit any signs of weakness and emotion, by for example crying in public". That is why males who claimed hegemonic masculinity over females feel threatened when females try to adopt feminist values. In this context, it is suggested men who feel threatened by women become insecure and vulnerable, which may lead to misogynistic actions such as sexual harassment, intrusion, or even sexual assault (Wikstrom, 2019, p.31). Furthermore, several media reports have indicated that there are incel (Involuntary celibates) groups,¹ who perceive that they are ignored sexually by women and express themselves either on online platform, such as Reddit, or by violence (Lounela & Murphy, 2023; Griffin, 2021).

This report will underscore the impact of far-right propaganda that stimulates GBV as well. It examines how far-right and populist political groups have encouraged "manhood" over women and non-white males. Academic research has only recently turned to explore GBV within far-right groups. Indeed, far-right actors often consider themselves to be victimized and oppressed due to the neoliberal economic system, immigration and women empowerment in the EU and beyond (Gilmore, 2019). In the international context, we have several far-right political groups such as Hungarian Fidesz and Fratelli d'Italia (Brothers of Italy) which depicted non-White migrants as "Muslim invasion" to protect the so-called

¹ "The term- short for 'involuntary celibate', can, in theory, be applied to both men and women, but in practice it picks out not sexless men in general, but a certain kind of sexless man: the kind who is convinced he is owed sex, and is enraged by the women who deprive him of it (Srinivasan 2021, p. 73)."

“Christian values” (Kuisma & Nygård, 2016; Bíró-Nagy, 2022; Michels, 2019; Farrell, 2022). Although these far-right groups claimed racial superiority towards non-white minorities and refugees, they also developed their own masculine languages in order to “protect” women from so-called non-native male threats (Ralph-Morrow, 2020, p. 27). This also indicates that masculinity is related to the dominance of men over women and the power of some men over other men (Ibid.). Moreover, far-right women activists also supported the concept of “manhood” and see refugees as sexual predators (Ralph-Morrow, 2020). Therefore, far-right movements advocate the use of violence to control and subordinate women’s freedom (Walton, 2012, p.10). In these manners, they may also cooperate with Incels whom considered themselves victims of sexual frustration. Incels with far-right ideological backgrounds also blame a rising matriarchy, so they seek dominance over females, at the same time, to destroy ethnic diversity and gender equality (Hoffman et al., 2020, p.16).Therefore, intersectionality becomes an important concept in order to understand the impact of ethnicity and race in terms of GBV.

Furthermore, GBV against LGBTQ+ groups and citizens is another concerning issue. As Falomir-Pichastor & Mugny (2009, p.1233) argue, men could consider LGBTQ+ movements as a threat to their masculinity. In this context, men adopted homophobia as a defensive mechanism to protect their own “manhood” against supposed queer threats (Ibid.). From that point, this report shed light on how social conservatism, patriotism and far-right ideologies impact on violence against gay and transgender people (Górska & Tausch, 2022). It will also examine how transgender people were considered as “sexual minorities” and are characterized as “less than human” (Ibid; Kteily et al., 2015). This trend has been especially perpetrated by nationalist populist parties such as Kosovar Vetevendosje (Self-determination movement), Bosnian Serb Alliance of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD) and Polish Law and Justice Parties who label LGBTQ+ people as “threats” in order to appeal to their conservative and nationalist voters at home (Ibid.; Hoeferle, 2022; Kurtic, 2023; Kondirolli, 2021). In these cases, we also observe an alliance between neoliberalism and religion to construct so-called “family values” and “conservative generations” in order to exclude homosexual and transgender people (Korkut & Eslen-Ziya, 2018). Therefore, this report will highlight how certain prejudices against queerness community triggered violence against the transgender and homosexual people.

As our Methodological Framework, we use feminist, queer IR theories and social psychology studies in order to explore the gender- and psychology-based reasons of GBV. First, we explain how feminist and queer IR theories are relevant to examine the gender-based radicalization within males due to the loss of hegemonic masculinity towards women and LGBTQ+ (Weber, 1999; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Second, we explore how social psychology studies demonstrate the relationship between collective narcissism and GBV (Golec de Zavala et al., 2009; Golec de Zavala & Lantos, 2020). In addition, the methodology section also underlines how we selected, collected, and analysed data on radicalism from five different countries that were EU member, and candidate, countries at the time of writing.

Overall, the structure of this report begins with the introduction. The second section explores the laws and norms of the EU in order to prevent the GBV against females and LGBTQ+ people. The third section examines the theoretical framework and methodology. The fourth part explains the relationship between toxic masculinity and gender-based radicalization. The fifth explores our five cases from EU members and EU candidate countries in order to analyse GBV against females and LGBTQ+ people. In the last section, we summarize our findings and conclude the report.

EU and gender-based violence

The European Union (EU) has adopted norms and rules in order to prevent GBV against females. The European Parliament (EP) has become more focused on women rights since 1980s. In the 1980s, the EP's Committee on Women's Rights issued a report and proposed a resolution on violence against women. Furthermore, the EU's initiatives to combat violence against women have occurred primarily after the mid-1990s (Montoya, 2009, p.333). The EU has identified violence against women as a significant European issue and supported the adoption of new policy (Montoya, 2009, p.333). In that context, the EU introduced the Daphne project to underscore the issue of violence against women such as sexual exploitation and human trafficking in 1997. With this project, it aimed to develop a coordinated and comprehensive approach to deal with violence against women and children in European society (Montoya, 2009). Thus, the EU has allocated almost € 200 million to the Daphne project in order to provide program funding for hundreds of advocacy organizations (Montoya, 2009, p.340).

In parallel with the Daphne Project, the EU has also adopted several resolutions in order to prevent GBV against women in the 2000s. Resolutions have included; a 2000 Resolution on Trafficking of Women, a 2003 Resolution on the Elimination of Domestic Violence against Women, a 2004 Resolution on the Elimination of Honor Crimes against Women, and a more comprehensive 2006 Recommendation on Combating Violence against Women were adopted (Montoya, 2009, p.334). Furthermore, the Istanbul Convention was signed by EU and non-EU countries to protect women against all forms of violence; to prevent, prosecute and eliminate violence against women and domestic violence; and to promote real equality between women and men in 2011 (Council of Europe, 2011). The EU recognized sexual harassment as discrimination based on the grounds of sex. It also implied a direct link with fundamental rights in line with the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU (2012) under Article 21 (Latcheva, 2017, p.1823). The European Institute for Gender Equality defines Femicide as: “The killing of a woman by an intimate partner and the death of a woman as a result of a practice that is harmful to women (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2017).” It also expresses that “intimate partner is understood as a former or current spouse or partner, whether or not the perpetrator shares or has shared the same residence with the victim” (Ibid). In addition to GBV, the EU seeks to protect women’s rights in the context of the labour force and work environment. To protect pregnant women, the EU has pushed its members to guarantee a safe working environment, facilitate childrearing and participation by women in the labor market (Korkut & Eslen-Ziya, 2011, p.401). After discussing the EU and its protective measures against women who are vulnerable to GBV, we underline how the EU tackles with the GBV against LGBTQ+ people.

The EU has become more active in terms of protecting gender rights of LGBTQ+ people since the 2000s. From 2010 onwards, the EU has adopted several external relations policy documents, including the 2010 toolkit and 2013 guidelines, to promote and protect LGBTQ+ rights and emphasise queer rights more explicitly (Slootmaeckers, 2019, p.13). At the same time, recognizing LGBTQ+ rights also provided the EU as a “civilized identity” vis-à-vis non-EU others such as Russia which considers LGBTQ+ as “foreign agents” to weaken family values and national order (Sleptcov, 2018, p.140). Therefore, the insistence on a European standard of respect for the rights of LGBTQ+ citizens, is perfectly functional to the strengthening of a model of European citizenship grounded in the liberal concept of ‘tolerance’ as a cultural and

political marker of civilisation as opposed to a specific conception of backwardness in the context of human rights protection (Ammaturo, 2015, p.1152).

To struggle with homophobia and transphobia, the EP resolutions facilitated the creation of an outlet for the LGBTQ+ activists to publicly address homophobia in their respective countries (Kulpa, 2014, p.438). In this context, the EU enacted the Pink Agenda to build and reinforce a concept of European Sexual Citizenship which is homonationalist in nature (Ammaturo, 2015, p.1151). The Pink Agenda, sought to create an appealing prototype of the European LGBTQ+ citizen, perfectly integrated into the social and political fabric of each member state, and standing in opposition to the ‘subjugated’ queer inhabitants of other European and non-European countries (Ammaturo, 2015). With this agenda, the rights of LGBTQ+ people could represent a unique tool to catalyse the creation of a model of European citizenship based on the continent’s unique role as guarantor of human rights (Ammaturo; 2015, p.1152). Therefore, the Pink Agenda also portrayed the EU as an “exceptional” by having “queer-friendly” approach.

Although the EU has sought to protect women’s and queer rights, its members and candidates have displayed contradictory messages. In this report, we argue that the EU and its periphery countries could not prevent the GBV because of gender- and psychological-based insecurities within males. In addition, we also underscore how social conservatism, right-wing and nationalist populism can also boost misogyny, homophobia and transphobia as well. In that context, we select a number of EU countries; Poland, Hungary and Italy as well as EU candidates such as Bosnia and Kosovo, as our cases to explore misogynistic, homophobic and transphobic GBV within the EU and beyond. In the next section, we explain the methodological framework of this report in order to discuss the impact of feminist, queer IR theories and social psychology studies to examine how “castration anxiety”, “male hysteria” and “collective narcissism” within males could trigger the GBV against females and queer people.

Theoretical Framework

This report examines how claiming hegemonic masculinity towards females and LGBTQ+ people could push males to become more aggressive and violent. Thus, this section explores how gender-and psychology-based approaches can help to explain the underlying reasons for

GBV against females and queer people. First, feminist IR is useful to understand how the loss of hegemonic masculinity within males could trigger GBV. Second, we select queer IR theory to understand how “castration anxiety” and “male hysteria” within males could trigger GBV against females and queer people. Last, we use social psychology studies to examine the relations between collective narcissism and GBV. Within this context, the present report highlights how gender- and psychology-based approaches are relevant to investigate GBV against females and queer individuals within the EU and beyond.

We begin our theoretical analyses by underscoring the impact of hegemonic masculinity on males to construct so-called gender-based superiority. Before entering our discussion, we use feminist IR theory to explain the definition of hegemonic masculinity. Connell & Messerschmidt (2005, p.832) explain that: “Hegemonic masculinity was understood as the pattern of practice (i.e., things done, not just a set of role expectations or an identity) that allowed men’s dominance over women to continue.” In other words, Connell & Messerschmidt (2005, p.832) mention: “Hegemony did not mean violence, although it could be supported by force; it meant ascendancy achieved through culture, institutions, and persuasion.” Thus, it is not surprising that in some contexts, hegemonic masculinity does refer to men’s engaging physical violence that stabilize gender dominance in a particular setting (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005, p.840).

Hegemonic masculinity also defines and determines the patriarchal relationship between men and women. As Hearn (2004, p.52) explains: “Hegemony involves both the consent of some men, and, in a very different way, the consent of some women to maintain patriarchal relations of power.” In that effort, some powerful men are dominant in the construction of women’s consent and the reproduction of men’s consent. Moreover, Hearn (2004, p.59) states: “The hegemony of men seeks to address the double complexity that men are both a social category formed by the gender system and dominant collective and individual agents of social practices.” Hearn (2004, p.65) expresses that “Men’s domination without force can also be formally organized (for example, men’s supposedly ‘peaceful’ domination of managerial positions) or individualized and interpersonal (for example, with men’s social status as fathers, husbands.” In that context, the concept of hegemonic masculinity is helpful to understand the patriarchal order.

“Hegemonic masculinity” represents not a certain type of men but, rather, a way that men position themselves through discursive practices. Hence, Schippers (2007, p.94) states that “Masculinity and femininity are conceptualized here as produced, contested, and transformed through discursive processes, and therefore embedded within and productive of power relations”. In this model, power dynamics are central, not only in the conceptual focus on the hierarchical relationship between masculinity and femininity. Rather, the specific relationship is portrayed as what men and women and their relationship to each other is and should be (Ibid.).

Masculine practices and characteristics also determine sexual relationship between males and females. Thus, masculine practices and characteristics which are embodied by men and women have widespread social and cultural effects (Schippers, 2007, p.86). The masculine position affects the way individuals experience their bodies, their sense of self, and how they project that self to others (Schippers, 2007, p.86). Schippers (2007, p.90) mentions that “While there is far more to the content of masculinity and femininity than erotic desire, the construction of hetero desire as the ontological essence if gender difference establishes the meaning of the relationship between masculinity and femininity.” From that point, Schippers (2007, p.90) explains that “Regardless of one’s sex category, the possession of erotic desire for the feminine object is constructed as masculine and being the object of masculine desire is feminine.”

Hegemonic masculinity also could enforce males to commit sexual violence against females. Femininity is always and already inferior and undesirable when compared to masculinity, it can sustain features of stigmatization and contamination. In contrast, masculinity must always remain superior; it must never be conflated with something undesirable (Schippers, 2007, p.96). Being physically weak or being compliant- men become the target of stigma and social sanction, much like women who embody features of hegemonic masculinity (Schippers, 2007). Schippers (2007, p.91) mentions that “(...), hegemonic masculinity can include physical strength, the ability to use interpersonal violence in the face of conflict, and authority”. These masculine characteristics guarantee men’s legitimate dominance over women only when they are symbolically paired with a complementary and inferior quality attached to femininity (Ibid.). Therefore, it is cultural insurance for male dominance that anybody who enacts or

embodies hegemonic characteristics that do not align with their gender category is stigmatized as problematic and feminine.

Hegemonic masculinity considers LGBTQ+ people as a “potential threat” due to the latter’s non-heterosexual position. Schippers (2007, p.96) mentions that “Because male femininities threaten the hegemonic relationship between masculinity and femininity, they are both feminizing and stigmatizing to the men who embody them.” Indeed, Schippers (2007, p.90) states that “Compulsory heterosexuality and hegemonic constructions of sexuality as natural or grounded in biology establish the “naturalness” of the complementary and hierarchical relationship between masculinity and femininity.” Schippers (2007, p.95) mentions that “Practices and characteristics that are stigmatized and sanctioned if embodied by women include having sexual desire for other women, being promiscuous, “frigid”, or sexually inaccessible, and being aggressive. In other words, these are characteristics that, when embodied by women, constitute a refusal to complement hegemonic in a relation of subordination and therefore are threatening to male dominance.” Furthermore, Men’s homosexual desire is not symbolically constructed as problematic masculine characteristics; it is constructed as decidedly feminine (Schippers, 2007, p.96). In that context, hegemonic masculinity identifies queerness as an existential threat for the so-called “manhood”.

We turn to queer IR theory to explain how males feel castration anxiety by losing their hegemonic masculinity with regard to females and queer people. In this section, we argue that the loss of hegemonic masculinity could push males to commit GBV. Before entering the discussions on castration anxiety or male hysteria, we will first define queer IR theory. Richter-Montpetit (2018, p.226) states that “(...), Queer IR scholarship investigates how certain sexual norms, normativities and subjects are produced and come to be understood in binary terms, interrogating the political effects of this kind of either/or thinking and ‘regimes of the normal’.” Smith & Lee (2015, p.55) mention that “It (Queer IR theory) is not (just) sexual norms but rather norms *per se* that a great deal of queer theory seeks to expose and destabilise.” Richter-Montpetit (2018, p.224) argues that “Queer inquiry thus proceeds on the basis of questioning the political formations and normalising power of sexuality and gender, rather than assuming a stable, rights-seeking, liberal political subject.” In sum, queer IR theory is significant to challenge with the understandings of gender and sexuality as singular and stable (*Ibid.*).

Males who lost their hegemonic masculinity vis-a-vis females and queer people could adopt castration anxiety. Castration anxiety could be triggered when males feel themselves as a feminine object. In other words, males could become a feminine object when they are stigmatized as “de-masculine” by other males (Weber, 1999). Thus, the feminization of a male is explained as being weak vis-à-vis females, homosexuals or transgender people in terms of social, economic, and cultural hegemony. With castration anxiety, males could lose the functions of their penis and the phallic power that is supposed to accompany them (Weber, 1999, p.5). This castration anxiety also turns males to be melancholic objects. As Weber (1999, p.55) explains that “melancholia, like mourning, is the response to the loss of a loved object that produces symptoms of sadness and withdrawal from the world.” Therefore, this also could push males to use sexual violence (which can include rape, killing etc) in order to reclaim their hegemony towards females and LGBTQ+ people.

Reclaiming hegemonic masculinity could increase the hypermasculine position of males. A hypermasculine male is considered irrational, emotional, and aggressive men who have failed to meet the standards of hegemonic masculinity (Bilgic 2015, p.12; Schippers, 2007). In this context, being a hypermasculine also increases male hysteria. Weber (1999, p.86) specifies that “Hysteria appears as the excessive miming of masculinity (a miming that psychoanalytic discourse equates with subjectivity) that “stands in” for a lack of phallic power (inability to make meaning).” In other words, Weber (1999, p.86) mentions that “Male hysteria is the emasculation of men (uncoding of men as men) rather than the feminization of men (coding of men as women).” Male hysterics imitate or mime masculinity to compensate for a lack of phallic; they do so not because they lack a penis, however, but because their penis is (over)-exposed (Weber, 1999, p.86). Furthermore, Weber (1999, p.108) mentions that “Male hysteria equates a lack of phallic power with an inability to make meaning. Meaning cannot be made because the phallus is exposed.” This hysteria also makes males voiceless and powerless vis-à-vis females and queer people. Therefore, males could pursue a male masquerade strategy to justify their GBV and hypermasculine position regarding females and queer people.

Males adopt a male masquerade strategy in order to conceal their loss of hegemonic masculinity. At times, males have tried to not appear as hegemonic masculine to avoid an aggressor image vis-à-vis females and queer people (Weber, 1999, p.3). Masquerade equates

a lack of phallic power with a reluctance to make meaning (Weber, 1999, p.108). This reluctance to make meaning is performed by “pretending” not to possess that which allows one to make meaning, the phallus. In other words, males try to portray themselves as a “victim” vis-à-vis females and queer people to justify their GBV. In its performance of phallic disavowal, the male masquerade protects the male subject from the threat of castration (because he “seems to” already have been castrated), all the while underscoring that he is in possession of the penis and could possibly wield phallic power (Weber, 1999, p.110). Thus, males who use the male masquerade strategy seek to justify their sexual or physical violence against females and queer people as a matter of honor or prestige.

The concept of collective narcissism is a significant tool which can be used to better understand the construction of male superiority vis-à-vis females and LGBTQ+ individuals. Collective narcissism is an approach of social psychology studies. In that sense, we will define social psychology study before explaining the impact of collective narcissism on hegemonic masculinity. Social psychology studies express how we perceive other people and social situations, how we respond to others and how others respond to us, and, in general, how we are affected by social situations” (Sears et al., 1988, p. 2). In that context, collective narcissism plays a significant role to underscore how males try to feel self-confident in order to contain their inferiority vis-à-vis females and LGBTQ+ people.

Collective narcissism is a tool by which one can understand why males need to depict females and LGBTQ+ people as “inferior others”. Golec de Zavala et al. (2009, p. 6) state that collective narcissists are assumed to be emotionally invested in a grandiose image of their own in-group. This image also demands constant validation. Indeed, Golec de Zavala (2011, p. 315) mentions that “Narcissists are motivated to seek external validation of their inflated self-image because their high self-esteem is accompanied by suppressed feelings of shame and low self-regard.” If males feel that their hegemonic masculinity is undermined by females and queer people, they could become narcissistic. That is why, collective narcissism suggests that males pursue hegemonic masculinity in order to boost their self-esteem in regard to females and LGBTQ+ people. In this respect, Golec de Zavala & Lantos (2020, p.273) explain that “Collective narcissism is a belief that one’s own group (the in-group) is exceptional but not sufficiently recognized by others. It is form of “in-group love” robustly associated with “out-group hate.”” Furthermore, Golec de Zavala & Lantos (2020, p.274) state that “People who endorse

collective narcissism explicitly express the belief that their in-group is exceptional and that others do not evaluate it positively.” Collective narcissism predicts prejudice, retaliatory intergroup aggression, and rejoicing in the suffering of other people (Ibid.).

The resistance of hegemonic masculinity from females and LGBTQ+ people could alleviate insecurity within males. In that sense, males could feel inferiority when females and LGBTQ+ people deny their hegemonic masculinity. Collective narcissism could be vulnerable to challenges from within (e.g., internal criticism) or from without (e.g., from out-groups that endanger or put into doubt the prominence of an in-group) (Golec de Zavala et al., 2009, p. 6). This means that “whatever the reason for the claim of the ingroup’s privileged status, collective narcissist belief expresses the desire for the ingroup to be highly positively distinguishable from other groups and the concern that the fulfilment of this desire is threatened” (Golec de Zavala et al., 2019, p. 38). Indeed, collective narcissism used in-group’s image as a vehicle to satisfy frustrated self-importance and to protect the undermined self-esteem (Golec de Zavala & Lantos, 2020, p.276). Therefore, males who could adopt Collective narcissistic sentiments could pursue GBV against females and the LGBTQ+ people.

Collective narcissism becomes a dominant narration about males who feel uncertain about their self-esteem are more likely to turn against other groups, such as non-traditional women. In other words, males who feel insecurity aim to protect their supposed grandiosity against females who threaten hegemonic masculinity by having their own economic, social, and political freedom (Golec de Zavala & Lantos, 2020, p.277; Agius et al., 2020). In this context, Golec de Zavala & Lantos (2020, p.275) mention that “In consequence, collective narcissists retaliate with excessive hostility in situations that require a stretch of imagination to be perceived as a threat or deliberate provocation.” For example, Collective narcissism is by incels-sexually frustrated men who are “involuntary celibates”-proclaiming that they hate all women (Golec de Zavala & Lantos, 2020, p.274). Therefore, narcissistic identification among men may be related to exaggerate feelings of threat and fear that the privileged position of their gender ingroup is in danger.

Collective narcissism also explains how males are sensitive to provocation and believe that revenge is a desirable response to their loss of hegemonic masculinity. In that context, Golec de Zavala & Lantos (2020, p.275) mention that “Collective narcissists are attracted to conspiracy theories because such theories suggest that other people question the special

entitlement of the in-group out of malevolence and jealousy." Golec de Zavala & Lantos (2020, p.275) state that "Conspiracy theories justify constant vigilant to threats to the in-group's image. They also provide a reassurance that the in-group is important enough to attract secretive plots from other people." In that effort, the antagonistic belief in the malicious plotting of females and LGBTQ+ people fuel the tendency associated with collective narcissism to adopt a posture of intergroup hostility (Ibid.; Sweigart, 2022). For example, far-right, and conservative and Islamist-led conspiracy theories could trigger males to be more aggressive towards females and LGBTQ+ people (Erel, 2018; Elias, 2008; Marchlewska et al., 2022, p.1224).

To follow up on these theoretical postulations, this report collected qualitative data on GBV from five countries: Italy, Poland, Hungary, Bosnia, and Kosovo. We needed our partners to answer the questions listed below. The first is to develop knowledge of how governments approach gender-focused radicalization. This, in part, needs to determine whether it is considered a problem and, if so, whether there are policy differences in responding. The second is to consider discourses about GBV with a particular focus on local media. Priority should be given to print media, online articles, opinion pieces, including visual sources. Later, this report will use gender- and psychology- based theories to analyse media narratives on surrounding GBV against females, homosexuals, and transgender people. We told our partners to analyse 2 case studies on GBV from their responsible countries. Theoretically, we use feminist, queer IR theories and social psychology studies to analyse the impact of gender- and psychology-based insecurities within males. After concluding this section, in the following section, we define and discuss the concepts of toxic masculinity, misogyny and homophobia to shed light on the reasons of gender-based radicalization within males.

Hypermasculinity within males could make them more aggressive towards both females and LGBTQ+ people. Before detecting hypermasculinity in our country cases, we need to define gendered concepts, such as masculinity and toxic masculinity. Snvastava (2012, p.1) explains that "Masculinity refers to the socially produced but embodied ways of being male." In that effort, masculine manifestations include manners of speech, behaviour, gestures, social interaction, a division of tasks 'proper' to men and women ('men work in offices, women do housework'), and an overall narrative that positions it as superior to its perceived antithesis, femininity (Snvastava; 2012, p.1). From that point, the discourse of masculinity as a dominant

and ‘superior’ gender position has prevailed in state, religious norms, popular culture, and the media (Ibid.).

The rise of feminine and LGBTQ+ presence in social, cultural, and economic spaces increased the sense of toxic masculinity within males. As Harrington (2021, p.348) expresses: “Toxic masculinity provided a discourse for diagnostic men’s problems in the face of the gendered fall-out from deindustrialization, during which well-paid jobs in “masculine” occupational sectors disappeared while feminized service sector occupations expanded.” Toxic masculinity provided a framework that essentialized marginalized men as aggressive and criminal, discursively packaged in a way that was presented as a concern for men’s well-being (Harrington, 2021, p.348). The idea of toxic masculinity harmonized with conservative political agendas concerned with the social control of low-income, under-employed men, and those with patriarchal family values. Furthermore, dominant masculinity stands in a relationship not just to femininity but also to those ways of being male that are seen to deviate from the ideal (Srivastava, 2012). Thus, toxic masculinity does not reject the gender hierarchy. Instead, toxic masculinity typically invoked notions of “natural” male dispositions vis-à-vis females and LGBTQ+ people.

Conservative state policies play a significant role in terms of constructing patriarchy or male dominance. State itself has a fundamental role in the forging of the gendered patterns of hierarchy and inequality (Elias, 2008, p.412). Srivastava (2012, p.6) mentions that “(...), public institutions have been understood to be the ‘natural’ preserve of men and hence have tended to operate according to a variety of masculinist ideologies.” In one example of this, the media quite often provides accounts of public women (including parliamentarians) by describing what they wear or how many children they have; women’s primary identity continues to be defined through an implicit understanding that public institutions possess (and should possess) a masculine identity (Ibid.). Beyond this, there are even more serious issues, such as the denial of equal opportunities to women through masculinity notions of what men can do and what women are capable of (Ibid.). In parallel, Srivastava (2012, p.11) states that “The school marks the first link between the pedagogic programmes of the family and that of the state and, often (though not always), such programmes replicate patriarchal values.” Moreover, gendered worker identities are produced not only in relation to globalized managerial norms, but they are also forged at the interface between the global and the local

(Elias, 2008, p.412). Central to this process of construction is the role of the state; the way in which firms have become sites to produce gender inequality and gender identity is a process that is in constant negotiation with localized masculinities embedded in the political economies of host states (Ibid.).

Hegemonic masculinity is also possessed by populist groups to undermine the social and political rights of females. In fact, populist right-wing sentiments demand protection of gender, sexuality, and family in order to provide the reproduction of the nation through the generations (Erel, 2018, p.174). According to right-wing populism, women play an important role in constructing national identities: on one hand as symbols of the nation, embodying its values to the next generation, as well as biologically reproducing the group (Erel, 2018, p.174). Hence, populist right wing adopts misogynistic position to consider women as sexually, socially, and economically inferior. In other words, feminism is presented as challenging the social order that makes the nation a 'homely' space (Erel, 2018, p.173). Furthermore, Erel (2018, p.173) states that "Increasingly visible populist right and far right movements try to center white, heterosexual hegemonic masculinities and specific versions of femininities proclaimed to be 'traditional' as protecting the future of the nation." In that context, right wing populism considers gender equality as a rising threat for their patriarchal aims. For example, the 'working wife' is a common male expectation, but she also raises male anxieties for being independent from the patriarchal system (Snvastava, 2012, p.13). This fear is stoked by the fantasy of overpowering feminist institutions (Erel, 2018, p.174). Thus, the populist right seeks to protect their "homely nation" vis-a-vis gender-based threats.

The concept of hegemonic masculinity considers sexual minorities namely LGBTQ+ as "threats" to patriarchal system as well. Konopka et al. (2021, p.802) mention that "Stigma toward sexual and gender minorities is in the scope of interest of social psychologists searching for the psychological determinants of sexual prejudices that embrace homogenativity and transphobia, among others." Furthermore, females could also adopt homophobic culture as males do (Basow & Johnson, 2000, p.403). Thus, LGBTQ+ people can be perceived by heterosexual, cisgender men and women as the non-prototypical group members responsible for impairing the positive distinctiveness and homogeneity of a group's gender (Konopka et al., 2021, p.804). Konopka et al (2021, p.805) state that "Another guiding mechanism prompting male individuals to aggression and derogation of gay and transgender

individuals lies in the precarious nature of their status and high sensitivity to masculinity threat." In this context, men under masculinity threats might express their prejudices and aggression to LGBTQ+ people to demonstrate how masculine they are themselves to compensate for their tarnished manhood (*Ibid.*). For example, violence against non-heterosexual people in public spaces relates to men's ideas of 'natural' claims to such spaces (Srivastava, 2012, p.7). In other words, the most straightforward way of elaborating upon this is to say that heterosexual men are seen to have a greater (if not exclusive) claim upon public space (*Ibid.*).

After concluding this section, we discuss five different case studies relating to GBV in the next section. In this effort, we also explore how political elites and media reacted to the violence against females and LGBTQ+ people in our case countries.

Results

- Bosnia

The following two case studies showcase one example of femicide and a case of a hate crime towards the LGBTQ+ population in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The first example is the case of Edina Odobašić, a woman murdered by her husband and the second case is the case of the attack on the organizers of the Parade of Pride in Banja Luka, Capital of the Serb Republic (one of the two entities of Bosnia and Herzegovina).

Femicide: Murder of Edina Odobašić

On the 11th of October 2022 Edina Odobašić, a 32-year-old woman from Bihać (town in north-west of Bosnia and Herzegovina) was strangled by her husband (Enes Serif). Two days after the murder and intensive police search Enes was found hanged in a place called Grmuša nearby Bosanska Krupa where he committed a suicide. The motives for the murder remain unknown. The murder of Edina Odobašić caused many women associations to react publicly and share a warning of the violence against women in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Protests were held in seven cities in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Bihac, Banja Luka, Gracanica, Tuzla, Sarajevo, Zenica and Stolac). Women's associations demanded the following from the authorities:

- Introducing the legal definition of femicide

- Introduction of femicide as a criminal offence in all laws and by-laws (N1 Sarajevo, 2022)

The European Institute for Gender Equality defines Femicide as: "The killing of a woman by an intimate partner and the death of a woman as the result of a practice that is harmful to women. Intimate partner is understood as a former or current spouse or partner, whether or not the perpetrator shares or has shared the same residence with the victim" (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2017). As we mentioned above, femicide is described by the EU as the killing of women by their intimate partners, former or current spouse (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2017). However, this description of femicide is not included in the Criminal Code of Bosnia and Herzegovina. That is why cases like the murder of Edina Odobašić are treated as murder and not femicide.

There were some reactions by political parties concerning violence against women in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Still, Femicide was not included in the Criminal Law of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Miomirka Melank, member of the Parliament of Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (One of the entities of Bosnia and Herzegovina) claims that the fact that Femicide is not included in the Criminal Code of Bosnia and Herzegovina has contributed to the murder of Edina Odobašić and other women:

"After almost a decade of pressure, the Draft Law on Amendments to the Criminal Code of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina was adopted on April 27, 2022, at the 32nd regular session of the House of Representatives of the Parliament of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The term 'femicide' was not included, it was rejected by the Commission of the Ministry of Justice. In addition to the Draft, with 74 votes were in favour, no votes against, and no abstentions. The FBiH House of Representatives adopted the Conclusion that the proponent is required to hold a public hearing by the end of the fifth month of 2022" (Fena Press Release, 2022).

Attack on LGBTQ+ activists in Banja Luka

On March 18th, 2023, in front of the Transparency International office in Banja Luka several LGBTQ+ activists were verbally and physically attacked by a hooligan group. Vanja Stokić, a journalist and activist and several others, were taken to the hospital after being injured during the attacks. Hours before these events, police of the Serb Republic had banned the Parade of

Pride that was supposed to be held that day in Banja Luka, because, as they argued they believed that “during the event there could come to great enlargement of humans and property” (Radio Free Europe, 2023).

Vanja Stokić, an attacked journalist, blames Milorad Dodik (The president of the Serb Republic), who is from populist and nationalist Alliance of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD) and Draško Stanivuković (The Mayor of Banja Luka) from the right-wing Party of Democratic Progress (PDP) for encouraging the hooligans to attack. Stokić stated: “Milorad Dodik and Drasko Stanivukovic heated up the atmosphere with their statements. Today, Stanivukovic is saying he is sorry because of the attack but that Banja Luka will remain the fortress of the traditional values. I am asking him now if those traditional values include girls being beaten up in streets? The attacked group of activists were mostly girls, shame on you!” (N1 Sarajevo, 2023). What is also indicative is that, as Vanja Stokić said in the same interview that the police who was present and the people who witnessed that event did not react.

Milorad Dodik, the president of the Serb Republic, believes that Banja Luka should not be a place where LGBTQ+ organizations should function: “Banja Luka is not a city that can accept and understand that kind of organization. Given that this was all organized by the people who come from aside, Banja Luka said it does not belong to this sort of conscience. As long as I'm the president, I will always be expressing my stance,” (N1 Sarajevo, 2023). Dodik went further to say that the Serb Republic will adopt a Law that regulates the LGBTQ+ activities in Kindergartens and Schools in the Serb Republic: “Republika Srpska will pass a law within next few months to ban the access for the members of LGBT associations to educational institutions. That means kindergartens, schools, universities. They won't be able to do that, to come close, to do propaganda. Why do you think we have no right to do that? We will pass that law in the next few months,” (N1 Sarajevo, 2023).

Draško Stanivuković, Mayor of Banja Luka, agreed with Milorad Dodik in his stance towards the Pride and LGBTQ+ activities in general, as he stated: “Banja Luka is not ready for the Pride Parade” (N1 Sarajevo, 2023). It is because of this that the activists believe that Milorad Dodik and Draško Stanivukovć are responsible for the attacks and will press charges against them. When we turn to the theoretical analysis, we can observe how both Milorad Dodik and Draško Stanivuković have portrayed LGBTQ+ as “abnormality” in order to protect the nation's so-called hegemonic masculinity. As we mentioned in the methodological framework section,

conservative and right-wing populism can consider LGBTQ+ as a gender-based threat to patriarchy (Cornell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Hearn, 2004; Schippers, 2007). In that context, both politicians seemed hysterical due to the presence of queer community who did not adopt heterosexuality (Weber, 1999). The “indirect” support for homophobic attacks in Banja Luka, was also a political action to reclaim masculinity or phallic power against non-heterosexuality (Weber, 1999; Bilgic, 2016). However, this also positioned these politicians as the hypermasculine object due to their aggression towards the LGBTQ+ community (Graaf & Heinecken, 2017). In terms of collective narcissism, the empowerment or visibility of the LGBTQ+ community increased male anxieties within Milorad Dodik and Draško Stanivuković (Svavastava, 2012; Konopka et al., 2021. In that effort, they supported homophobic and transphobic attacks in order to protect “manhood”. By criminalizing LGTBQ+, they sought to re-establish their tarnished gender-based superiority (Golec de Zavala & Lantos, 2020).

- Hungary

The Hungarian Criminal Code offers comprehensive and extensive protection against hate crimes by encompassing various protected grounds, including race, nationality, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, and other statuses. Despite the existence of a robust legal framework to combat hate crimes, victims encounter challenges in accessing a supportive and protective procedure at both stages (Morou et al., 2023). Our research has revealed that although there are two victim support services funded by the public, interviews indicate that they do not adequately cater to the needs of victims, mainly due to issues related to accessibility and efficiency. Based on our research in to the Counter Hate project, victims of intersectional hate crimes often experience re-victimization and demonstrate increased hesitancy in reporting such incidents (Morou et al., 2023).

Gender-based violence against women

The Hungarian legal system does not recognise femicide and its perpetrators instead may be liable for homicide or involuntary manslaughter. Data from the European Institute of Gender Equality reveals that in 2018, the rate of female victims of homicide in Hungary was 0.84 per 100 000 inhabitants, the 10th highest rate among the 24 Member States, and Hungary has the fifth highest rate (0.22) of female victims of intentional homicide perpetrated by intimate partners (out of 15 jurisdictions) (EIGE, 2021). There has been a case against a doctor

(Krisztián B.), who in 2018, was sentenced to 11-years in prison for drugging his ex-girlfriend Erika Renner in March 2013 and then mutilating her genitals with lye (Blikk.hu, 2018).

When we turn to possible theoretical explanations for this crime, we could observe how the doctor sought to establish his lost hegemonic masculinity by mutilating the genitalia of Erika Renner. An application of queer IR theory highlights that this violent action committed by the doctor could be a sign of apparent male hysteria due to a loss of phallic power (Weber, 1999; Bilgic, 2016). The phallic power lost can be seen to have an influence on the prestige and authority of the doctor vis-à-vis his girlfriend (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). However, expressing excessive masculinity by mutilating the genital of his girlfriend also transformed the doctor in to a hypermasculine object due to this aggressive position (Weber, 1999). Moreover, this misogynist action of the doctor could also be seen as a response to his fear of losing hegemonic masculinity and an inferiority complexity vis-à-vis his girlfriend. In terms of collective narcissism, the doctor mutilated the genital of his girlfriend in order to reconstruct his lost gender-based superiority in order to feel narcissistic again (Golec de Zavala & Lantos, 2020).

Of over 1,000 women surveyed in one of the older studies on physical and sexual violence in the home in Hungary, 28 per cent reported being beaten and over 7 per cent said they had been forced to have sex by their partners (Tóth, 2007). Rape and other forms of sexual violence are violations of women's human rights. The Hungarian government's responsibility for criminal acts by private individuals lies in ensuring that laws and procedures provide a framework of protection that such provisions are vigorously implemented to protect women from violence, and that women who have been subjected to violence are actively supported in obtaining justice and redress (Amnesty, 2007). These state-level obligations are set out in international human rights laws that Hungary has made commitments to uphold. In the most recent study by the EU founded Riskfree project found that responses from their data collection support the argument that since 2007 there has not been any steps taken by the government to enhance the legal protection for women in Hungary. According to the study, only 8 percent of women experienced no violence of any kind though their lives (Riskfree, 2022).

Many civil society organisations have urged the Hungarian government to ratify the Istanbul Convention and incorporate its measures into domestic law to provide women the necessary

protection. Even if Hungary was a signatory for the Convention, it has never ratified it. The ratification of the Istanbul Convention is an ongoing political issue in Hungary (Fazekas & Korkut, 2023). Already in 2017, the Hungarian Parliament Justice Committee proposed the ratification of the Convention and some civil society organisations extended their decades long experience to incorporate women's protection measures into domestic law. However, none of them received an invitation for a discussion. Instead, the Justice Committee cancelled its proposal for ratification, solely based on an opinion piece published by a pseudo-academic Facebook-site 'Centre for Human Dignity' with around 200 likes on their page (Nokert.hu, 2017). This opinion piece was shared by different pro-governmental Facebook sites, which eventually resulted in the Committee's examination and conclusion that the "many studies and people have shown" that the Convention was "not actually about women's rights" (Nokert.hu, 2017).

The fact that the Hungarian government neglected facts in order to keep up with their anti-liberal agenda can sow feelings of injustice and grievance within the society, which can be understood as an element of the I-GAP spectrum (Fazekas & Korkut, 2023). According to studies from 2018, more than 250,000 women in Hungary lived with a violent partner and experienced physical or verbal abuse (Tóth, 2018). Currently, there is no communication from the government about the ratification of the Istanbul Convention or whether different steps were to be taken in order to provide a legal safety net for women in abusive relationships. On rare occasions, when the Convention is mentioned within pro-governmental circles, it is often called as a left-wing radical, feminist propaganda or a dangerous liberal agenda.

Violence against LGBTQ+ members of the Hungarian society

Reported hate crime violence against LGBTQ+ members in Hungary is above the EU average by 2 per cent (Lukács, 2017). Based on previous D.Rad research in Hungary, we concluded that the Hungarian government actively curbs rights of the LGBTQ+ community. Part of the government's campaign against this social group contained several amendments to the Hungarian Constitution (Fundamental Law) in order to include homophobic and anti-transgenderism. Conservative and right-wing Prime Minister Viktor Orban's populism consists of threat-construction and identifying new enemies is a never-ending quest for Fidesz. Although LGBTQ+ communities have long been under attack (Gyollai & Korkut, 2020), the

government targeted racial minorities, foreigners and the EU in their political discourse in order to consolidate their voter base.

Prior to the 2022 Hungarian general election, the government began a homophobic campaign against the opposition coalition party to strengthen an already conservative and nationalist political stance. One recent legislation proposal was initially created in order to pose heavier sentences on paedophile perpetrators, however it was supplemented by the introduction of homophobic amendments. The law prohibits the display and promotion of homosexuality and gender reassignment to anyone under the age of 18 and allows only registered NGOs to give lectures and information on the subject in schools – those who will definitely follow the government guidelines (Fazekas, 2021). The new bill also introduces a ban on media content (movies or advertisements) that promotes or depicts any form of homosexuality or transgenderism. These measures are extremely discriminative and violate the human rights of members of the LGBTQ+ community in Hungary. The Hatter Society called the draft amendment an attempt to seriously curb freedom of speech and children's rights and a move that "endangers mental health of LGBTQ+ youngsters and prevents them getting access to information and affirmative support." (Korkut & Fazekas, 2021). In 2019, the government already curtailed LGBTQ+ rights by banning same-sex couple's adoptions, legal gender recognition and included in the Fundamental Law that the 'father is a man and the mother is a woman' (Fazekas, 2021).

After the new legislation, incidents of hate crimes followed. Three men tried to break into an apartment in Budapest, because there was a rainbow flag displayed in the balcony. The perpetrators managed to flee the scene before the police arrived. The perpetrators also left anti-LGBTQ+ stickers on the walls of the staircase. The police suggested the residents to remove the flag from the balcony (Telex, 2021). Furthermore, two gay men were recently attacked in rural Hungary. However, the police did not add the hate crime element to the investigation (HVG.hu, 2021). The attack was condemned by a pro-LGBTQ+ Hungarian NGO, the Hatter Society, stating that there are fears that the new law will lead to more hate crime incidents and anti-gay attacks. The NGO has been promoting acceptance and tolerance, which will now be illegal in schools under the provisions of the new legislation.

- Poland

The first case example was chosen because it reflects anti-LGBTQ+ sentiment in a way that it shows how even an 'accusation' of not being cisgender might lead to deadly consequences. This case was reported on by Foundation Kampania Przeciwko Homofobii², an organisation that protects the rights of the LGBTQ+ community. The case took place in 2015 in Bieżuń, where a 14-year-old, Dominik, became the target of attacks from his classmates. Dominik distinguished himself from other children by his attention to appearance and clothes, for which he was bullied. The children referred to him as 'pedzio', which is a name used for a pedophile in Polish. In this way, the children suggested that he had a non-heterosexual orientation and for this reason, perpetrators of bullying can be attributed a homophobic motivation. Dominik reported these behaviors to adults, but even teachers did not stand up for him. What's more, he was also harassed by a teacher.

Dominik's story ended tragically, as the boy, unable to bear the constant intimidation, took his own life. On the day of his death, Dominik did not want to go to school, saying that he was afraid of one of the lessons. Before his death, he wrote a letter in which, among other things, listed the names of his acquaintances, characterizing them as "colleagues, friends and enemies".³ The prosecutor's office accused Bożena S., a chemistry teacher, of contributing to the child's death through mental and physical abuse. The court proceedings did not prove that she abused the student, and she was eventually acquitted by the Supreme Court.⁴ In terms of queer IR theory, the case of Dominik expressed the ongoing heterosexual and patriarchal order in the Polish society. Although Dominik was harassed by his female chemistry teacher, it was obvious that conservative gender sensitivities which aimed to protect masculinity were also prevalent in females as well (Weber, 1999). In addition, the mockery of male students about the non-heterosexual appearance of Dominik was also revealed the fear of losing hegemonic masculinity among these students (Weber, 1999; Graaf & Heinecken, 2017). At the same time, the fear of losing hegemonic masculinity also increased their male hysteria (Weber, 1999). In that sense, male students who rejected non-cisgender

² Kampania Przeciwko Homofobii, 'Raport o Polsce - Homofobiczne i transfobiczne przestępstwa z nienawiścią i wymiar sprawiedliwości', Warsaw 2016, p. 8.

³ <https://www.polsatnews.pl/wiadomosc/2021-02-09/uczen-powiesil-sie-uniewinniono-nauczycielke-oskarzana-o-znecanie-sie-nad-nim/>

⁴ <https://dziennikzachodni.pl/samobojstwo-w-biezuniu-14letni-dominik-popelnil-samobojstwo-zostawil-list-video/ar/3920243>

orientation of Dominik expressed hypermasculine attitudes by bullying him (Weber, 1999; Graaf & Heinecken, 2017). When we turn to the Collective narcissism, we could observe the apparent gender superiority claims vis-à-vis Dominik. In that sense, male students mocked about the non-heterosexual appearance of Dominik in order to "protect" their so-called narcissistic position (Golec de Zavala et al., 2009).

Gender based violence is a widespread phenomenon in Poland, as well as in the rest of the world. However, honour killings that happen elsewhere, have not so far been a problem in Poland. Every year, there are five thousand honor killings around the world, including Europe. Most murderers are fathers, brothers and husbands, while victims are young women. Honor killing is most often intended to punish "dishonor" due to women's behavior. Sometimes the dishonor might be brought by activities such as using Facebook or conversing with men that the woman is not related to. Whether the behavior is deemed dishonorable is decided by the male members of the family and they make the verdict.

The second example case in Poland was selected as it relates to the first known and reported honour killing in the country. As Poland is getting more popular as a destination for immigration, it is also becoming more diverse and multicultural, so the scene of gender-based violence is also likely to undergo a transformation. Polish law enforcement need to be able to properly respond and identify this type of killings to safeguard the victims and vulnerable populations without misrecognition and stigmatisation. The first victim of such a murder in Poland was a 31-year-old Polish woman, Agnieszka, who was killed by her partner Naeem. Agnieszka met Naeem when she was 18 years old at a disco. Naeem lived in Poland but he was originally from Pakistan. Agnieszka converted to Islam and the couple had four children. Naeem did not allow her to go to school or to work because there were men. He not only isolated her, but also physically abused her, even when she was pregnant. He would isolate her from her children, and she was only allowed to spend time with them, if she provided him with large sums of money through forced prostitution.

At some point, they left for Pakistan, where they got married. Agnieszka learned the local language. Despite this, Agnieszka, due to her European origin, did not fit to the traditional Pakistani society. As a result, Naeem and his family treated Agnieszka and her children very brutally. She was regularly beaten and treated as a slave: she had to obey all orders, she and the children were fed only scraps of food that the rest of the family refused to eat. One day,

Agnieszka overheard that Naeem's family was planning to sell Agnieszka's daughters to a brothel and send the sons to an Islamic school, where the 'learning' is limited to memorizing the Quran, which was notorious for brutality towards students. Desperate Agnieszka then proposed to Naeem's family that she would return to Poland and buy the children for a large amount of money, working in Poland as a prostitute. The family agreed to let her to go and even helped her return, and subsequently a 'protection fee' was paid for the children. Upon his return to Poland, Naeem still had complete control over his wife and threatened to take her children from her again. Eventually he killed her in her apartment. Traces of her blood were found in the apartment and on Naeem's clothes. According to the investigators, the Pakistani man killed Agnieszka because she decided to leave him, which shamed his and his family's honor. As a disgraced man, he could only regain it through honor killing, known in Pakistan as karo-kari. Naeem was convicted and the justification for the sentencing was kept confidential by the court, as was the whole trial.

These cases exemplify the helplessness of the Polish state authorities, especially as far as law enforcement, women's services and children's services are concerned. It is also shows how Polish society, in this case teachers, friends, family and neighbors, chose to ignore the harm done to Dominik, Agnieszka and Agnieszka's children which has led to serious consequences.

- Kosovo

On December 1, 2022, Kosovo woke up to the macabre news of the murder of a 35-year-old pregnant woman by her ex-husband in Prishtina. The incident sent shockwaves through the country and raised concerns about the safety and protection of women. The victim, whose name was Hamide Magashi, was waiting in the courtyard of Pristina's Gynecology Clinic on the evening of November 30, 2022, preparing to give birth the following day. Tragically, she was shot and killed by her ex-husband, Sokol Halili, in a horrifying act of violence. The shooting not only claimed the life of Magashi but also resulted in the death of her unborn child⁵.

The Kosovo Police launched an immediate investigation into the femicide, and the search for the perpetrator began. After an intense operation involving various police units, Sokol Halili was located in the family home in the village of Davidoc. However, as police officers attempted to negotiate his surrender, Halili took his own life, ending the manhunt but leaving behind a trail of grief and unanswered questions.⁶ The news of the murder and subsequent suicide shook the entire nation. On Thursday, human rights organizations organized a protest in Pristina, demanding justice for Magashi and calling for greater attention to the issue of violence against women. During the demonstration, some protesters resorted to lighting a fire on the lawn near the government building, expressing their anger and frustration⁷.

Prior to taking his life, the perpetrator had written a lengthy letter to his family in an attempt to exonerate himself for the heinous crime committed. According to him, his now-deceased ex-wife had threatened to take the child away from him by raising him by herself at her family's home. She supposedly had planned this with her sisters from the onset of her pregnancy and had offered to pay 25 thousand Euros for him not to disturb her and the baby⁸.

⁵ Bami, Xh. (2022, December 1). Kosovo Authorities Failed Second Woman Murdered in a Week. *Balkan Insight*. Available at: <https://balkaninsight.com/2022/12/01/kosovo-authorities-failed-second-woman-murdered-in-week/>

⁶ Isufi, P. (2022, December 2). Suspected Murderer of Pregnant Woman in Kosovo Commits Suicide. *Balkan Insight*. Available at: <https://balkaninsight.com/2022/12/02/suspected-murderer-of-pregnant-woman-in-kosovo-commits-suicide/>

⁷ Zeqiri, A. (2022, December 12.). Protest in Prishtina after Pregnant Woman's Murder in Hospital Courtyard. *Prishtina Insight*. Available at: <https://prishtinainsight.com/protest-in-prishtina-after-pregnant-womans-murder-in-hospital-courtyard/>

⁸ Top Channel. (2022, December 12). Zbulohet letra tronditese qe Sokol Halili shkroi pasi vrau ish-gruan shtatzene: Nuk kam femije per te shitur.

The tragic events surrounding the murder of Hamide Magashi and the subsequent suicide of Sokol Halili shine a light on a disturbing aspect of domestic violence; the self-victimization and manipulation tactics employed by some perpetrators. By framing the murder of his ex-wife as a revengeful act against her attempt to take his child away from him, the perpetrator, Sokol Halili, attempted to distort the narrative and portray himself as a victim rather than the aggressor. Furthermore, by taking his own life, he effectively ended any possibility of facing legal consequences for his actions and shifted the attention towards his tragic demise.

Another troubling aspect of this case was the reaction of Prime Minister Albin Kurti's response to the murder of Hamide Magashi and her unborn child. Albin Kurti, who is an Albanian nationalist and the leader of Lëvizja Vetëvendosje (Self-determination movement), expressed his opinion on social media, including the comment, "Yet another man who lays hands on a woman he was supposed to protect," sheds light on the pervasive patriarchal reality in which women in Kosovo often find themselves⁹. It highlights how the notion of men's protection can be distorted and misused as a pretext to infringe upon women's rights and perpetrate acts of violence against them.

Queer IR theory can highlight how the fear of "losing hegemonic masculinity" pushed Sokol Halili to kill his ex-wife Hamide Magashi. Sokol Halili felt castration anxiety due to ex-wife's threats over taking his child away from him by raising him by herself (Weber, 1999). In this context, this castration anxiety also made Sokol Halili as a melancholic and then hysterical due to his search of lost phallic power which symbolized his honour and dignity (Weber, 1999; Bilgic, 2016). Thus, Sokol Halili committed a misogynistic crime by killing his ex-wife in order to reclaim his lost masculinity (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). However, this femicide turned Sokol Halili as a hypermasculine object (Graaf & Heinecken, 2017; Bilgic, 2015). In order to conceal his aggressive position, Sokol Halili adopted male masquerade strategy by expressing himself as a "male victim" due to her disobedience (Weber, 1999). When we turn to the collective narcissism experienced, we could observe how losing superiority over his ex-wife frustrated him very much (Golec de Zavala & Lantos, 2020). Therefore, Sokol Halili, who felt disgraced, killed his ex-wife in order to re-establish his narcissistic position over her.

⁹ Nacionale. (December 2022). Reagimet tmerruese nga lideret politike per vrasjen e gruas shtatzene ne QKUK: Albin Kurti, Vjosa Osmani, Ramush Haradinaj.

Brutal Murder of 18-year-old Marigona Osmani

Marigona Osmani, an 18-year-old woman, was brutally murdered in late August in Ferizaj, Kosovo. Her body, bloodied and severely battered, was left in front of a hospital in the town. The incident, captured by security cameras, revealed that one of the men who left her body was her husband of two months. Marigona had been sexually abused and tortured for two days before succumbing to her injuries. The murder and its particularly brutal nature sparked protests across Kosovo, with demonstrators expressing anger towards the authorities for their perceived inability to prevent such crimes¹⁰.

The two suspects, Marigona's husband Dardan Krivaqa and Arber Sejdiu, both had prior criminal records. Her husband, Krivaqa, had an extensive criminal history with a record of 135 offenses, which included charges of rape, extortion, fraud, intimidation, robbery, physical assault, theft, and even stabbing a police officer.

Soon after the main facts about the case were established, there were growing attempts to depict this case as an isolated incident, and not as a symptom of the wider societal phenomenon of 'femicide'. Many people on social media began to justify the actions of the perpetrators, pointing to various factors that had supposedly led them to commit these heinous crimes. This was further substantiated by the prosecution, who ascribed 'jealousy' as a motivation in the murder of Marigona¹¹. During the trial against him, the perpetrator Krivaca declared that prior to her murder Marigona had admitted to him that she had cheated on him with Krivaca's cousin¹². This information added another layer to the complex dynamics of the case, potentially feeding into the narrative of self-victimization by attempting to shift blame onto the victim herself.

- Italy

The following two case studies showcase one example of femicide, and a case of a hate crime towards the LGBTQ+ population in Italy in 2023. The first case refers to Giulia Tramontano, a

¹⁰ Brezar, A. (2021, September 2). Is the Brutal Murder of Marigona Osmani a tipping point for Kosovan society?. *Euronews*. Available at: <https://www.euronews.com/my-europe/2021/09/02/is-the-brutal-murder-of-marigona-osmani-a-tipping-point-for-kosovan-society>

¹¹ Luci, B. (2021, July 27). The Murder of Marigona. *KOSOVO 2.0*. Available at: <https://kosovotwopointzero.com/en/the-murder-of-marigona/>

¹² Hasani, E. (2022, November 11). Djali i dajes se Dardan Krivaces jep deshmi para gjykates. *KALLXO.com*. Available at: <https://kallxo.com/lajm/djali-i-dajes-se-dardan-krivaces-jep-deshmi-para-gjykates/>

woman murdered by her boyfriend, and the second case describes the brutal beating of a transgender woman in Milan, which was perpetrated by local police officers.

Murder of Giulia Tramontano

Giulia Tramontano, a woman who was seven months pregnant, was found deceased in an abandoned green area in Senago, Milan in early June 2023. Her boyfriend, Alessandro Impagnatiello, admitted to killing her and attempting to burn her body. Tramontano had been reported missing since May 29, 2023, and it later emerged that an argument had occurred between the couple after Tramontano discovered Impagnatiello's involvement in another relationship. Impagnatiello is currently facing charges of murder, concealing a corpse, and non-consensual termination of pregnancy.

During the investigation, Tramontano's body was discovered hidden in a crawl space of a garage near the couple's residence. Traces of blood were found in Impagnatiello's car, and evidence emerged linking him to text messages sent by the victim after her death. The investigation also revealed Impagnatiello's other relationship with an American colleague, who allegedly contacted Tramontano to disclose details about her boyfriend's double life. The colleague supposedly recorded conversations with Impagnatiello to gather evidence. Impagnatiello deceived her by falsely claiming that he and Giulia had broken up months before, even though she was pregnant at the time. During a meeting between the two women, the American colleague became aware of the dangerous situation and offered Giulia a place to stay, but the offer was declined. Later, suspecting that something was wrong, the colleague attempted a video call with Impagnatiello, who lied and said that Giulia was fine. After Tramontano's death, Impagnatiello allegedly messaged his American colleague, proclaiming his newfound freedom and asserting that he was not the father of the unborn child. Tramontano's parents also received WhatsApp messages from Impagnatiello's number, sent by Impagnatiello himself, while their daughter's body was already concealed.

Insights into the murderer's personality have emerged from the autopsy, affirming the brutal sequence of events leading to the murder of Giulia Tramontano and dismissing any attributions to stress. According to the autopsy, Giulia sustained thirty-seven to forty stab wounds, with only two proving fatal. This disproportionate violence, known as 'overkilling', signifies the perpetrator's deliberate intent to inflict excessive harm on the victim, even

beyond the point of causing death. Psychological manipulation played a significant role preceding the physical assault. Impagnatiello systematically dismantled the victim emotionally over the course of several months, exploiting her identity as a woman and mother. Despite uncovering the betrayals in January, Tramontano desperately sought alternative interpretations of the unfolding situation, despite the overwhelming anguish she endured. This response can be attributed to the profound ability of pathological narcissists, like Impagnatiello, to distort the reality of those in their proximity, leaving behind a devastating emotional void.

The evidence gathered during the investigation prompted Impagnatiello to confess to acting alone. He admitted to killing Tramontano during an argument in their Senago residence, using a knife. Despite his unsuccessful attempt to burn her body, he proceeded to hide it in the crawl space. Impagnatiello was placed in custody and charged with aggravated voluntary manslaughter.

Following the tragic murder of Giulia Tramontano, Interior Minister Matteo Piantedosi announced a new bill aimed at protecting women, currently under discussion in the parliament. This comprehensive set of measures, known as 'Code Red', seeks to strengthen the penalties for perpetrators of violence against women (Bezzone, 2019). The bill would encompass various provisions, including harsher punishments, immediate police intervention, and simplified judicial procedures. It would also introduce additional measures such as a prohibition on approaching victims within a minimum distance of 500 meters, mandatory use of electronic monitoring bracelets, and the expansion of warning systems for violent offenders. To enhance the response to crimes against women, specialized panels of judges would be established, specifically dedicated to handling such cases. These initiatives aim to address the urgent need for improved protection and support for women affected by violence in Italy.

Hatred towards LGBTQ+ population

In May 2023, Bruna, a transgender woman, endured a brutal assault perpetrated by local police officers in Milan. During the incident, Bruna was forcibly handcuffed and confined inside her car for an agonizing 20 minutes. The officers subjected her to pepper spray and spewed degrading insults. Disturbing videos capturing the assault were widely circulated on

social media platforms. Shockingly, it took over 48 hours before Bruna was finally taken to the emergency room at Policlinico di Milano, where she was released with a five-day prognosis due to the severe injuries she sustained, particularly a blow to the head, as evidenced by the acquired video footage. Responding to this appalling act, lawyer Debora Piazza promptly filed a complaint with the Public Prosecutor's Office, lodging grave charges including torture aggravated by racial discrimination, injuries aggravated by abuse of power, and aggravated threats.

The reprehensible assault ignited a wave of protest as more than a hundred individuals gathered in a public square in Milan. LGBTQ+ associations played an active role in the demonstration, brandishing signs bearing powerful messages such as 'Trans lives matter' and 'Touch one of us touch all of us'. Guglielmo Giannotta, the president of Acet (Association for Transgender Culture and Ethics), underscored the urgency of standing united with the transgender community in the face of such violence. He called for a resolute commitment to safeguard the protection and well-being of transgender, non-binary, and gender non-conforming individuals (Buscaglia, 2023). The associations jointly demanded the establishment of a permanent working group in collaboration with the Milan City Council, aiming to address these issues comprehensively and enhance the overall quality of life for transgender people, especially given the prevailing climate of discrimination.

Political responses to the incident varied significantly. While some individuals expressed solidarity with the officers, citing their perceived intent to safeguard schoolchildren, numerous users on social media platforms demanded accountability and concrete actions from the institutions, casting doubt upon the justification put forth.

The attack suffered by Bruna represents a tragic incident of violence and discrimination, which has generated significant public outrage and highlighted the urgent necessity to safeguard the rights of transgender individuals. Additionally, it emphasizes the importance of implementing awareness-raising campaigns and projects aimed at addressing homo- and transphobic behaviours within law enforcement agencies. After discussing our country cases, in the next section, we summarize our findings and conclude this report by giving some recommendations on GBV.

Conclusion

While the EU has established certain programs such as Daphne Project (1997), Istanbul Convention (2011), Pink Agenda, and several resolutions, to tackle gender-based radicalization in its members and candidate countries, its measures have not proved effective in preventing GBV. Our finding is that although countries were aware about the GBV against females and queer people, they lacked detection mechanism or interest to tackle with gender-based radicalization. Depending on this finding, the theoretical assumptions (feminist, queer IR theories and social psychology studies) also explained how the gender-and psychology-based male insecurities triggered GBV.

Furthermore, we also observed the impact of collective narcissism on GBV against both females and queer community. In this report, our cases examined how being inferiority towards females and LGBTQ+ people could sometime trigger extreme reactions and GBV within males. As we explained, narcissistic males felt threatened when females and queer people denied patriarchal and heterosexual values (Golec de Zavala et al., 2009). At the same time, this also weakened the privileged status of males (Golec de Zavala et al., 2019). That was why, males may utilise collective narcissism in order to protect their undermined self-esteem (Golec de Zavala & Lantos, 2020, p.276). As we discussed in this report, feeling narcissistic can also push males to commit GBV against females and queer people.

This report also underscored how nationalist populist groups alleviated GBV within EU members and candidate countries. Populist right-wing sentiments demanded protection of patriarchal and heterosexual values in order to provide the reproduction of the nation through the generations (Erel, 2018; Snvastava, 2012). As we discussed in this report, nationalist parties consider non-traditional women and non-heterosexual people as a “threat” to national interests. On the one hand, nationalist populist parties such as Kosovar Vetevendosje (Self-determination movement), Bosnian Serb Alliance of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD) and Hungarian Fidesz sought to marginalize the LGBTQ+ community in order to protect family and religious values (Hoeferle, 2022; Kurtic, 2023; Kondirolli, 2021). On the other hand, nationalist parties namely Vetëvendosje claimed patriarchal values by portraying men as the protector of family (Pacarizi, 2023). Therefore, we found that nationalist populist groups were keen to justify GBV against females and LGBTQ+ community in order to protect patriarchal and heterosexual order within and beyond EU.

Overall, our findings can help policymakers who are eager to receive recommendations on tackling gender-based radicalization perpetrated by males. Our first recommendation is that political elites from both left- and right-wing parties should acknowledge the presence of misogynistic, homophobic and transphobic sentiments within their societies. Second, political elites and media should increase awareness around GBV against females and the queer community by developing gender-related campaigns and projects. Third, governments should establish strict codes and penalties in order to punish GBV. Finally, political elites should develop better education systems or pedagogic programmes to train young people about the threat of gender-based radicalization (Srivastava, 2012).

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