

Foreign Fighters and Radical Influencers

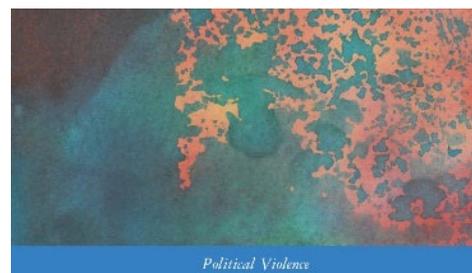
Radical Milieus in the Postwar Balkans

Book Presentation by Asya Metodieva,
Institute of International Relations Prague,
Czech Republic

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This book looks at Salafi influencers and foreign fighters in the Balkans to examine how the origins and dynamics of radical milieus are related to the legacy of the Bosnian War and the Kosovo War. The work seeks to understand if and in what ways these wars influenced the consolidation of radical milieus and whether they impacted the recruitment of foreign fighters. The book traces the path of more than 400 individuals that either traveled to Syria or were involved in recruitment locally. Employing a qualitative methodological approach, the book argues that radical influencers are likely to be more evident in postwar societies due to state and societal fragility, which create more power for social actors and constrain efforts to counter extremism. Through the activism of social actors emerging from wars, preceding conflicts resonate through society across different locations and particular postwar radical milieus do not need to be only in the place where war atrocities happened. Thus, radical milieus can spread to various locations including countries hosting postwar diaspora communities.

Asya Metodieva is a researcher at the Institute of International Relations in Prague. She obtained her PhD from Central European University. Her research is on the mobilisation of Balkan foreign fighters to Syria. She did her fieldwork between 2018 and 2019 when foreign fighters were already returning to the Balkan region. Her book “Foreign fighters and radical influencers” was published earlier this year. Previously, Asya was a fellow of LSE Ideas, Visegrád Insight, and the German Marshall Fund of the US.



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Asya Metodieva



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