The Police Perception of the Role of School in Preventing Radicalization: The Case of Croatia[1]

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Purpose:

The aim of this paper was to explore whether and how educational institutions can be involved in the process of the prevention of extremism and radicalization from the point of view of the police.

Design/Methods/Approach:

Efficient prevention strategies include a community-oriented and multi-agency approach, and this research focuses on the role of education in preventing violent extremism and radicalization. This research was conducted on a sample of 108 students from the Croatian Police Academy of the Ministry of the Interior by a questionnaire examining the participants' knowledge on radicalization, the presence of various types of radicalization in their environment, factors and conditions that affect the development of extremism and radicalization and the ability of schools to prevent radicalization.

Findings:

Correlation analysis points to the role of schools in the prevention of radicalization by exerting influence on the three factors (financial/economic crisis, individual's characteristics/personality and online propaganda) which affect the occurrence of extremism and radicalization.

Research Limitations/Implications:

Future research should include a larger sample with an equal number of participants with and without work experience in the police, so that potential differences in their attitudes could be investigated. Additionally, it would be useful to investigate the attitudes of participants on how schools could prevent radicalization.

Practical Implications:

The results of this research could be used to present the importance of schools in preventing radicalization to various stakeholders in order to start implementing teacher training for the facilitation of this process.

Originality/Value:

This paper gives us an insight into Croatian police officers' perception of schools as their partners in the prevention of radicalization and extremism.

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Keywords: extremism, police, prevention, radicalization, schools

Zaznavanje policistov vloge šol pri preprečevanju radikalizacije – primer Hrvaške

Namen prispevka:

Namen prispevka je analizirati načine vključevanja izobraževalnih institucij v procese preprečevanja radikalizacije in ekstremizma ter proučiti mnenje policistov o tem vprašanju.

Metode:

Učinkovito preprečevanje radikalizacije vključuje večinstitucionalni pristop, podprt s filozofijo policijskega dela v skupnosti. Raziskava o vlogi izobraževalnih institucij pri preprečevanju radikalizacije je bila izvedena na vzorcu 108 študentov Visoke policijske šole Ministrstva za notranje zadeve Republike Hrvaške. Uporabljen je bil vprašalnik, s pomočjo katerega so raziskovalci proučevali stopnjo znanja udeležencev raziskave o radikalizaciji, oblike radikalizacije na Hrvaškem ter dejavnike, ki vplivajo na razvoj radikalizacije in ekstremizma. Znotraj tega so proučevali vlogo šol pri preprečevanju radikalizacije.

Ugotovitve:

Korelacijska analiza je pokazala povezavo med vlogo šole in preprečevanjem radikalizacije pri treh dejavnikih (finančna/ekonomska kriza, individualne značilnosti posameznika, *online* propaganda), ki vplivajo na pojav in razvoj radikalizacije in ekstremizma.

Omejitve/uporabnost raziskave:

Nadaljnje raziskave bi morale vključevati večji vzorec anketirancev z bolj uravnoteženimi delovnimi izkušnjami v policiji.

Praktična uporabnost:

Rezultati študije bi lahko služili kot osnova za krepitev zavedanja pomena in vloge šol pri preprečevanju radikalizacije ter ekstremizma in bi lahko bili osnova za usposabljanje učiteljev na tem področju.

Izvirnost/pomembnost prispevka:

Članek daje dober uvid v zaznavanje hrvaških policistov vloge šol kot njihovih partnerjev znotraj koncepta policijskega dela v skupnosti pri preprečevanju radikalizacije in ekstremizma med učenci.

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Ključne besede: ekstremizem, policija, preprečevanje, radikalizacija, šole

1   INTRODUCTION

Over the past two decades, the world has witnessed many tragedies caused by terrorist attacks on all continents. They were committed by violent extremist groups as well as by radicalized individuals. Until recently, policy makers and researchers were focused on combating terrorism (Macaluso, 2016), but as we understand the origins of terrorism, we have become aware of the need to cope with radicalization and violent extremism to prevent terrorism. These concepts are largely debated and there is still no single definition of violent extremism and radicalization (Preventing violent extremism through education, 2017). However, there are some universally accepted key issues and theories behind these concepts (Dandurand, 2015) that enable us to use them in everyday life as well as in research or policy-making.

Radicalization refers to "a process through which individuals are persuaded that violent activity is justified and eventually become determined to engage in violence" (Dandurand, 2015, p. 24).

Violent extremism is widely understood as "the use of violence to further particular beliefs, including those of a political, social, religious or ideological nature" (Dandurand, 2015, p. 25).

Terrorism could be defined as "anxiety-inspiring method of repeated violent action, employed by (semi-) clandestine individual, group or state actors, for idiosyncratic, criminal, or political reasons, whereby – in contrast to assassination – the direct targets of violence are not the main targets" (Schmid, 2011a).

Summarizing the data on many terrorist attacks, Gereluk and Titus (2018) warn that there is no unique terrorist profile. A significant body of research from different parts of the world and with focus on different terrorist actions (Freilich, Adamczyk, Chermak, Boyd, & Parkin, 2014; Kozaliev, 2015; Lombardi, 2015; Murray, 2014; Schmid, 2011b) suggests that perpetrators of terroristic acts develop through a long process of radicalization in a variety of settings, including not only isolated neighbourhoods or immigrants' ghettos, but also schools and entire communities. The practical implication of these findings is a shift away from countering terrorism towards preventing radicalization and violent extremism (Henry, 2014; Macaluso, 2016).

The existing evidence reveals that a community-oriented and a multi-agency approach are crucial components of an efficient prevention strategy (Aiello, Puigivert, & Schubert, 2018; Kozmelj, 2018; Macaluso, 2016; Prislan, Černigoj, & Lobnikar, 2018). According to Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (Preventing terrorism and countering violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism, 2014), the police is a crucial stakeholder in a community because it has the power and capacity to initiate and coordinate community efforts in preventing radicalization and violent extremism.

Although it is well known that the education policy and system are crucial in the socialization of future generations, the role of education in preventing violent extremism and de-radicalizing young people has only recently gained global acceptance (Kozmelj, 2018; Macaluso, 2016). In order to understand the significance of school's role as an educational institution in the process of preventing the occurrence of extremism and radicalization in a society, one can

use Bronfenbrenner's *Ecological Model of Human Development* (Bronfenbrenner, 1994), which vividly describes the layers of the environment's effect on the socialization of a person to desirable values. In the centre of the model, there is a microsystem comprised of the family, peers, school and religious settings or influences with which a student communicates on a daily basis, and after that follows the mesosystem, ecosystem and macrosystem. Socialization is, according to that model, actually the enculturation of a person, a person's immersion into the culture, a process through which a person becomes a member of a community (Härkönen, 2007). The significant predictor in the person's socialization to humanistic and democratic values is exactly the person's environment, which in itself possesses humanistic and democratic values, i.e. when all educational lines of force are pointed in the same direction.

This potential of education in preventing radicalization and violent extremism has been recently recognized by the world's leading international organizations. The European Commission has established the Radicalisation Awareness Network to support coordination, cooperation and collaboration of different stakeholders across Europe engaging with prevention of radicalization and violent extremism, including education institutions (Aiello et al., 2018; Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies [INEE], 2017). The United Nations General Assembly adopted the Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism in 2015, which emphasized different aspects of engaging educational institutions in the prevention of radicalization and violent extremism (United Nations, General Assembly, 2015). As a response to this document, a year later UNESCO developed the first guidelines on prevention of violent extremism for teachers (Preventing violent extremism through education, 2017; Teacher's guide on the prevention of violent extremism, 2016).

Two types of interventions are used by the education sector to counter violent extremism: (1) providing access and quality education for all, and (2) specific programmes focusing on populations that have a higher probability of being attracted to violence. Young people are often mentioned as the group that is most vulnerable to radicalization and therefore international counter-terrorism strategies have engaged with youth with some of the education programs financed by the World Bank (de Silva, 2017).

Despite the growing demand for multi-agency cooperation and collaboration in preventing radicalization and violent extremism, the studies of possibilities and conditions for such cooperation and collaboration are still rare. It is extremely important that the police, as a crucial stakeholder in a multi-agency partnership for preventing radicalization, is aware of capacities and limits of other stakeholders and to have a positive attitude to such a community approach (Preventing terrorism and countering violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism, 2014; Sozer, Sevinc, & Ozeren, 2015). This paper addresses the role of schools in the prevention of radicalization and violent extremism from the police officers' point of view. The purpose is to analyse ways in which young police officers in Croatia perceive schools as their partners in the prevention of radicalization.

1.1 Reasons Why Schools Should Play an Important Role in Preventing Radicalization

Since young people are particularly vulnerable to the messages of violent extremists, they need opportunities to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes that can help them build resilience to such propaganda, and teachers can help them with that goal (Preventing violent extremism through education, 2017; Teacher's guide on the prevention of violent extremism, 2016). Institutions of formal education play key roles in preventing radicalization at two levels. Firstly, schools foster shared values and critical thinking, and they help students develop basic life skills and social competences essential for living in democratic societies (Nordbruch, 2016). Education can help young people develop the communication and interpersonal skills they need to dialogue, face disagreement and learn peaceful approaches to change, develop their critical thinking to investigate legitimacy of extremist beliefs, develop the resilience to resist extremist narratives, engage constructively in society without having to resort to violence and to constructively engage in peaceful collective action (Preventing violent extremism through education, 2017; Teacher's guide on the prevention of violent extremism, 2016). Additionally, if parents and teachers aim to educate children towards democratic citizens who have respect for the rights of others and to tolerate beliefs that are different from their own, the education that young people receive cultivates beliefs and dispositions that oppose radicalism and extremism. Since extremists perform activities that they possibly had never thought they would be capable of, disengaging from their behaviour using various mechanism, democratic moral education may have an important role in adequately responding to signs of moral distancing (Pels & de Ruyter, 2012). At this level of generic prevention, students are given tools for boosting resilience against social polarisation and radicalization. Not only can schools cultivate different skills necessary for democratic life, but they are also places where early signs of radicalization can be noticed. Teachers are often the first ones to notice changes in appearance, thinking and behaviour of students, which provides them with an important role in initiating early responses (secondary prevention) (Nordbruch, 2016).

The first reason that leads to the prominent role of schools in preventing radicalization is the expansion of extremism to different social milieus and educational backgrounds, including classrooms and affecting life in schoolyards and on campuses. Concerns that are often addressed by extremist propaganda, like concerns about identity, immigration, gender, social and economic conflicts, discrimination and social marginalization, international conflicts, are all discussed in society and among students. Important channels for addressing these concerns are social networks, which are often used for hate speech, radicalization and calls for violence. Schools are responsible for providing alternative narratives to those promoted by extremist organizations and are expected to provide a safe environment for students to express their ideas and convictions, with the presence of teachers to moderate their discussions. However, it is important to be aware of the limits within which these views are acceptable (Nordbruch, 2016).

Not only schools, but also universities have strategic and unique function in preventing radicalisation. Roles of university are detecting, preventing, planning and producing of ideas to tackle radicalisation. Universities have to approach the problem of radicalisation interdisciplinary, while holistically viewing such problem (El-Muhammady, 2018). Thus, perceived problem of radicalisation can be ground for development of ideas and solutions to the problem at hand.

Universities should support the rest of the education system in the form of conducting research, implementing adequate intervention, i.e. the prevention programs with constant supervision, and upgrading and modifying prevention programs (Bašić, 2009). A better involvement of the university academia would create additional force in tackling radicalisation (El-Muhammady, 2018). Universities, through cooperation with state and public city and local authorities and the NGO's, and education, should develop deep cooperation with the police.

1.2 Methods for the Prevention of Radicalization in Schools

As mentioned above, teachers already encourage the acceptance of various differences and respond to expressions of hatred and violence. However, many teachers express their concerns about the lack of knowledge and skills that allow qualified responses to different situations of radicalization. Teachers report problems with teaching on political subjects, such as Middle east, terrorist attacks or religion. Also, teachers have problem handling difficult discussions in which respect and consensus are difficult to reach, which is why they tend to avoid such topics in order to ensure order and peace in the classroom (Pels & de Ruyter, 2012). For that reason, training teachers is crucial for fostering competence to build resilience against radicalization and detect potential signs of extremism. The training should be incorporated in their existing professional training, rather than adding another training session on radicalization. For teachers to be able to pass on values of equality and tolerance to students, they themselves must go through training to raise awareness of cultural and religious diversity and accept differences (INEE, 2017; Nordbruch, 2016). The influence of democratic ideals and moral values of teachers and schools on students have not been investigated often. There is some evidence that teachers' interventions with xenophobic utterances of pupils are negatively related to xenophobia of students, which indicates that teacher intervening makes a difference (Pels & de Ruyter, 2012). It is important that teachers be aware of how they treat minority students, because teachers can more or less consciously exclude students when addressing them or their communities. Discrimination and different treatment of children from minority groups have negative influence on their well-being, motivation and achievements (Wubbels, Den Brok, Veldman, & Van Tartwijk, 2006). These are important findings because young people who are susceptible to radicalization tend to have a strong need for acknowledgement and relationships, and can be negatively impacted in case of teacher rejection (Pels & de Ruyter, 2012).

Another way to prevent radicalization at the school level is by learning democracy, which should not only be limited to the acquisition of knowledge. Students should be able to experience democracy, which means that schools

should provide students with the opportunities to actively participate in the education process. This step toward de-radicalization requires change at the institutional level. Active participation in the education process can strengthen students' identification with their social environment and prevent alienation, which often serves as a motive for connection with extremist groups, which fulfil the students' need for belonging (INEE, 2017; Nordbruch, 2016). Furthermore, inclusive approaches in multi-ethnic schools, like creating a sense of community through cooperative learning and developing democratic and justice-oriented communities, instead of accentuating assimilation and control, has a diminishing effect on the onset of radicalisation (Pels & de Ruyter, 2012).

As mentioned earlier, one of the important aspects of teacher training is to detect early signs of radicalization in students. In order for teachers to detect signs that students are getting involved in radical ideologies, the training should encourage teachers to engage in a dialogue with students to discover the motives behind their changed looks and behaviour. This method emphasizes the importance of the student-teacher relationship (INEE, 2017; Nordbruch, 2016).

In addition to training teachers, some changes should be made in the curricula. Migration, especially the representation of Islam and Muslims, is portrayed as a problem and a cause for concern, rather than as a normal feature of most European societies. This represents the imperfections of the curricula and textbooks, which do not accurately represent the diverse identities and biographies making up classes in European countries. Classrooms provide appropriate settings for tackling the problem of social polarisation and promoting inclusiveness. Considering the fact that students are exposed to various information from the media, teachers play an important role in explaining that information to students and directing them to consider the information critically. Many teachers are reluctant to teach their students about some controversial issues, such as wars in Syria and Iraq, which is not only important for building knowledge, but also for providing the space for students to express emotions, anger and frustration (Nordbruch, 2016). Violent extremism can be addressed by various topics, such as the issues of rights and responsibilities in society, justice, identity, belonging, freedom of expression, history of genocide and mass atrocities, secularism and humanism, gender equality and gender-based violence. Discussing these topics, if done in an appropriate way, can help young people to explore their own values and opinions and to manage their emotional responses, while gaining a better understanding of the underlying narratives of extreme ideologies. After these discussions, positive messages should be delivered about solidarity, respect for diversity, human rights, empathy, cultural sensitivity, understanding of discrimination, acceptance and communication. Moreover, young people should be encouraged to engage - to create and develop positive ideas and innovative solutions to today's challenges and global concerns. Schools can teach skills related to advocacy, campaigning, budgeting, organization building and leadership, in order to facilitate engagement (Preventing violent extremism through education, 2017; Teacher's guide on the prevention of violent extremism, 2016).

Keeping in mind the effect of media on promoting extremist ideologies, experts agree on the need for fostering media literacy and raising awareness of the online content and online strategies of extremist propaganda. An additional tool

for this aim is using alternative readings which provide new narratives to inspire critical thinking without imposing certain views and convictions (Preventing violent extremism through education, 2017; Teacher's guide on the prevention of violent extremism, 2016).

Taking into account the students' need for peer acceptance, an interesting approach to preventing radicalization is peer education. This refers to the approach in which peers lead discussions on various topics and provide authentic role models for their colleagues, which facilitates identification and encourages participation in these discussions (Nordbruch, 2016). Generally, schools are a good place for young people from different ethnic backgrounds to bridge the ethnic boundaries. However, research indicates that young people tend to withdraw into their own ethnic groups outside the school context. Interethnic contact leads to positive interactions only in specific contexts, for instance if groups are equal in their position on the status hierarchy (Pels & de Ruyter, 2012).

Additionally, education can possibly prevent radicalization through Global Citizenship Education (GCED), which promotes the sense of belonging to the global community and common humanity and focuses on instilling the respect for human rights, social justice, gender equality and environmental sustainability, which are fundamental values that help raise the defences of peace against violent extremism (Preventing violent extremism through education, 2017; Teacher's guide on the prevention of violent extremism, 2016).

Countries across the Europe have developed numerous projects including a range of police-led initiatives targeting schools, often aimed at creating an awareness of the risks of extremism among children and teachers, as well as at breaking down negative attitudes toward the police. An example of an initiative is "From one extreme to the other" in Great Britain, which is regarded as highly effective tool for teaching children about the dangers of extremism, intolerance and terrorism. A similar project is "Getting on Together", a DVD-based lesson program for schools, that helps teachers understand which children might be susceptible to extremism. The project is expanded with Welsh government support to a broader "Challenging Extremism" program for 11 years to adulthood that is being offered, among others, to schools. In Netherlands, some programs are designed to encourage critical thinking, the ability to listen to and objectively evaluate opposing views, the capacity to express thoughts in a non-confrontational way and to allow young people to safely vent frustrations (for example, by writing an essay about what made them angry and what their ideal society looks like). An important initiative in Denmark have been the discussions on Danish foreign policy in high school, universities, youth clubs and other venues frequented mostly by young people. More specifically, officials from the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other government officials meet with young people and explain Denmark's positions on various foreign policy issues. Additional activities include the distribution of inspirational material on democracy and civic education in Danish public schools, the establishment of "civic centers", and the creation of an internet forum for young people on democracy and radicalisation. In Norway, ensuring that more young people complete their secondary school education is a general preventative measure (Vidino & Brandon, 2012).

Republic of Croatia fights terrorism with the "National Strategy for prevention and countering terrorism", which recognises important roles and cooperation of academic community, non-governmental organisations, religious organisations, private sector and media. There are no specific prevention programs for minors. Nonetheless, indirect dealing with this population can be seen in emphasizing the importance of education aimed at preventing radicalisation. Considering the importance of Internet in the lives of minors, important measure is "reducing the availability and effect of the Internet content that promotes radicalisation, recruitment and training" (Ricijaš, Kovčo-Vukadin, & Dodig Hundrić, 2017).

1.3 Co-operation of Schools and Police in Preventing Radicalization

While schools in Croatia rarely cooperate with the police, the Nordic countries are cited as an excellent example of cooperation. The Croatian police promote the safety of road traffic in schools and, at the invitation of the school, speak out about the dangers of various addictions. The Nordic countries have developed and implemented co-operation between schools and police at the local level. In the Nordic countries, schools and even kindergartens are regarded as equal stakeholders in the prevention of radicalization. Also, the Nordic countries are distinguished by the simultaneous and equal education of all social stakeholders, including police officers and school staff (Butt & Tuck, 2014; Ramboll, 2017). The situation is similar in the countries of Central Europe, while in the countries of Eastern Europe, that is, in the Balkans, the situation is quite different. We can also link the above mentioned to the functionality of the community policing model (Ponsares, 2013). Community police officers are a rare occurrence in communities in Eastern Europe which indicates poor implementation of community-policing model (Meško, Fields, Lobnikar, & Sotlar, 2013). Since the community police did not come to life, so did the police community's cooperation with the community. In some countries government and police recommend contacting the police in the case of radicalisation emerging in schools (Preventing violent extremism in schools, 2016).

2 DESCRIPTION OF THE METHOD, SAMPLE, AND INSTRUMENT
2.1 Sample Description

A sample of 108 students from the Croatian Police Academy of the Ministry of the Interior participated in this study during the students' courses in December 2018. The majority of the participants (66.7%) were working at the local level in police stations, 4.6% at the regional level in the police department and 28.1% were regular students without any work experience in the police. The participants who were working in the police had, on average, 5.7 years of work experience (SD = 2.93), with the minimum length of service of 1 year and the maximum of 11 years. This research was conducted on police officers because of the idea that police officers and citizens collaborate and solve actual problems on the local level, and one important problem that can effect lives of the local community is

radicalisation. Moreover, since the police is a crucial stakeholder for preventing radicalization, it is important that the police is aware of capacities and limits of other stakeholders, such as schools.

2.2 Instrument

This research was conducted by a questionnaire developed in the *First Line*[2] project, whose aim was to train various stakeholders (e.g. representatives of the police, local governments, NGOs, education, and health) to address the problems of radicalization and to strengthen de-radicalization/disengagement processes in the Western Balkans (Prislan et al., 2018). In order to adjust the questionnaire to the Croatian sample, different parts of the questionnaire were modified. The first set of items included participants' estimates of the extent of their knowledge on radicalization and the presence of various types of radicalization in their local environments. The second set of 13 items referred to the factors and conditions that affect the development of extremism and strengthening of the radicalization on an individual level. The Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient for this set of items is α = .729. The last set of items consisted of 13 items that assessed the ability of various stakeholders to prevent radicalization through adequate and professional conduct. The Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient for this set of items is α = .898. All the items were assessed on a five-point scale, ranging from 1 – completely disagree to 5 – completely agree. For the purpose of conducting t-test presented in the Results section, it was necessary to recode variable assessing the ability of schools to prevent radicalisation from five-point scale to two categories (participants who believe schools have low and those who believe schools have high impact in preventing radicalisation). This was conducted by recoding 1 and 2 points from five-point scale to point 1, and 4 and 5 point to point 2. Point 3 on the original scale, which represents non-defining attitude, was excluded from t-test analysis.

The participants filled the paper-pencil questionnaire before and after the 4-hour training session about the latest trends concerning terrorist attacks in Europe and the different approaches to preventing and disengaging from radicalisation. In this research, only the results collected before the training were analysed.

3   RESULTS
3.1   Descriptive Analysis

In Table 1, there are means, medians, modes, standard deviations, minimum and maximum values for the statement on whether schools are able to, by taking appropriate/professional actions in their area, efficiently prevent the radicalization process in Croatia and for items related to which conditions i.e. factors affect the development of extremism and strengthening the radicalization of an individual.

2   *FIRST LINE Practitioners Dealing with Radicalisation Issues – Awareness Raising and Encouraging Capacity Building in the Western Balkan Region, project No. HOME/2014/ISFP/AG/RADX/7533 (2016-2018), funded by the Internal Security Fund (ISF), European Commission.*

Table 1: Descriptive indicators for the statements about the ability of school to efficiently prevent the process of radicalization and factors affecting the development of extremism		N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean (*M*)	Standard Deviation (*SD*)	*Median*	*Mode*
	Extent to which schools are able to prevent radicalization processes	108	1	5	3.12	1.258	3.00	3
	Factors affecting the development of extremism and radicalization							
	Injustice in the world	107	1	5	3.34	1.009	3.00	3
	Financial/economic crisis	108	1	5	3.69	0.848	4.00	4
	Political disagreements in the world	108	1	5	3.67	0.976	4.00	4
	Political disagreements in the local environment	108	1	5	3.13	0.908	3.00	3
	Religious or other ideological indoctrination of people	108	1	5	3.67	1.059	4.00	4
	Promotion/fuelling of hatred by political leaders	107	1	5	3.73	1.005	4.00	4
	Propaganda by religious leaders	107	1	5	3.64	1.030	4.00	4
	Individual's feeling of powerlessness	108	1	5	2.96	1.022	3.00	3
	Individual's characteristics/personality	108	1	5	2.93	1.030	3.00	3
	Reporting of the media (newspapers, TV)	108	1	5	3.69	0.870	4.00	4
	Online propaganda (Internet, FB, Twitter)	106	2	5	3.80	0.877	4.00	4

		nothing	2	3	4	significant	Table 2:
Extent to which schools are able to prevent radicalization processes	N	15	17	33	26	17	Participants' percentage
	%	13.9	15.7	30.6	24.1	15.7	regarding the
		does not affect	2	3	4	strongly affects	assessments of the statement
Factors affecting the development of extremism and radicalization							about the ability of
Injustice in the world	N	3	19	38	33	14	school to efficiently
	%	2.8	17.8	35.5	30.8	13.1	prevent the
Financial/economic crisis	N	2	3	39	46	18	process of
	%	1.9	2.8	36.1	42.6	16.7	radicalization
Political disagreements in the world	N	3	10	27	48	20	and factors
	%	2.8	9.3	25.0	44.4	18.5	affecting the
Political disagreements in the local environment	N	3	22	48	28	7	development of
	%	2.8	20.4	44.4	25.9	6.5	extremism
Religious or other ideological indoctrination of people	N	4	10	30	38	26	
	%	3.7	9.3	27.8	35.2	24.1	
Promotion/fuelling of hatred by political leaders	N	1	13	27	39	27	
	%	0.9	12.1	25.2	36.4	25.2	
Propaganda by religious leaders	N	1	15	31	34	26	
	%	0.9	14.0	29.0	31.8	24.3	
Individual's feeling of powerlessness	N	5	33	41	19	10	
	%	4.6	30.6	38.0	17.6	9.3	
Individual's characteristics/personality	N	8	28	45	18	9	
	%	7.4	25.9	41.7	16.7	8.3	
Reporting of the media (newspapers, TV)	N	1	7	35	46	19	
	%	0.9	6.5	32.4	42.6	17.6	
Online propaganda (Internet, FB, Twitter)	N	0	6	35	39	26	
	%	0.0	5.7	33.0	36.8	24.5	

Based on the results in Table 1, it can be seen that the Police Academy students on average more believe than they do not believe that school can, by appropriate i.e. professional actions in its area, efficiently prevent the processes of radicalization in Croatia (M = 3.312, SD = 1.258). To be more precise, 13.9% of the students believe that school can do nothing in the prevention of radicalization, while 15.7% of the students believe that school has an important role in that process. Median and mode values suggest that the majority of participants express neither strong nor weak belief in the importance of schools in the process of radicalisation.

The average assessments of the influence of the majority of factors affecting the development of extremism and strengthening the radicalization of an individual are above the average of the scale, which indicates that the students believe to a greater extent that said factors affect the development of extremism and strengthening of radicalization to a certain extent. Moreover, median and

mode values suggest that the most common participants' answers are three or four on the scale from one to five. The factors for which the greatest part of the students believe that they strongly affect the development of extremism and strengthening of radicalization are fuelling of hatred by political leaders (25.2%), online propaganda (24.5%), propaganda by religious leaders (24.3%) and religious or other ideological indoctrination of people (24.1%). The largest part of the students (7.4%) believe that, among the tested factors, characteristics i.e. the personality of an individual has no influence whatsoever on the strengthening of extremism and radicalization.

The conclusion can be drawn that the students are more inclined to the attitude that school can prevent the processes of radicalization in Croatia and are of the opinion that the sources of extremism and radicalization mostly lie in the propaganda of such attitudes by influential public figures.

3.2 Correlation Between the Extent to Which Schools are Able to Prevent the Occurrence of Radicalization and Factors Affecting its Occurrence

A correlation analysis has been conducted in order to establish whether there are certain factors affecting the occurrence of extremism and radicalization for which the students believe that they can be prevented or affected in the area of school. It is important to investigate these correlations because the results could actuate cooperation between the police and schools in dealing with factors that potentially affect the occurrence of extremism. The results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Correlations between the extent to which schools are able to prevent the occurrence of extremism and radicalization as well as factors affecting their occurrence

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Extent to which schools are able to prevent radicalization processes	1											
2. Injustice in the world	.170	1										
3. Financial/economic crisis	.219*	.364**	1									
4. Political disagreements in the world	.063	.268**	.305**	1								
5. Political disagreements in the local enviro-nment	.142	.208*	.186	.629**	1							
6. Religious or other ideological indoctrination of people	.101	.036	-.167	.253**	.240*	1						
7. Promotion/fuelling of hatred by political leaders	.112	-.020	.076	.395**	.163	.544**	1					
8. Propaganda by religious leaders	.051	-.025	-.180	.123	.107	.682**	.601**	1				
9. Individual's feeling of powerlessness	.171	.258**	.149	.175	.388**	.109	.023	.139	1			
10. Individual's characteristics/personality	.238*	.067	.188	-.034	.220*	.089	.068	.132	.530**	1		
11. Reporting of the media (newspapers, TV)	.145	.116	.012	.187	.134	.173	.150	.150	.061	.110	1	
12. Online propaganda (Internet, FB, Twitter)	.242*	-.023	.095	.230*	.197*	.204*	.312**	.133	.116	.159	.600**	1

Note: $p < .01$**; $p < .05$*

The results in Table 3 indicate that the extent to which school can prevent the processes of radicalization has statistically significant positive correlations to three factors affecting the occurrence of radicalization. To be more precise, the students believing that school is able to do a great deal to prevent the process of radicalization are more inclined to believe that a financial/economic crisis (r = .219, p < .05), the characteristics/personality of an individual (r = .238, p < .05) and the online propaganda through Facebook and Twitter (r = .242, p < .05) really do affect the occurrence of the process of radicalization. All the factors affecting the occurrence of radicalisation that are significantly correlated have positive correlations, suggesting that participants who think that one factor strongly affects the occurrence of radicalisation, think the same for the other factors that are correlated with the first one. For example, the participants who believe that religious or other ideological indoctrination of people affect the occurrence of radicalisation, think the same for the propaganda by religious leaders (r = .682, p < .01). Described correlation is the strongest correlation found between the examined factors.

Regarding the established correlation, it is necessary to consider the role of school in the prevention of radicalization by exerting influence on the three factors (financial/economic crisis, individual's characteristics/personality and online propaganda) which affect the occurrence of extremism and radicalization.

3.3 Difference between Participants in Their Opinions about Factors Affecting Radicalisation Depending on Their Perceived Importance of Schools in Preventing Radicalisation

In order to investigate whether participants who believe schools have low or high impact in preventing radicalisation differ in their opinions about the importance of examined factors affecting radicalisation, t-test was conducted. Since perceived importance of schools was measured on a five point scale, the variable was recoded into two categories: those participants who believe school has low impact in preventing radicalisation and those participants who believe they have high impact. Recoding is described in more detail in the Method section. Prior to the analysis, it was concluded that assumptions for conducting t-test, regarding sample size, distribution normality and homogeneity of variables, were satisfied. The results are presented in Table 4.

		N	Mean (M)	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		T-test for Equality of Means			
				F	p	t	df	p
Injustice in the world	low	32	3.13	.866	.355	-1.438	72	.155
	high	42	3.48					
Financial/economic crisis	low	32	3.63	1.182	.281	-1.825	73	.072
	high	43	3.95					
Political disagreements in the world	low	32	3.78	.828	.366	.148	73	.883
	high	43	3.74					
Political disagreements in the local environment	low	32	3.00	.001	.975	-.734	73	.465
	high	43	3.16					
Religious or other ide-ological indoctrination of people	low	32	3.59	.383	.538	-.616	73	.540
	high	43	3.74					
Promotion/fuelling of hatred by political leaders	low	32	3.78	1.000	.321	-.796	72	.429
	high	42	3.98					
Propaganda by religious leaders	low	32	3.72	2.275	.136	-.076	72	.940
	high	42	3.74					
Individual's feeling of powerlessness	low	32	2.75	2.660	.107	-1.302	73	.197
	high	43	3.07					
Individual's characteri-stics/personality	low	32	2.63	.035	.851	-2.674	73	.009
	high	43	3.28					
Reporting of the media (newspapers, TV)	low	32	3.66	1.200	.277	-1.116	73	.268
	high	43	3.88					
Online propaganda (Internet, FB, Twitter)	low	32	3.66	.117	.733	-1.990	71	.050
	high	41	4.07					

Table 4: Results of *t-test* for testing the difference between participants who believe schools have low and those who believe schools have high impact in preventing radicalisation in their opinions about factors affecting radicalisation

The results of t-test suggest that participants who believe that schools have low and those who believe that schools have high impact in preventing radicalisation do not differ significantly in their opinions about the effect of the most examined factors on the occurrence of radicalisation. The only factors that exerted difference between the two groups of participants are the ones regarding individual's characteristics (personality) (t = -2.674, df = 73, p = .009) and online propaganda (t = -1.990, df = 71, P = .050). The results suggest that participants who believe that schools have low impact in preventing radicalisation tend to believe in lesser extent that individual characteristics (M = 2.63) and online propaganda (M = 3.66) affect the occurrence of radicalisation than those who believe that schools have high impact on preventing radicalisation.

These results also support the idea that schools can have impact in preventing radicalisation and extremism by exerting influence on some factors affecting the occurrence of extremism and radicalisation, in this case factors regarding

individual's personality and online propaganda. Unlike correlation analysis, t-test didn't show the importance of schools in preventing radicalisation by exerting influence on financial/economic crisis.

4   DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The results of this research point out to the question of how an educational institution can, in practice, be involved in the process of prevention of the occurrence of extremism and radicalization in a society. Namely, the prevention of those negative occurrences, considering a person's and community's safety, is also founded on the inherent idea of the respect for general human rights and the prevention of the creation and spreading of stereotypes and prejudices towards a person as a bearer of various racial, ethnic, religious, sex, gender or age characteristics. This topic is therefore by its nature profoundly educational and especially significant for the development of a society as a whole.

The curriculum, as a complete planned, organized and purposeful experience of learning and teaching, comprises of the core, differentiated and school curricula as well as seven cross-curricular themes, the contents of which should be included into the educational work of all subject teachers and expert associates of the institution. So devised programmes exert their influence on the creation of school culture as the place of zero tolerance for all forms of violence. The school curriculum, as an implementing version of the national curriculum for a specific educational institution, presents the exact space for devising, implementing, realization and evaluation of different programmes in line with social prevention. These programmes can also be a part of the concept of civic education as a cross-curricular theme from the national curriculum (Ministarstvo znanosti i obrazovanja [MZO], 2017), by which a school directly influences the socialization of students to desirable humanistic and democratic or European values. European values are a part of the European concept promoting the establishment of permanent peace, economic growth and social development in the geopolitical territory of Member States of the European Union (Altaras Penda, 2005), and the concept contains the following values: human rights, respect for human life, peace, democracy, individual freedom, the rule of law, equality, solidarity, tolerance, self-fulfilment, respect for other cultures and religions (European Commission, 2014). Such contents also facilitate the acquisition of one of eight competences for life-long learning from the recommendations of the European Union (European Commission, 2014) and that is gaining social and civic competences, while some of the principles (Fuchs, Vican, & Milanović Litre, 2011), or the foothold for the National Curriculum Framework (MZO, 2017), are the respect for human rights and children's rights, democracy, the European dimension of education and interculturalism.

For competent and sustainable responses to radicalization, transparent structures and clear procedures are crucial for every institution of formal education, and teachers should be trained to follow them (Nordbruch, 2016).

In their training, teachers have acquired skills to foster resilience, provide multiple perspectives and encourage self-reflection among students, while reinforcing the acceptance of social, cultural and religious differences. Moreover,

teachers are trained to respond to expressions of hatred and calls to violence in classrooms. Considering all this, it can be concluded that teachers and school do not have to develop completely new strategies of prevention – they already have experience with handling difficult situations and conflicts, which can serve as a useful starting point for the prevention of radicalization (Nordbruch, 2016). It is important to keep in mind the amount of work and responsibilities teachers already have in school and try not to overload them with additional work, which they probably do not have the time for. Building up on schools' existing resources is a desirable way of dealing with this rising problem.

Finally, we have to keep in mind that this study reflects the police officers' perception of the role of school in preventing radicalization and violent extremism. This notion limits the generalizability of these results, since police officers have different traits than the rest of the population and specific training and experience regarding extremism. It is also important to be aware that participants in this study are the police officers who are also students at the Croatian Police Academy, which means that they are up-and-coming members of the Croatian police whose police career is just about to begin. In the future research, it would be useful to compare attitudes of the police officers considering their work experience, and compare police officers' attitudes to the ones of civil population. Knowledge on radicalisation process probably affects participants' opinion about the importance of various stakeholders in the prevention of radicalisation. Also, it is important to investigate how schools themselves, including the administrative staff, teachers and students, see their role in the prevention of radicalisation. Future research should investigate students' experience with radicalisation, i.e. with radicalised individuals or groups trying to recruit them. Online grooming and radicalisation are a part of contemporary society, the responsibility of which partly falls to schools to explore. Approaching this problem from multiple points of view could provide better understanding of this topic. In order for the police and schools to cooperate, it is important that both side become aware of their role in the prevention of radicalisation. The obtained results reveal that police officers perceive the role of school in preventing radicalization and violent extremism to a certain extent, but their perception should be broadened. It is encouraging that Croatian police officers understand that education is an important factor in young people's socialization. It should also be stressed that the respondents of this study perceive the corrective role of education institutions and expect school to mitigate negative impacts of online propaganda and economic crisis on their pupils. These results implicate that schools should include in their curricula education about the usage of Internet and stimulate students to assess critically information they see and hear in the media. Also, schools should educate students about the potential impacts of financial crisis on society, especially creating radicalistic individuals and groups. The police could provide schools with necessary resources for prevention, such as educating teachers and students about radicalisation and its means of entering the lives of young people. This is a promising foundation for the future joint involvement of the police and school system in preventing radicalization and violent extremism.

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