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to extremism  
and polarisation



# COMMUNITY RESILIENCE STUDY

KUMANOVO, NORTH MACEDONIA

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## Abstract

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As part of its Strong Cities Network (SCN) regional engagement in Kumanovo, North Macedonia, the Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD) conducted a representative survey of the population to better understand local dynamics of resilience. The findings from this study will serve as an evidence base to tailor and target Community Action Team (CAT) activities listed in the Kumanovo Local Action Plan for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism. In addition, this data serves as a baseline of community resilience against which the impact of preventative measures in the municipality can be evaluated. The research shows that Kumanovo's population is relatively resilient, with the biggest differences in resilience scores found in an individual's age and residential neighbourhood. The research also shows that the resilience of communities in Kumanovo is most affected by their trust in public institutions.

# Introduction

Under its Western Balkans regional programming, ISD's SCN has partnered with the municipality of Kumanovo to support interdisciplinary and multi-stakeholder approaches to preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE). To achieve this goal, SCN has facilitated the establishment of a local prevention network, called the CAT, mandated to develop and implement policy measures to strengthen social cohesion and build community resilience to hate, polarisation and extremism. CAT members have participated in a capacity-building programme through which they were equipped with subject matter and technical expertise to develop a local P/CVE action plan, which was subsequently formally adopted by the Local Prevention Council of Kumanovo. Currently, the SCN is supporting CAT members and other local stakeholders to implement key community-based activities, which deliver against the action plan priority areas and objectives.

To ensure a successful evaluation of the project, the SCN developed a survey instrument to measure the community-wide impact of CAT activities. Composed of two sections, it measures awareness of, and attitudes towards, violent extremism and local government prevention; and community resilience to radicalisation. The survey will be conducted twice in order to establish a baseline at the outset of the project and subsequently an endline at its final stages to measure changes in community resilience and perceptions of extremism. This report presents our baseline findings.

# Methodology

The research was conducted in partnership with the Institute for Political Research – Skopje (IPRS), a research and polling company based in Skopje, North Macedonia. IPRS was responsible for surveying an unbiased and representative sample of individuals aged 15 and over from the municipality of Kumanovo through telephone interviews. IPRS collected 1,052 valid responses, out of which 797 were conducted in Macedonian and 255 in Albanian. This sample size was selected to be representative of the population living in the territory of the municipality of Kumanovo; hence, findings from the sample can be applied to the population as estimates. Additionally, all findings from this survey are statistically significant unless stated otherwise. The telephone interviews were carried out between 10 and 25 February 2020 in the same period that the CAT was planning its first community outreach activities. Consequently, the initial results of any of the activities implemented from the local P/CVE action plan should be captured in the endline survey, which will be conducted in July 2021.

The survey instrument comprises 30 questions, which represent a mix of tailored items developed in-house by ISD, and an established attitudinal scale called BRAVE-14. The bespoke questions are designed to measure community attitudes towards extremism and the government's response to it, while BRAVE-14 is used to measure community resilience to radicalisation. Specifically, BRAVE-14 is designed to measure five facets of resilience:

- cultural identity and connectedness
- bridging capital – trust and confidence in people from other groups
- linking capital – trust and confidence in government and authority figures
- violence-related behaviours
- violence-related beliefs.

The nature of this study poses various challenges for measuring attitudes in Kumanovo accurately. A detailed list of limitations and mitigations can be found in the full methodology added as Annex 1 to this report; here is a summary of the major limitations of the study and SCN's approach to mitigating them:

- This study relies on self-reported attitudes towards sensitive topics rather than observed behaviours. As a result, misreporting through inaccurate or untrue responses from those surveyed may distort the findings. To mitigate this risk, the survey used in this study avoided terms like extremism or radicalisation.
- The concept of 'resilience to violent extremism' and the attributes which constitute resilience remain hotly contested. The BRAVE-14 scale was selected because of the strength of the research and evidence used in its development.
- The statistical adjustments used to correct for missing data and weight responses to ensure greater representativity may have reduced the accuracy of the dataset by introducing threats to internal validity. To mitigate this risk, a large sample of responses from Kumanovo were collected. Furthermore, post-adjustment statistical tests and a parallel analysis of the raw data was carried out to check divergence of the original and recoded datasets.
- Any population-level changes in resilience produced by the CAT will realistically emerge over several years, after this phase of SCN involvement in Kumanovo concludes and the endline survey is conducted. Some changes in community attitudes are expected, but they are likely to be small and confined to specific sub-populations.

# Key Findings

- 1 Kumanovo has a relatively high community resilience to violent extremism according to its position on the BRAVE-14 attitudinal scale of 53.49 out of 70.** To put the number into context, youth in Australia and Canada scored 53.04 and 51.13 on the scale respectively.
- 2 Results show that demographics alone are a poor predictor of resilience to violent extremism,** despite differences in resilience scores by sex, age and neighbourhood of residence.
- 3 Contrary to the widely held belief that youth are the most vulnerable and least resilient group in society, the results show that on average younger generations (15–34 year olds) have a higher resilience score at 54.12 than older generations (35–69 year olds) with a score of 52.86.** However, it should be noted that 20–24 year olds still have the lowest resilience score of any age group at 51.62, which is slightly lower than the average score for older generations. , despite differences in resilience scores by sex, age and neighbourhood of residence.
- 4 There is a difference in the resilience scores of the various neighbourhoods in Kumanovo.** For instance, Igo Trickovic and Zeleznicka received resilience scores significantly below the average for the rest of the municipality, at 44.95 and 48.87 respectively. Conversely, those living in Braniteli, Jane Sandanski and Goce Delcev recorded resilience scores above the municipal-wide average.
- 5 Linking capital with authorities is the biggest issue among the five resilience domains explored under BRAVE-14 in Kumanovo.** It is important to note that linking capital was higher in rural areas than in urban, and there is a large discrepancy between some neighbourhoods in the municipality.
- 6 Bridging capital with individuals outside one’s religious or ethnic community is also on the lower end of the five resilience domains, but higher than the linking capital.** This suggests that the various communities in Kumanovo have better relations with each other than they do with government authorities in general.
- 7 On average, youth aged 15–34 have greater bridging capital with other communities than adults aged 35–69.** As with the overall resilience score, 20–24 year olds remain an outlier with the lowest bridging capital score among youth, while 55–59 year olds have the lowest score for all age groups.
- 8 Ethnic Albanians reported marginally lower bridging capital than ethnic Macedonians and other ethnic groups such as Serbs, Roma, Turks and Bosniaks, in Kumanovo.** Albanians scored 9.98 out of 15 on this scale, while Macedonians and all other ethnic groups combined scored 10.90 and 10.91 respectively.
- 9 Public confidence in the response of local authorities, schools and religious institutions to violent extremism has a significant impact on resilience in Kumanovo.** The survey data shows that there is a positive correlation between the public’s confidence in the ability of local government, schools and religious institutions to tackle hate and polarisation and their resilience.

- 10 Public opinion is almost evenly divided over how well local authorities, schools and religious institutions respond to intolerance and hate in Kumanovo.** On average 37% of respondents felt that local authorities, schools and religious institutions had responded effectively to these issues, while 38% believed that they had not. Except for marginal differences in age and neighbourhood, no clear association was found between respondents' socio-demographic characteristics and their attitudes towards the effectiveness of local responses to intolerance and hate.
- 11 Public awareness of the existence and responsibilities of the Local Prevention Council (LPC) and CAT is limited in Kumanovo.** Survey responses showed that only 20% of people in the municipality are familiar with the role of the LPC and only 16% are familiar with the role of the CAT. The most likely reason for these findings is that the body mandated to prevent violent extremism in Kumanovo was only formed six months before this study.
- 12 Members of the public in Kumanovo are most likely to turn to local authorities and the police when they experience or witness discrimination and hate.** 66% of the respondents would go to the police, which leads by a high margin over the second most popular option, local institutions, with 12%.
- 13 People in Kumanovo are most likely to contact local authorities and police if someone they know is acting in a hateful or discriminatory way.** As in the previous finding, most respondents (56%) selected the police as the most appropriate actor to deal with discrimination.

# Recommendations

On the basis of our findings, ISD has identified a clear set of practical recommendations for improving local programming in Kumanovo. The CAT launched a local P/CVE action plan in December 2019 following a series of capacity-building and best practice exchange activities. This data generated by this study is of critical value in informing its policy measures and better targeting future activities in Kumanovo.

## 1 Activities must be designed to specifically target vulnerable adults.

The Local Action Plan has a significant portion of activities focused on youth, especially in elementary and high schools. However, this report shows that older generations tend to be less resilient to extremism than their younger counterparts. Since getting older generations to participate will be more challenging, the CAT should find venues either through the private sector or public campaigns to engage this key demographic group.

## 2 Activities must target the least resilient areas of Kumanovo.

The added value of conducting programming in relatively resilient neighbourhoods will be less than in places that returned lower average resilience scores. For instance, Igo Trickovic has the lowest resilience score, including one of the lowest linking and bridging capital scores, in all of Kumanovo. Consequently, local authorities should prioritise this neighbourhood when collecting data to understand the reasons behind these dynamics and increase the number and quality of activities that aim to strengthen social cohesion and community resilience in this area. This does not mean that other more resilient neighbourhoods such as Braniteli and Jane Sandanski should not be included in P/CVE activities, but merely that the time, expertise and resources allocated should be based on the extent of the challenge posed by lower resilience levels.

## 3 Further research needs to be undertaken to understand differences in resilience between the different neighbourhoods in Kumanovo.

This study attempted to contextualise the geographic findings discussed above. However, relevant primary or secondary research could not be found on in-depth localised drivers or trends which might increase vulnerabilities to extremism in the city.

## 4 CAT activities should be organised with the aim of improving trust and confidence in institutions (including law enforcement), alongside existing efforts to bridge ethnic and religious communities.

The LPC, the body from which the CAT receives its mandate, was designed as tool to renew trust in the police through the community policing model, but these results show it has not been fully effective.

### **5 Engagement with the municipality, schools and religious institutions should be prioritised and well publicised.**

According to the data, the response of local authorities, schools and religious institutions has a significant impact on resilience in the community. Together with public awareness of the existence and activities of the LPC and CAT, this factor accounted for 30% of the variation in resilience scores in the community. This should serve as an encouragement for the CAT to continue working to improve prevention in Kumanovo, particularly in local schools and religious institutions, and for the municipality to invest in programming to prevent and counter violent extremism. Furthermore, in addition to capacity building and general prevention activities, the findings suggest that the CAT should devote some of its time and resources to strategic campaigns designed to increase its public profile.

### **6 Civilian institutions need a clear mandate to tackle hate and polarisation, challenging popular perceptions that the police are the go-to agency for raising concerns.**

The survey results show that people in Kumanovo reach out to the police whenever they experience and witness discrimination by a person they know. This reflects the overly securitised approach to this issue and the limited role that other institutions have been allowed to play in this area. Through the establishment of the National Committee for Countering Violent Extremism and Counter-Terrorism and the adoption of the National CVE Strategy and Action Plan, the government has more recently displayed its commitment to include non-security institutions in this space and adopt a 'whole of society approach' to violent extremism. This change will not happen overnight. A sustained effort will be needed on the part of the government to steer institutions and create a culture where the police is not the only institution to deal with hate and polarisation in society.

# In-depth: review of findings and conclusions

## Resilience to violent extremism is relatively high in Kumanovo

Our survey found that the population of Kumanovo has a relatively high level of resilience, with an average resilience score of 53.49 on a scale running from 14 to 70. Resilience in Kumanovo was assessed using the BRAVE-14 scale, which measures risk and protective factors in the five areas considered important for resilience as described in the methodology above. Respondents were asked to rate how much they agreed with 14 attitudinal statements on a 5-point scale. Respondents' scores across the 14 statements in the Likert scale were then combined, with higher total scores indicating greater levels of characteristics associated with resilience to violent extremism.

Contextualising and benchmarking the average resilience score of Kumanovo against other cities or countries is difficult for a number of reasons. BRAVE-14 was initially tested with smaller youth audiences in Canada and Australia rather than representative population samples. While the measure has been used in a range of other contexts there is very little public data available for comparison. Even where data can be accessed, resilience scores are not readily comparable. There will always be variation in how audiences respond to certain items in the scale based on contextual factors that may not be linked with their resilience to violent extremism. As a result, BRAVE-14 is more useful for identifying variations in resilience across socio-demographic groups or points in time within defined populations. Nevertheless, a comparison with average resilience scores among youth surveyed in Canada and Australia indicates that Kumanovo has roughly similar levels of resilience to respondents in these countries: 53.49 in Kumanovo compared with 53.04 in Australia and 51.13 in Canada.<sup>1</sup>

Kumanovo's score on the BRAVE-14 tool is significant in the context of the city's history of violence and extremism. Kumanovo is the second-largest city in North Macedonia after the capital of Skopje, with a mixed ethnographic composition, which largely resembles country-wide demographics. Its residents form a multicultural community with representatives from various ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds. At various points, this trait has proven to be both a strength and a weakness. On 9–10 May 2015, Kumanovo witnessed an armed battle between government forces and a paramilitary group with alleged ties to the Kosovo Liberation Army, which turned Kumanovo's predominantly ethnic Albanian Divo Naselje neighbourhood into a conflict zone.<sup>2</sup> The event resulted in 22 casualties, of which 8 were state police (from mixed ethnic backgrounds) and 14 were attacking militants. A further 37 officers were wounded and 30 members of the militant group were arrested on terrorism related charges.<sup>3</sup> While the fighting was ongoing, residents from different ethnic backgrounds in Kumanovo, including the current mayor of the municipality, went to the streets to send a message of unity and solidarity despite their ethnic identity.<sup>4</sup> The bloody event has not led to any other violent incidents in the municipality, but this does not mean that the city's threat profile is low. Residents from the city have found their way to battlefields in Syria joining Salafi-jihadi groups as foreign terrorist fighters, some of whom have been incarcerated a second time after serving prison sentences for participating in foreign (para)military and/or (para)police units.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, memories and grievances stemming from the 2001 conflict in North Macedonia remain potent among the community, not least because a number of military operations took place in the territory of the municipality itself.

<sup>1</sup> M. Grossman et al. (2020) 'Youth resilience to violent extremism: development and validation of the BRAVE measure', *Terrorism and Political Violence*, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09546553.2019.1705283>.

<sup>2</sup> BBC News (2015) 'Macedonia blames Kosovans for deadly Kumanovo clashes', 10 May, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-32680904>

<sup>3</sup> BBC News (2015) 'Macedonia charges 30 with terrorism after Kumanovo clashes', 11 May, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-32695909>

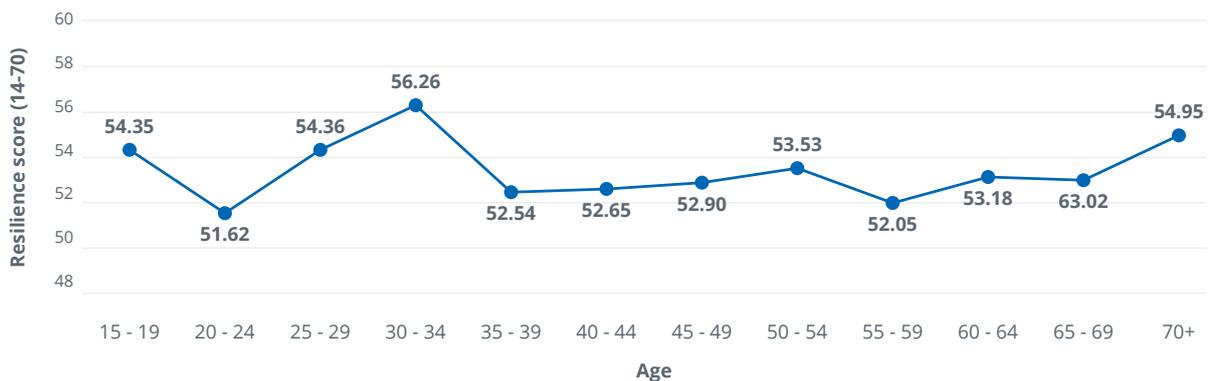
<sup>4</sup> YouTube (2015) 'Albanian in Kumanovo speaks the truth', 11 May, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3J0cGFWSkJM>

<sup>5</sup> Al Jazeera (2020) 'North Macedonia arrests three men on suspicion of plotting attack', 1 September, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/9/1/north-macedonia-arrests-three-men-on-suspicion-of-plotting-attack>

## Socio-demographic analysis

The survey results show that the resilience of Kumanovo’s population is based on a range of factors including some socio-demographic characteristics like gender, age group and neighbourhood of residence. Taken alone, however, demography was still found to be a poor predictor of resilience to violent extremism:

- The results of the survey suggest that **women in Kumanovo are generally more resilient to violent extremism than their male counterparts**. The average resilience score among women was 54.12 out of 70, 1.26 points higher than men in the municipality who had an average score of 52.86. This finding conforms with other research performed using the BRAVE-14 scale in Australia and Canada, where women were also found to be more resilient than men.<sup>6</sup>
- In contrast to popular narratives about the vulnerability of youth to violent extremism, the findings from the survey suggest that **young people under the age of 35 in Kumanovo are actually slightly more resilient than older age groups**. The average resilience score for those aged 15–34 was 54.15 out of 70 compared with 52.84 for those aged 35–69. **One exception to this trend was a more specific range of 20–24 year olds, who had the lowest resilience score out of all age brackets, slightly below the 35–69 age groups at 51.62 (Figure 1).**



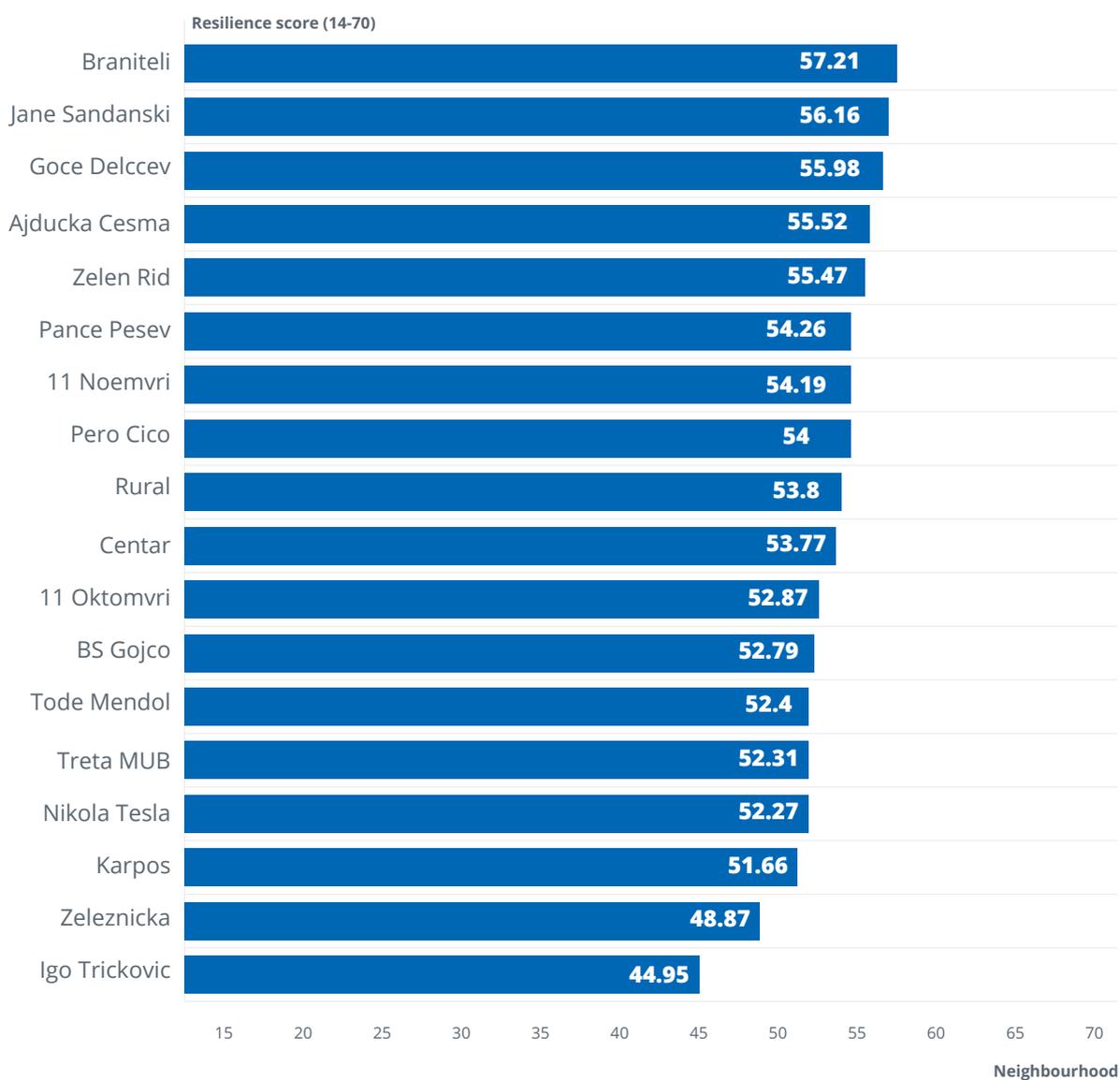
**FIGURE 01** Resilience to violent extremism score of inhabitants of Kumanovo, by age group, 2020

- No significant differences were found in respondents’ resilience scores for ethnicity, education or settlement type.
- While resilience scores fluctuated for certain socio-demographic characteristics, the survey findings suggest that **demography alone is a poor predictor of resilience to violent extremism in Kumanovo**. Only gender, age and neighbourhood of residence were significantly associated with differences in overall resilience and even when taken together these factors explained less than 10% of the variation in resilience scores. Therefore, **while we can conclude that men in Kumanovo are on average less resilient than women, simply being male in no way guarantees that an individual will be more vulnerable to violent extremism.**

<sup>6</sup>Grossman et al. (2020). Youth resilience to violent extremism’.

## 2 Resilience to violent extremism varies by neighbourhood in Kumanovo

While the population of Kumanovo has moderately high levels of resilience to violent extremism there are neighbourhoods in the municipality that recorded levels of resilience somewhat higher or lower than the average. The average resilience score across Kumanovo was 53.49. **However, neighbourhoods like Igo Trickovic and Zeleznicka received resilience scores below this figure and the rest of the municipality at 44.95 and 48.87 respectively.** In contrast, those living in Braniteli (57.21), Jane Sandanski (56.16) and Goce Delcev (55.98) have some of the highest resilience scores in Kumanovo (Figure 2).

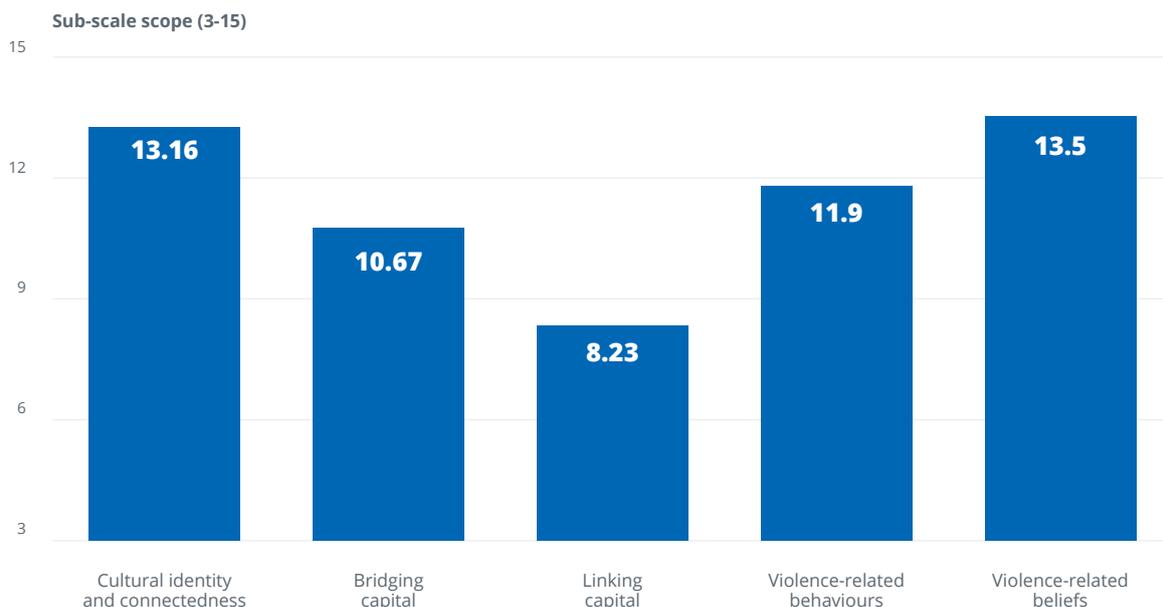


**FIGURE 02** Resilience to violent extremism score of inhabitants of Kumanovo, by neighbourhood, 2020

The current literature does not provide any insights as to why some of these neighbourhoods have notably higher or lower resilience scores. Igo Trickovic is an exceptionally small neighbourhood on the outskirts of the city inhabited mostly by families who have emigrated from the eastern part of the country. Zeleznicka is on the inner outskirts of Kumanovo where more socially disadvantaged families live. Goce Delcev and Braniteli are mostly ethnic Macedonian neighbourhoods considered to be some of the most desirable areas of Kumanovo to live in, since the collapse of the former Yugoslavia. Jane Sandanski on the other hand is considered to be inhabited by individuals who came from the northern villages around Kumanovo and is composed of more socially disadvantaged families. This neighbourhood is composed mostly of ethnic Macedonians and Roma communities. Nonetheless, these largely anecdotal insights are not sufficiently robust to allow one to draw meaningful conclusions on the variation in resilience scores between neighbourhoods. Additional research needs to be done in this area to understand differences in hyper-local resilience dynamics.

### 3 Poor relationships between residents of Kumanovo and government authorities has a substantial negative impact on resilience to violent extremism in the municipality

As outlined in the methodology, the BRAVE-14 scale measures resilience across five domains. Of these, cultural identity and connectedness, violence-related behaviours and violence-related beliefs return strong resilience scores in Kumanovo. Linking capital with authorities, however, returned a substantially lower average score than any of the other resilience domains at 8.23 out of 15. Total scores for each of the sub-scales are rated from 3 to 15 with higher scores indicating greater levels of each attribute in the population (Figure 3).<sup>7</sup> The sub-scale on linking capital with authorities assesses individuals' trust and confidence in government and authority figures, their perceived access to institutions, and their ability to contribute to or influence decision-making in their communities.



**FIGURE 03** Resilience to violent extremism sub-score of inhabitants of Kumanovo, by BRAVE-14 resilience domain, 2020

The low linking capital score observed in Kumanovo is not surprising given recent events in North Macedonia. In 2015, the country experienced a significant political crisis following a wiretapping scandal in which the intelligence services under the former ruling VMRO-DPMNE party secretly monitored and recorded calls on more than 20,000 telephone numbers between 2007 and 2013.<sup>8</sup> The scandal significantly undermined confidence in government and the legitimacy of institutions. EU-commissioned experts instructed to report on rule of law issues following the release of the communication interceptions found a lack of oversight over the functions of the former intelligence service (UBK) and direct involvement of senior government and ruling party officials in:

*electoral fraud, corruption, abuse of power and authority, conflict of interest, blackmail, extortion (pressure on public employees to vote for a certain party or face a loss of employment), criminal damage, severe infringements of procurement procedures aimed at gaining an illicit profit, nepotism and cronyism.*<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> The sub-scale for violence-related behaviours consisted of two item statements for a total score of 10, but has been adjusted to a range of 3 to 15 for easier comparison.

<sup>8</sup> R. Lyman (2015) 'Tiny Macedonia confronts a supersize scandal', New York Times, 14 May, <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/15/world/europe/tiny-macedonia-confronts-a-supersize-scandal.html>

<sup>9</sup> European Country of Origin Information Network (2015) 'The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia: recommendations of the Senior Experts' Group on systemic rule of law issues relating to the communications interception revealed in spring 2015', 8 June, [https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/news\\_corner/news/news-files/20150619\\_recommendations\\_of\\_the\\_senior\\_experts\\_group.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/news_corner/news/news-files/20150619_recommendations_of_the_senior_experts_group.pdf)

Following the scandal, a caretaker government organised a new parliamentary election in 2016, which produced indecisive results. The formation of a new government in 2017 coincided with so-called 'Bloody Thursday', during which right-wing extremists infiltrated the parliament and injured former opposition politicians. The new government has improved relations with civil society organisations, made efforts to increase media independence and resolved a number of international disputes. However, nothing substantial has been done to strengthen efforts to counter high-profile, political or institutional corruption in the country. Even more detrimental, the 'Extortion Affair' in 2019 exposed that the chief prosecutor of the Special Prosecution Unit, established to try high-profile cases against alleged criminal activity, was involved in racketeering. This destroyed the credibility of the unit and ultimately influenced the decision not to renew its mandate.<sup>10</sup>

According to the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) issued by Transparency International, North Macedonia ranks 106/180 countries with a score of 35/100 in 2019. This has been the lowest CPI score the country has had since Transparency International introduced its new methodology in 2012.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, Freedom House has characterised the country as a 'transitional or hybrid regime' and has given it a democracy score of 3.75/7. The democracy score is an average of multiple indicators including: national democratic governance, electoral process, civil society, independent media, local democratic governance, judicial framework and independence, and corruption. Among the Western Balkan countries, only Bosnia & Herzegovina and Kosovo have a lower democracy score. Underlying corruption combined with the more recent political scandals have likely had a severely deleterious effect on public confidence in the government and could well explain the low linking capital observed in Kumanovo.

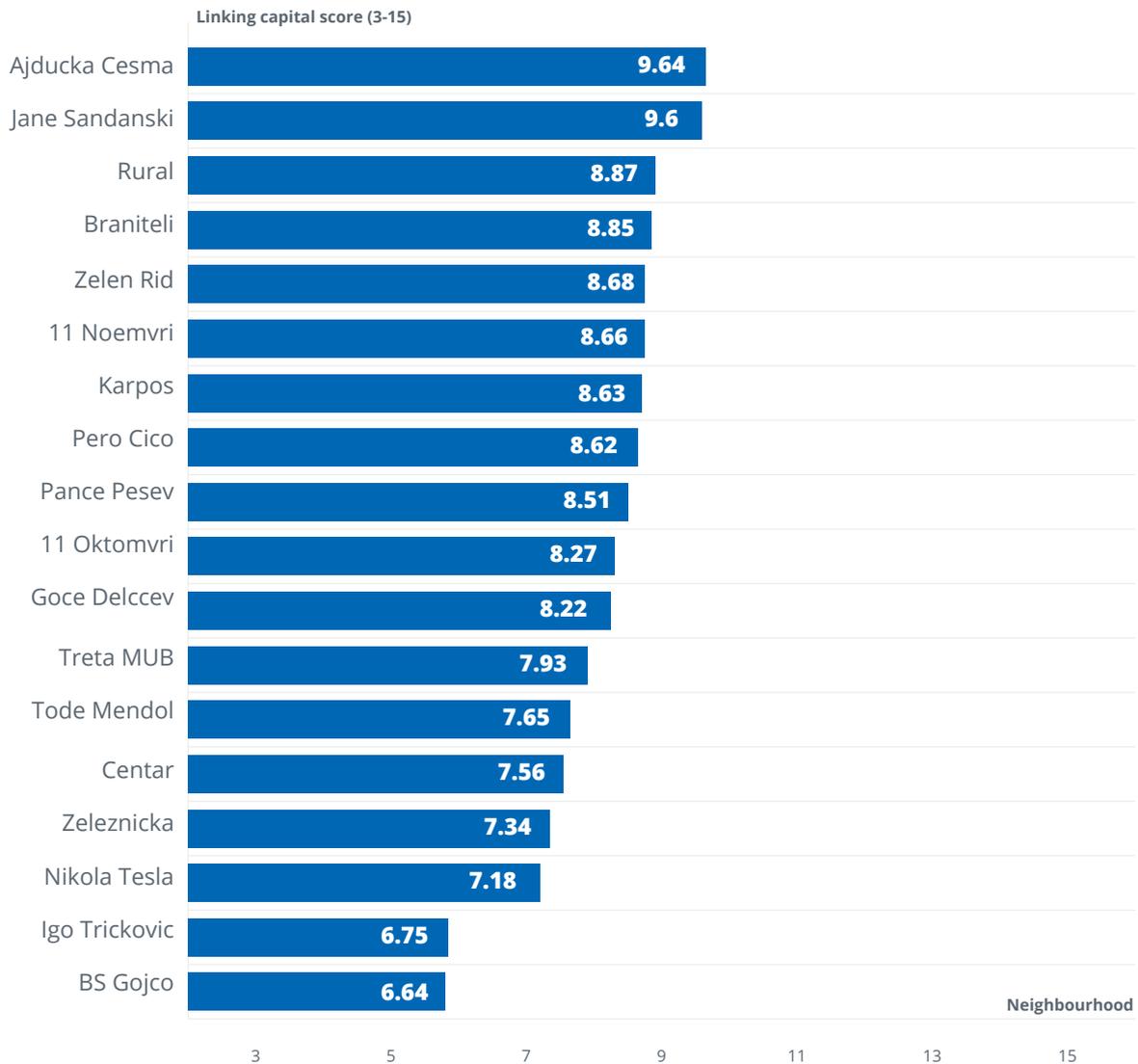
## Socio-demographic analysis

While average scores for linking capital remained the lowest among the five resilience domains across all socio-demographic groups, some notable differences were apparent in relation to an individual's settlement type and neighbourhood:

- Individuals from rural areas in the municipality demonstrated slightly higher linking capital with authorities than those based in the urban centre of Kumanovo. Linking capital was 9% higher in rural areas at 8.87 out of 15, compared with 8.06 in urban areas.
- Linking capital with authorities varied depending on the neighbourhood in which respondents live. Scores for linking capital ranged from 6.64 in BS Gojco to 9.64 in Ajducka Cesma, a difference of approximately 31%. The highest linking capital was found in Ajducka Cesma, Jane Sandanski and the rural areas surrounding Kumanovo, while the neighbourhoods with the lowest linking capital included BS Gojco, Igo Trickovic and Nikola Tesla (Figure 4).

<sup>10</sup> Freedom House (2020) 'Nations in transit 2020: North Macedonia', <https://freedomhouse.org/country/north-macedonia/nations-transit/2020>

<sup>11</sup> Transparency International (2021) 'Corruption Perceptions Index, World map: North Macedonia', <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2018/results/mkd>



**FIGURE 04** Linking capital score of inhabitants of Kumanovo, by neighbourhood, 2020

- As in the previous section, no publicly available research has been conducted which could explain the differences in linking capital scores between neighbourhoods in Kumanovo. BS Gojco is close to the centre of the city, while Igo Trickovic is on its outskirts. Jane Sandanski and Ajducka Cesma have lower income families who have mostly migrated from rural areas around Kumanovo in recent decades. However, again there is no data on these neighbourhoods regarding incarceration rates, income levels, perceptions of corruption, voting trends, etc. Further research will need to be carried out if differences in linking capital between neighbourhoods is to be fully understood.
- No significant differences were found in respondents' linking capital with authorities by gender, age, ethnicity or education. The fact that linking capital scores do not vary significantly by ethnicity suggests that all groups currently distrust all government institutions equally. This finding is important given historic tensions caused by the lack of ethnic representation in public institutions.

## 4 Resilience in Kumanovo is negatively affected by the lack of cohesion between communities in the municipality

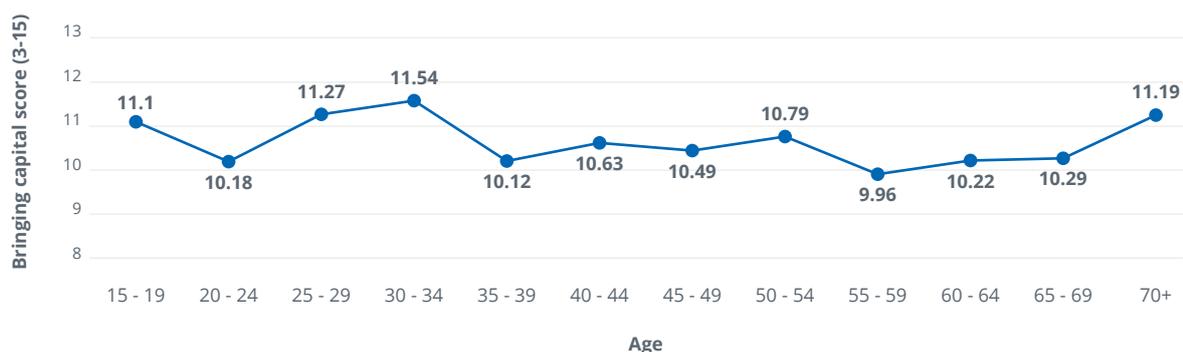
The average score for bridging capital with members of out-groups was also on the lower end of the five resilience domains at 10.67 out of 15. The item statements for bridging capital related to: an individual's trust and confidence in people from other groups, the strength of their ties with members of other communities, whether they felt comfortable connecting with individuals from out-groups, and the degree to which they value inter-group harmony.

The municipality of Kumanovo is multi-ethnic and multicultural, composed of Macedonians (60.47%), Albanians (25.80%), Serbs (6.67%), Roma (5.71%) and other groups (1.35%). As a result of this diversity, good relations between the communities are crucial for peace and development. However, the low bridging capital scores reported are not surprising given North Macedonia's history of distrust and violence between the different ethnic and religious communities that make up its population. Ethnic tensions between the majority ethnic Macedonians and minority ethnic Albanians have been prominent throughout the country's history, culminating in the 2001 conflict. Kumanovo was one of the main theatres of conflict, which served to exacerbate or create new rifts between the various ethnic communities. For instance, during the conflict, the National Liberation Army allegedly cut off water supplies to households in the city causing a humanitarian crisis. Following the signing of the Ohrid Framework Agreement, ethnic inclusion forms a key legal demand for public institutions and governance and, with exception of a handful of incidents, inter-ethnic relations have largely remained peaceful. Nevertheless, instead of reaping the benefits of improved social cohesion, the country has largely witnessed ethnic Macedonians and Albanians organising into increasingly parallel communities. This is evident in the parallel, and often segregated, school system in the country where ethnic Macedonian students follow class in Macedonian language schools, while ethnic Albanian students follow classes in Albanian language schools. Also, there is a system where ethnic Macedonian and Albanian students would go to the same school, but in different shifts in order to allow them to study in their native language. While it is therefore understandable that bridging capital is low, it is nonetheless significant that it is higher than linking capital. **This undermines a common assumption that inter-ethnic tensions are the biggest threat to peace and prosperity in the country, when in fact our survey demonstrates that poor trust in government and institutions is a more significant factor.**

### Socio-demographic analysis

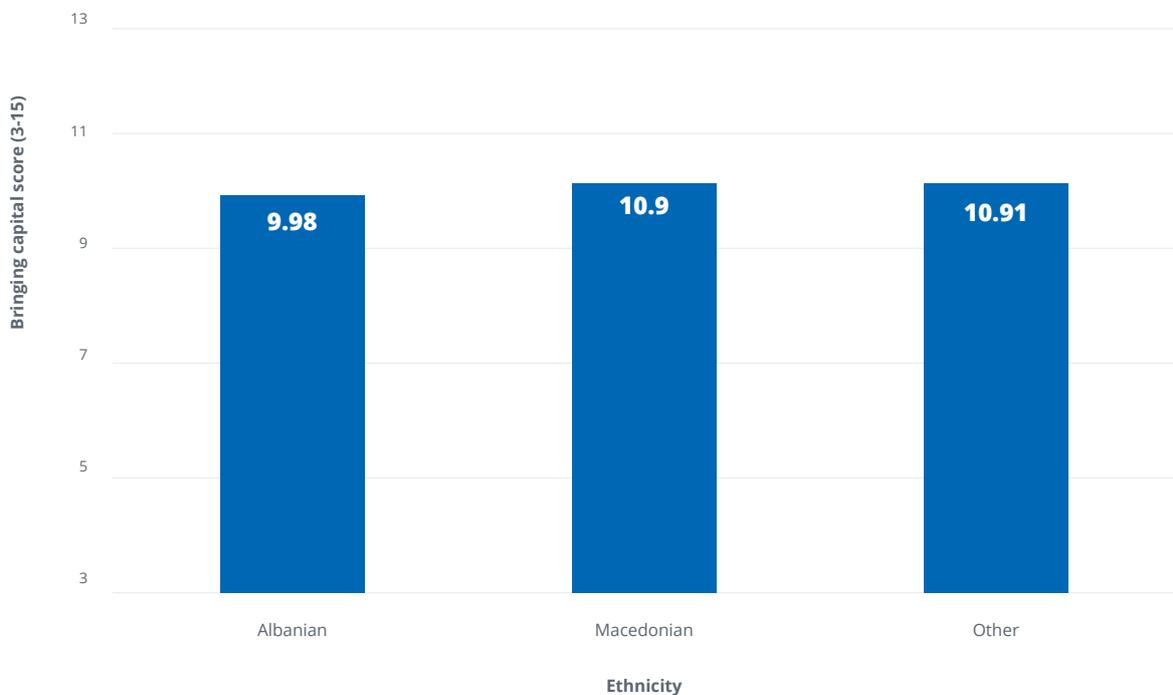
A detailed assessment of the dataset shows that certain socio-demographic characteristics tend to be associated with different attitudes towards out-groups:

— Bridging capital with out-groups tended to be marginally higher among young people than older members of the population. The average score for bridging capital for individuals aged 15–34 was 11.02 out of 15 in Kumanovo, compared with 10.36 for those aged 35–69. Again 20–24 year olds lay outside this trend with the second-lowest bridging capital of any group in the municipality (10.18 out of 15) (Figure 5).



**FIGURE 05** Bridging capital score of inhabitants of Kumanovo, by age group, 2020

- The difference in bridging capital between the various generations merits further investigation. Individuals aged 15–35 were either born or had their earliest memories when North Macedonia gained independence from Yugoslavia and lived in relative peace compared with other republics in the federation. Meanwhile, older generations would have more vivid memories of the bloody dissolution of the country and the conflict in 2001. This is one hypothesis that may explain why younger generations have greater bridging capital than their elders. Nonetheless, it should not be ignored that among youth there is a large fall in bridging capital scores among 20–24 year olds. It is important not to ignore this age group, not least because the three returned foreign terrorist fighters who were arrested in Kumanovo on 31 August 2020 for plotting a terrorist attack were 22, 25 and 28 years old, and all fell within this age range when they first left for Syria.<sup>12</sup>
- Ethnic Albanians in Kumanovo reported slightly lower levels of bridging capital with out-groups than other ethnic communities in the municipality. The average bridging capital score for Albanians was 9.98 out of 15, compared with 10.90 for Macedonians and 10.91 for all other ethnic groups (a category comprising Serbs, Roma, Turks, Bosniaks, etc.) (Figure 6)



**FIGURE 06** Bridging capital score of inhabitants of Kumanovo, by ethnicity, 2020

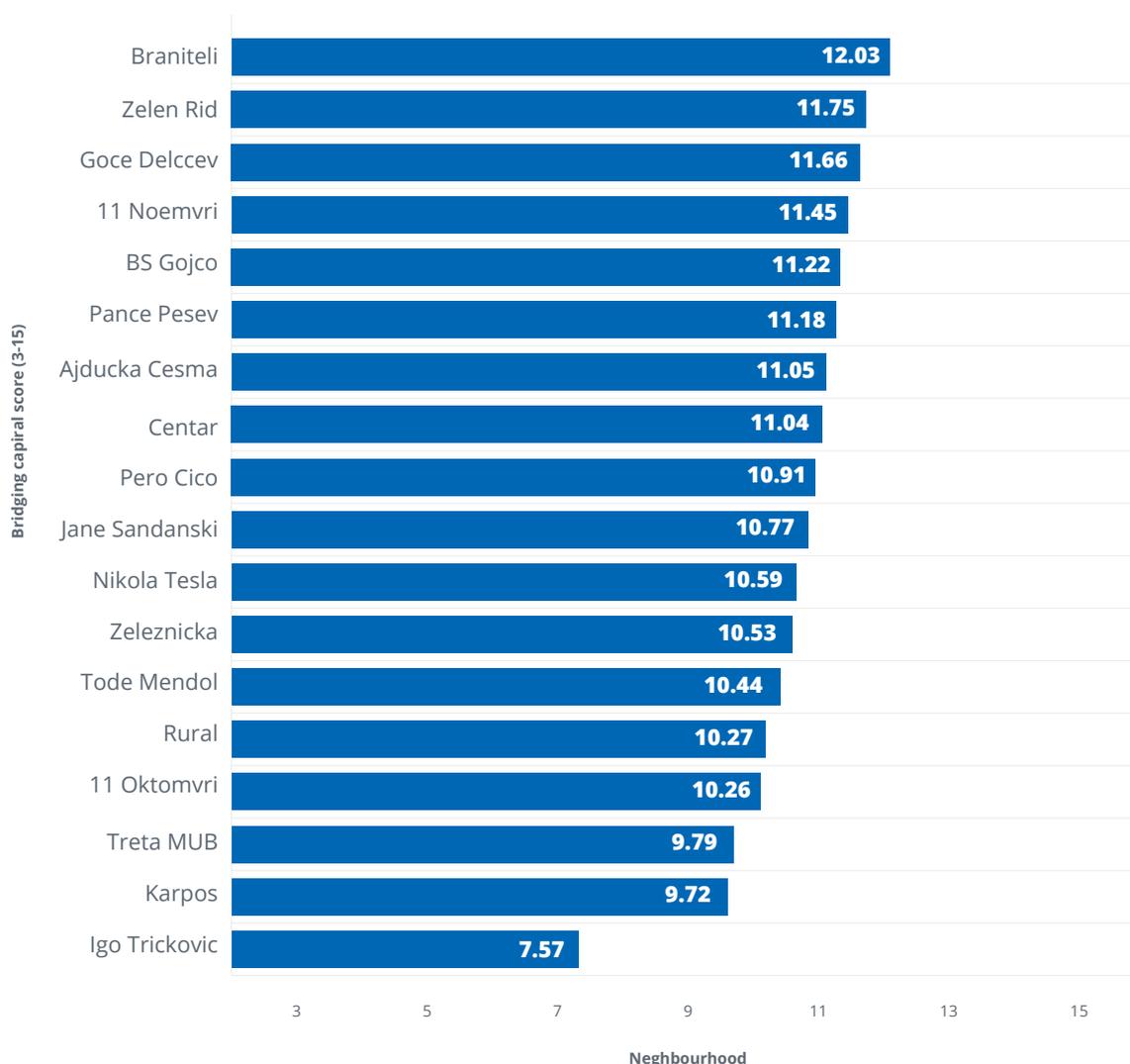
Strengthening bridging capital between the Macedonian and Albanian ethnic communities has been the goal of many international and national policies and measures. Nevertheless, bridging capital with out-groups still remains relatively middling across the populace of Kumanovo. Albanians in the municipality reported marginally lower bridging capital scores, which could be explained by a variety of factors. One reason could be that Albanians perceive (in many instances correctly) that some segments of the Macedonian community view them as foreigners or as subversive threats in their own country. Even some Macedonian political elites, including the former Macedonian president, viewed demands to make Albanian an official language of North Macedonia as a threat to the country’s sovereignty and independence.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Libertas (2020) ‘(Galerija) MVR gi objavi fotografiite od uapsenite teroristi na ISIS vo Kumanovo,’ 1 September, <https://libertas.mk/galeri-a-mvr-gi-ob-avi-fotografiite-od-uapsenite-teroristi-na-isis-vo-kumanovo/>

<sup>13</sup> VOA News (2017) ‘Macedonian president warns of Albanian threat to sovereignty,’ 7 March, <https://www.voanews.com/europe/macedonian-president-warns-albanian-threat-sovereignty>

Similar bridging capital scores between Macedonians and other ethnic groups in Kumanovo could be explained by the fact that the merged score among ‘other ethnicities’ comprises mainly Serbs, the third largest ethnic group in the municipality. Serbs speak a similar language to Macedonians and share the same Orthodox Christian faith, which has aided their efforts to integrate into society and which in turn could produce similar bridging capital scores.

- Bridging capital among individuals living in the urban heart of Kumanovo is fractionally higher than those in rural areas, 10.77 versus 10.29 out of 15.
- Again, individuals’ neighbourhood of residence appears to be significantly associated with their bridging capital with out-groups. Scores generally ranged from 9.72 in Karpos to 12.03 in Braniteli, which equates to an increase in bridging capital of about 19%. Among the 18 neighbourhoods in this report, Igo Trickovic was an outlier with an average bridging capital of 7.57, far lower than other areas of the municipality. Neighbourhoods with the highest bridging capital were Braniteli, Zelen Rid and Goce Delcev, while the lowest scores were found in Igo Trickovic, Karpos and Treta MUB (Figure 7). Similarly, as indicated above, more research needs to be carried out to find out why a handful of neighbourhoods in Kumanovo repeatedly show resilience scores that fall significantly above or below the average for the municipality.



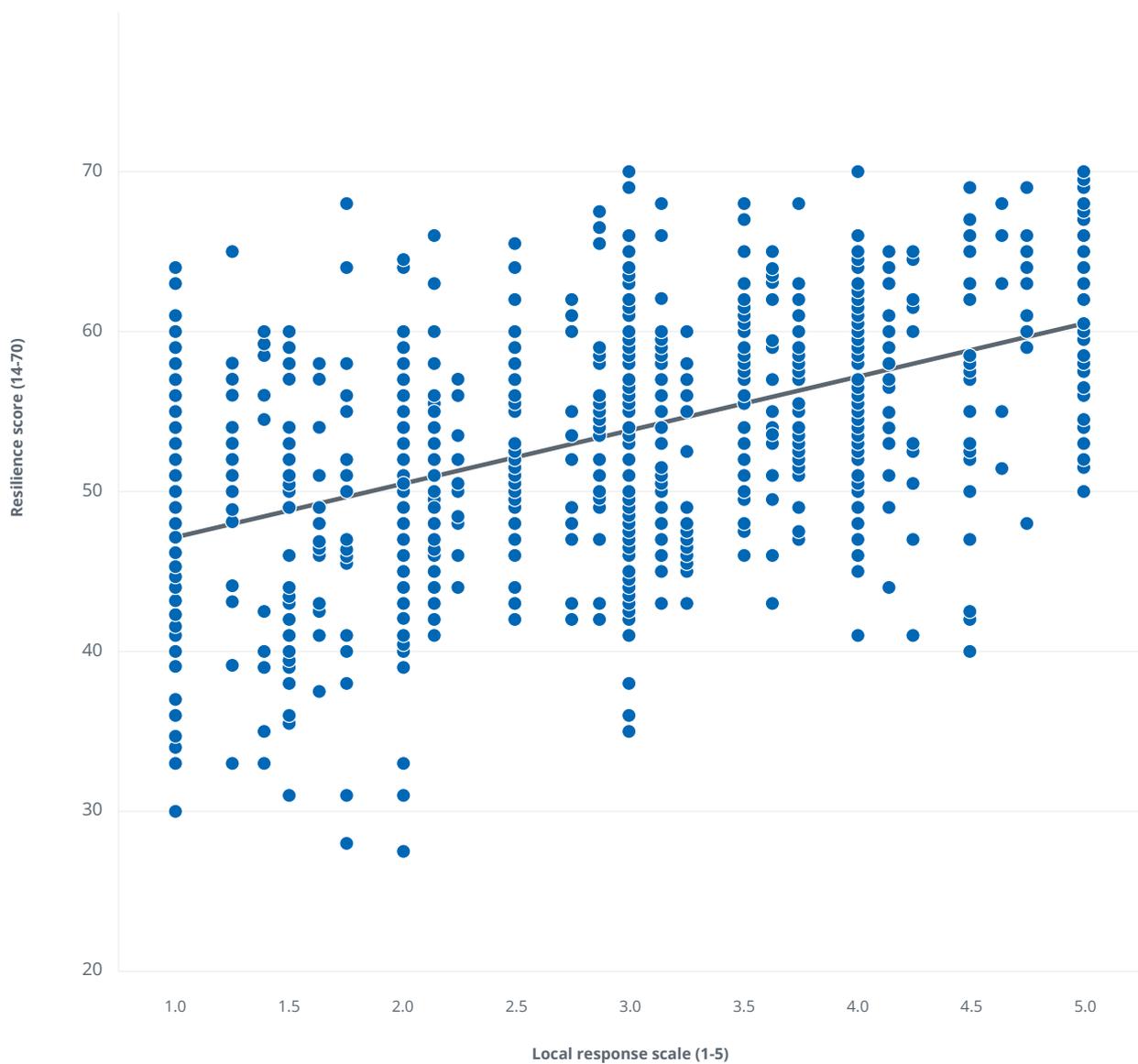
**FIGURE 07** Bridging capital score of inhabitants of Kumanovo, by neighbourhood, 2020

- No significant differences were found in respondents’ bridging capital with out-groups by gender or education.

## 5 Public confidence in the response of local authorities, schools and religious institutions to violent extremism has a significant impact on resilience in Kumanovo

The survey results revealed that public confidence in the response of local authorities, schools and religious institutions to violent extremism is a good predictor of resilience, with higher levels of confidence associated with higher resilience. Respondents' attitudes towards local responses combined with their awareness of the LPC and CAT explained 30% of the variation in their resilience scores, suggesting that these three factors have a major influence on resilience in Kumanovo.

Confidence in local authorities was calculated using a four-item statement Likert scale assessing how well local authorities, schools and religious institutions in the municipality tackle social problems like discrimination, intolerance and hate. Answers to this local response scale are scored from 1 to 5, with higher scores indicating greater confidence in the local response. As the scatter plot of Figure 8 shows, confidence in the local response to violent extremism is moderately correlated with resilience in Kumanovo, with greater confidence linked to higher resilience.



**FIGURE 08** Resilience score of inhabitants of Kumanovo, by local response scale, 2020

## 6 Public opinion is fairly evenly divided on how well local authorities, schools and religious institutions tackle social problems like intolerance and hate in Kumanovo

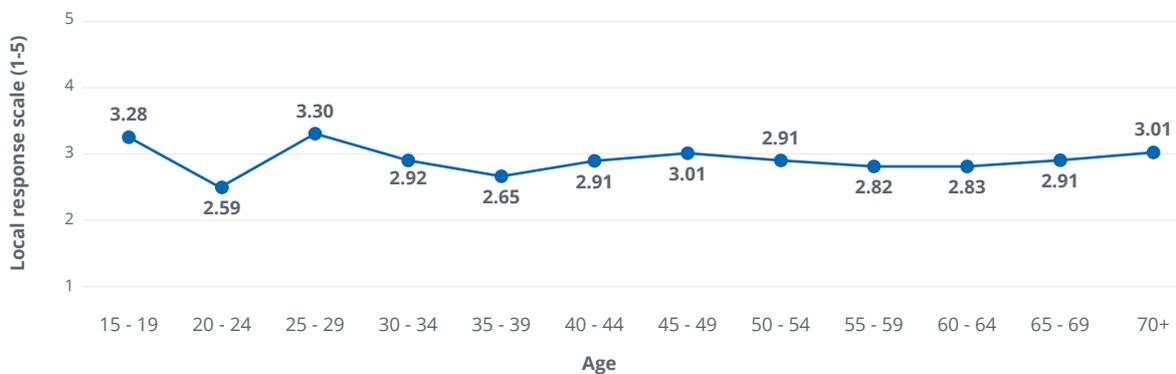
Survey respondents were asked to rate the effectiveness of various local institutions in addressing discrimination, intolerance and hate using a four-question local response scale. On average, 37% of respondents felt that local authorities, schools and religious institutions had responded effectively to these issues, while 38% believed that they had not. The local response scale consisted of four attitudinal statements, which were each rated on a 1 to 5 Likert scale, with a higher average score across the four questions suggesting there was greater confidence in the response of local institutions. The average score for the scale was 2.93, with extensive variation observed in how survey respondents rated the effectiveness of local institutions.

The fairly even split in public opinion on the quality and effectiveness of local responses to hate and discrimination could be linked to various factors. Kumanovo has been part of a number of activities designed to tackle these issues and improve social cohesion. These activities and programmes have probably had a range of effects on the ground. However, it seems fairly improbable that the majority of survey respondents have accessed any research outlining the impact of anti-hate and discrimination programmes so their views are most likely based largely on opinion rather than evidence. Some individuals may base their views on the impact of a particular government activity on their political affiliation. On the role of the local institutions, for example, an individual could provide answers based on their political affiliation, suggesting that their answer has nothing to do with the genuine quality of the programmes but rather their support for a particular political party.

### Socio-demographic analysis

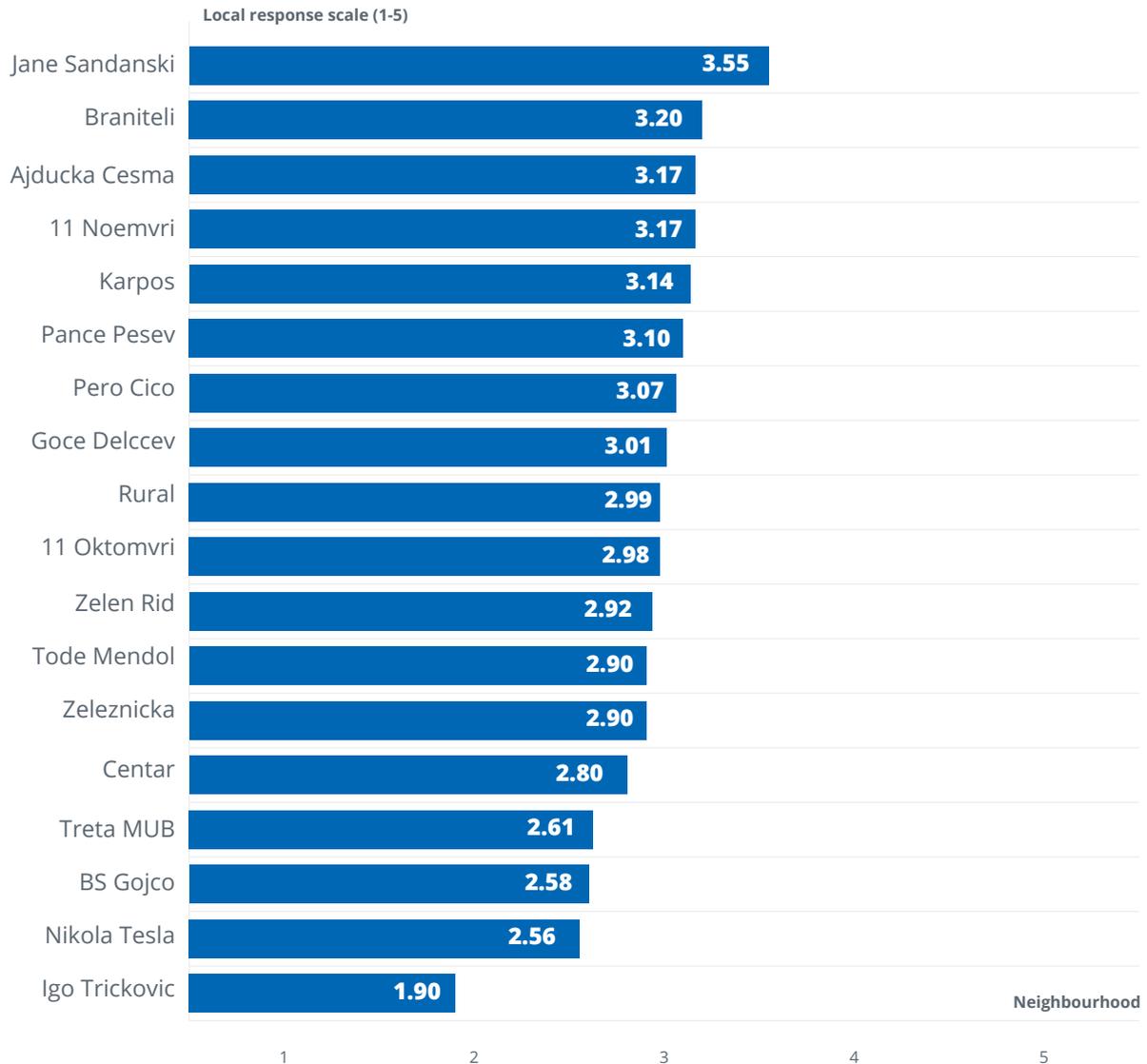
Except for marginal differences in age and neighbourhood, no clear association was found between respondents’ socio-demographic characteristics and their attitudes towards the effectiveness of local responses to intolerance and hate:

The survey revealed that youth aged 15–34 tend to be more positive about the effectiveness of local authorities, schools and religious institutions in addressing intolerance and hate than older residents of Kumanovo. On average, youth groups rated the local response to these issues at 3.02 on a 1 to 5 scale, compared with 2.86 among 35–69 year olds. Again, an exception to this trend was observed among 20–24 year olds, who showed the least confidence in the effectiveness of local responses to intolerance and hate at 2.59 (Figure 9).



**FIGURE 09** Local response scale of inhabitants considering how well local authorities, schools and religious institutions tackle social problems like intolerance and hate in Kumanovo, by age group, 2020

While most neighbourhoods were fairly evenly divided in their attitudes towards the effectiveness of local responses to intolerance and hate, certain areas of Kumanovo slightly varied from this trend. Scores largely ranged from 2.56 in Nikola Tesla to 3.20 in Braniteli, equating to a 25% increase. However, Igo Trickovic represented a negative outlier with an average rating of 1.90, and Jane Sandanski a positive outlier with an average score of 3.55 (Figure 10).



**FIGURE 10** Local response scale of inhabitants considering how well local authorities, schools and religious institutions tackle social problems like intolerance and hate in Kumanovo, by neighbourhood, 2020

No significant differences were found in respondents' attitudes towards the effectiveness of local responses to discrimination, intolerance and hate on the basis of their gender, ethnicity, education or settlement type.

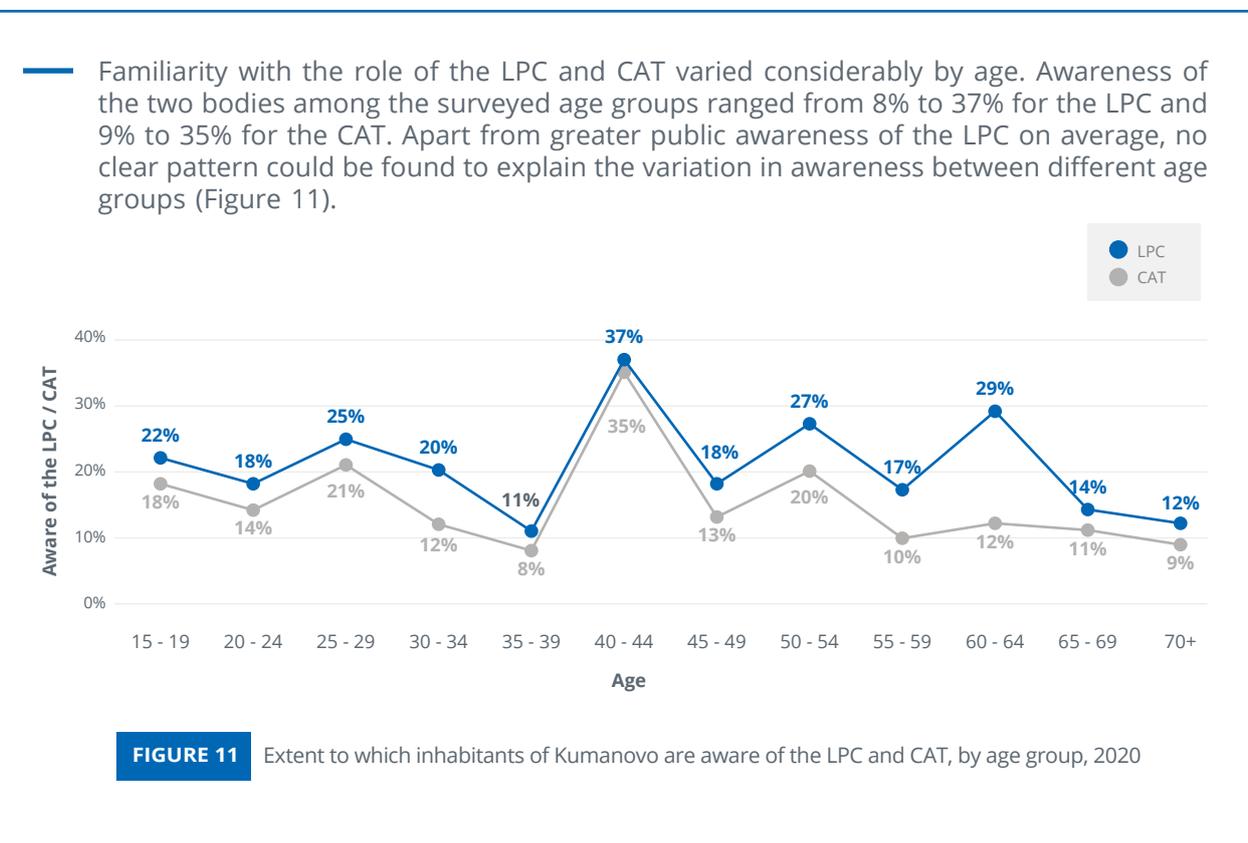
## 7 Citizens of Kumanovo have a limited awareness of bodies designed to prevent violent extremism in the municipality

Public awareness of the existence and responsibilities of the LPC and CAT is limited in Kumanovo. Based on the survey responses, only 20% of people in the municipality are familiar with the role of the LPC and only 16% are familiar with the role of the CAT. In both cases awareness was measured using 5-point Likert-type scales, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Unsurprisingly, a correlation was found between awareness of the two bodies, with greater familiarity with the LPC tending to coincide with greater familiarity with the CAT.

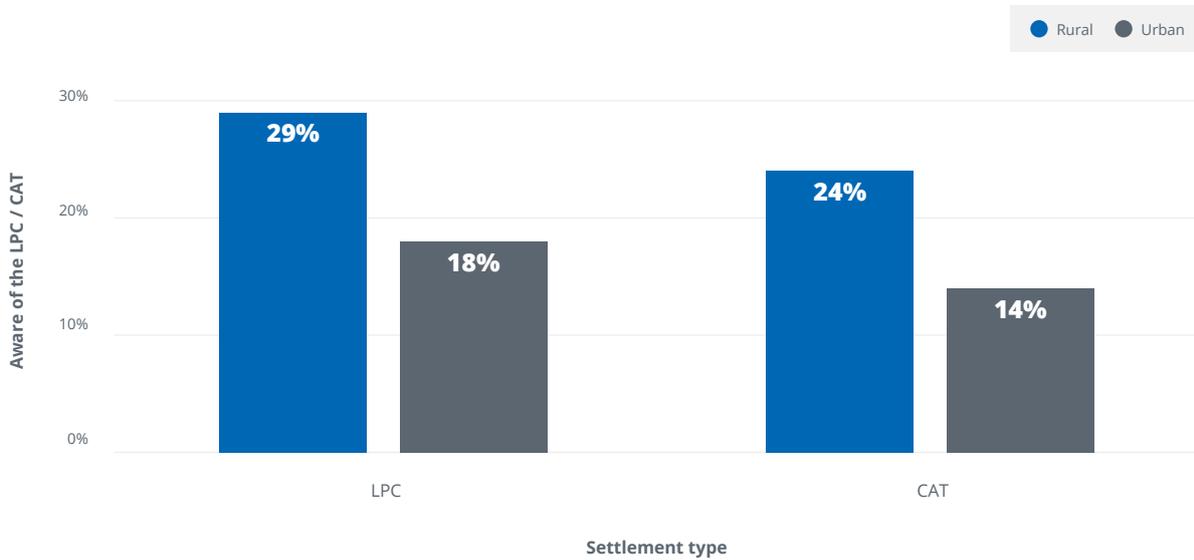
The LPC in Kumanovo was established in 2008 as a tool to increase confidence in law enforcement and local government institutions. Unlike many LPCs around the country, which were formed only on paper, the LPC in Kumanovo is fully operational. The body has been used continuously since 2008 by law enforcement and municipal officials as a forum to discuss societal challenges, and plan and implement prevention activities. On the other hand, the CAT was formed as a result of SCN engagement and as a permanent thematic working group within the LPC in 2019. It has a specific mandate to prevent and counter violent extremism. At the time this survey was conducted, the CAT was in its infancy and the limited public awareness of the body is not surprising. However, given the swathe of activities implemented by the LPC over the last 12 years, popular awareness of its existence might be expected to be higher and will need to be strengthened. Building public awareness should be a priority for local stakeholders because, as outlined in Finding 5, increased familiarity with the LPC and CAT translates to higher community resilience in the municipality.

### Socio-demographic analysis

Public awareness of the LPC and CAT was low among all socio-demographic groups, but some differences were identified in respondents' age and settlement type:



Individuals residing in rural Kumanovo have moderately higher awareness of the existence and responsibilities of the LPC and CAT. For both bodies, awareness was approximately 10 percentage points higher in rural areas than urban ones (Figure 12).

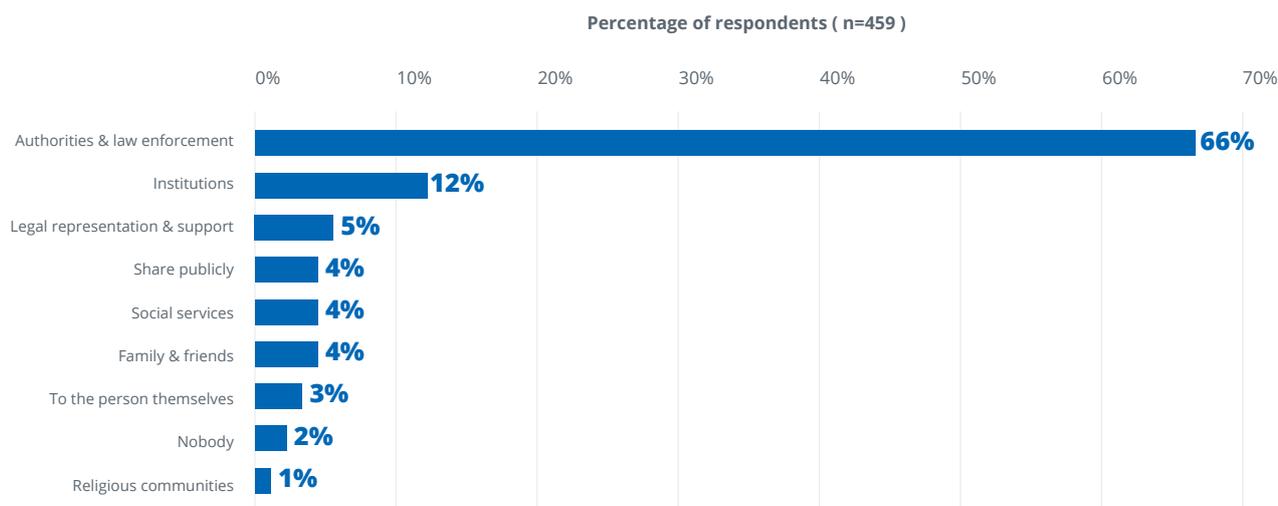


**FIGURE 12** Extent to which inhabitants of Kumanovo are aware of the LPC and CAT, by settlement type, 2020

No significant differences were found in respondents' awareness of the LPC and CAT from their gender, ethnicity, education or neighbourhood.

## 8 Members of the public in Kumanovo are most likely to turn to local authorities and the police when they experience or witness discrimination and hate

The survey indicates that most people living in Kumanovo would turn to local authorities and law enforcement agencies if they witnessed or experienced discrimination that is based on personal characteristics like race, ethnicity or religion. Investigated through an open-ended question, respondents were asked to identify who they would contact in the event of a hateful or discriminatory incident. Most individuals identified law enforcement authorities (66%), followed by institutions (12%). The remaining 22% of respondents chose a variety of groups ranging from speaking with friends and family to contacting social services (Figure 13).

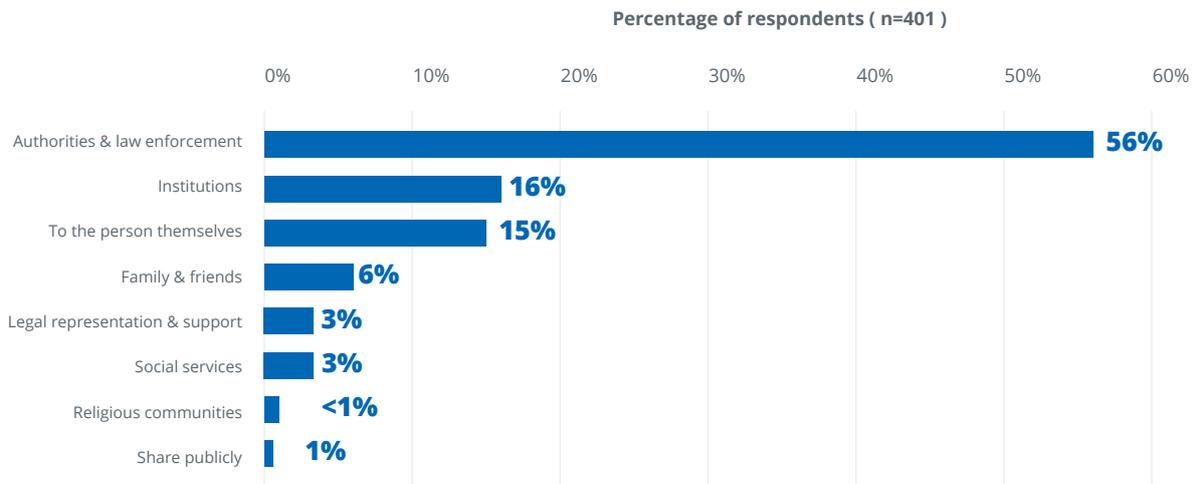


**FIGURE 13** Extent to which inhabitants of Kumanovo are likely to turn to institutions or informal groups when they experience or witness discrimination and hate, 2020

Unfortunately, only 44% of respondents provided an answer to this question, which makes drawing accurate conclusions from the findings more difficult. This was most likely due to the sensitive nature of the question or the limited personal experience respondents had with hate and discrimination. However, this finding supports existing government guidance and policy that the police are responsible for dealing with all social grievances of this kind. There is neither governmental nor public awareness of the value non-securitised stakeholders and civilian institutions can have in this field and the contribution they can make to preventing and countering factors that would lead to discrimination and polarisation.

## 9 People in Kumanovo are most likely to contact local authorities and police if someone they know is acting in a hateful or discriminatory way

Survey respondents identified a range of actors they would contact if someone they knew was acting in a hateful or discriminatory way towards people on the basis of their ethnicity, race or religion. Most individuals who answered the question (56%) stated that if they knew someone was acting in this manner they would turn to authorities and law enforcement; 16% would contact institutions of North Macedonia, though the specific institutions were not identified; and a further 15% would speak to them personally (Figure 14). Again, due to the sensitive nature of the question and the limited experience of many individuals with this issue, only 38% of respondents provided an answer to the question.



**FIGURE 14** Extent to which inhabitants of Kumanovo are likely to turn to institutions or informal groups when someone they know is acting in a hateful or discriminatory way, 2020

As with Finding 8, this further strengthens the common perception that the police are responsible for dealing with all types of ‘deviant behaviour’ in the community, neglecting the role that other actors, including some mentioned in Figure 14, can play, using their expertise or resources.

# Next steps

The Kumanovo Community Resilience Study is one in a series of research briefs being undertaken by the ISD's SCN aimed at supporting evidence-based prevention programming in North Macedonia. This report has two goals: to provide a baseline of actionable data on resilience that national and local governmental and non-governmental stakeholders can use when designing policy and activities, and to serve as a baseline against which the impact of CAT activities can be evaluated.

In addition to this report, ISD is conducting two additional surveys under its SCN programming. These will analyse the role and effect of COVID-19 disinformation on polarisation in Kumanovo and North Macedonia. The Kumanovo study was inspired by the observation of CAT members that there had been an increase in polarisation and animosity between various communities in the municipality. Drawing on the CAT's insights, ISD identified a research gap in this area and conducted a rapid appraisal of consumers' susceptibility to disinformation to support prevention activities in Kumanovo. The North Macedonia study was inspired by the Kumanovo survey and designed using a more robust methodology in order to allow more accurate conclusions and recommendations to be drawn. These studies will allow ISD to measure and assess the role of disinformation on polarisation in North Macedonia and will help inform and target practical SCN programmes.

As a part of its Young Cities Programming, ISD is also conducting two youth resilience studies in Cair (Skopje) and Gostivar – two SCN members in North Macedonia. The purpose of this data will be to support campaigns developed by youth groups in these cities and provide an evidence base for municipal stakeholders to understand youth grievances, needs and motivations. This data will also inform the design of youth-focused policies and activities on countering hate and extremism.

ISD plans to present the findings of all these efforts to relevant local, national and international governmental and non-governmental stakeholders'. Findings and recommendations will generate an evidence base to inform and better target activities of SCN and Young Cities, maximising the impact of programming to bring real-world benefits to the communities and municipalities engaged.

# Annex 1: Full Methodology: Kumanovo Community Resilience Study

As part of its programming in the Western Balkans, the Strong Cities Network (SCN) carried out a community perception study in North Macedonia, funded by the US Department of State. The Western Balkans project aims to assist in the creation of a local community action team (CAT) in the municipality of Kumanovo and support them in developing and implementing a local action plan (LAP) to prevent violent extremism.

The goal of the survey, which will be repeated at the end of the project, was to provide a baseline for the CAT's activities in order to evaluate the body's ability to function as an effective mechanism for preventing violent extremism in Kumanovo. The survey for this study is split into two parts: the first measures community perception of hate and extremism in the municipality and the local government's response to it, and the second gauges the population's resilience to radicalisation.

The baseline survey was conducted between 10 and 25 February 2020 on behalf of SCN by the Institute for Political Research – Skopje (IPRS), a research company based in Skopje, North Macedonia. For the study, IPRS surveyed an unbiased, representative sample of the municipality, collecting 1,052 valid (complete) responses from residents aged 15 and over. The data was gathered using telephone interviews, of which 797 were completed in Macedonian and 255 in Albanian.

This methodology report consists of six sections outlining the sample design, survey mode, survey instrument, sample disposition and weighting, procedures for treating missing data, and some of the limitations of this study. A complete copy of the survey instrument used in this study is included as Annex 2.

## 1. Sample Design

To ensure that the telephone interviews produced a dataset that was unbiased and representative of the population, units were randomly selected from a stratified sample frame using three-stage probability sampling. In order to ensure a sufficiently large sample was collected, IPRS was instructed to gather 1,100 responses using this method. The following process was employed to construct the sample:

- 1 The sample frame was stratified in accordance with the population size of different areas in the municipality. The sample frame for the municipality of Kumanovo consisted of 110 strata, equivalent to the polling stations used in elections.
- 2 For each telephone interview, a probability proportional to size method was used to randomly select a stratum from the sample frame factoring population density into the chance of selection.
- 3 Within the stratum, simple random sampling was then used to select telephone numbers for interview.

## 2. Survey Mode(s)

IPRS conducted the survey in Macedonian and Albanian using telephone interviews. Ten enumerators were engaged for this process supervised by two controllers and one project manager. To ensure that a high quality of data was collected, experienced enumerators with academic backgrounds in subjects compatible with survey topic were selected. Both the controllers and enumerators were then trained on the regional specifications and socio-demographic characteristics of the population of interest, plus the data collection requirements of the study and the survey instrument they would be using.

For the non-Macedonian communities in Kumanovo, appropriate enumerators from other ethnic groups were engaged to mitigate any possible language barriers or gaps in communication arising from a lack of cultural awareness or authenticity.

## 3. Survey Instrument

The survey instrument used in this study consists of 30 questions and contains a mixture of bespoke items developed by SCN and an established attitudinal measure, BRAVE-14. The survey focuses on two areas of interest: awareness of, and attitudes towards, violent extremism and prevention in Kumanovo; and general community resilience to hate and extremism. As mentioned above, a copy of the survey instrument can be found in Annex 2.

### Demography

The first section of the survey captures respondents' socio-demographic data and was included to allow for the identification of differences and associations between groups according to their personal characteristics. Of particular interest for this study were respondents' gender, age and ethnicity. A detailed section on demography was added to ensure the representativity of the sample and allow for post-stratification weighting if necessary.

### Awareness of, and attitudes towards, violent extremism and prevention in Kumanovo

The second part of the survey instrument explores awareness of, and attitudes towards, violent extremism and prevention in Kumanovo. It consists of seven 5-point Likert-scale-type questions and two open-ended questions, all of which were developed in-house by SCN and designed specifically for the project. Areas of interest include: the degree to which local authorities and institutions have responded effectively to hate and extremism in the community; general awareness of the established structures for prevention in Kumanovo; and respondents' personal experience with, and response to, incidents of hate and discrimination in their personal lives.

## Building Resilience Against Violent Extremism (BRAVE-14)

The final section of the survey employs BRAVE-14 to measure risk and protective factors present in the population for resilience to violent extremism.<sup>14</sup> BRAVE-14 was developed and validated for use with youth audiences by the Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation, Deakin University, and The Resilience Research Centre, Dalhousie University. While it has not been rigorously validated with all age ranges, BRAVE-14 has been used successfully to determine the resilience of older populations. The measure consists of 14 brief statements to which respondents are required to select a response from a 5-point Likert scale of agreement, with the aggregate of these scores denoting overall resilience. These 14 item statements were adapted to fit the context of North Macedonia and some wording changes were made to ease the Macedonian and Albanian translations. The 14 items investigate respondents' attitudes across five facets of resilience:

- 1 **Cultural identity and connectedness:** This covers familiarity with one's own cultural heritage, practices, beliefs, traditions, values and norms; knowledge of 'mainstream' cultural practices, beliefs, traditions, values and norms if different from one's own cultural heritage; the degree to which one has a sense of cultural pride; the feeling of being anchored in one's own cultural beliefs and practices; the perception that one's culture is accepted by the wider community; and feeling able to share one's culture with others.
- 2 **Bridging capital:** This relates to trust and confidence in people from other groups; support for and from people from other groups; strength of ties to people outside one's group; the perception that one has the skills, knowledge and confidence to connect with other groups; the degree to which one values inter-group harmony; and active engagement with people from other groups.
- 3 **Linking capital:** This encapsulates trust and confidence in government and authority figures; trust in community organisations; the perception that one has the skills, knowledge and resources to make use of institutions and organisations outside one's local community; and the ability to contribute to or influence policy and decision making relating to one's own community.
- 4 **Violence-related behaviours:** This covers the willingness to speak out publicly against violence; challenge the use of violence by others; and reject violence as a legitimate means of resolving conflict.
- 5 **Violence-related beliefs:** This investigates the degree to which violence is seen to confer status and respect; and the degree to which violence is normalised or tolerated in the community. The three items related to this facet of resilience are reverse-weighted.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>14</sup> M. Grossman and M. Ungar (2017) Understanding Youth Resilience to Violent Extremism: A Standardised Research Measure, <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5aebdc1dcc8fedda5a5815bb/t/5b20c64d70a6adcf82c304dd/1528874577754/Understanding+Youth+Resilience+to+Violent+Extremism+-+the+BRAVE-14+Standardised+Measure.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> Resilience Research Centre (2020) 'BRAVE Research Tool: Background', <https://brave.resilienceresearch.org/background/>

## 4. Sample Disposition

The dataset supplied by IPRS consisted of 1,052 valid responses from the municipality of Kumanovo. The disposition of the sample, including the response rate, weighting procedures and margin of sampling error are outlined below along with a tabulated comparison of the sample and population distributions in Table 1. All statistical procedures were carried out in IBM SPSS.

### Response rate

The response rate for the telephone interviews was calculated using The American Association of Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) RR2 definition and formula, one of the standard methods employed for gauging survey response rates.<sup>16</sup> The average response rate for surveys in North Macedonia varies depending on the sensitivity of the research topic in question, but usually falls within an interval of 30–60%. Despite the sensitivity of this study, the survey received a 43.19% response rate returning 1,052 valid responses.

### Weighting procedures

The final dataset for this survey was weighted to balance it with known population parameters in order to correct for systemic under- and over-representation of meaningful socio-demographic groups and ensure consistency between the sample and population distributions. No base-weights were applied to the dataset, but post-stratification weighting was conducted using the following procedure:

- 1 An iterative raking methodology was adopted to construct the weights for this study in order to address the problems associated with traditional post-stratification weighting techniques. The dataset was manually adjusted one variable at a time using an iterative proportional fitting process until the sample and population frequencies had fully converged. The raking achieved an acceptable fit with the population parameters after 47 iterations. The sample was adjusted to approximate the population of Kumanovo based on the latest socio-demographic data from the Bureau of Statistics and the 2002 household census for North Macedonia. Post-stratification raking was conducted on the parameters for the following socio-demographic categories: gender, age, ethnicity, highest level of education, settlement type and neighbourhood.<sup>17</sup>
- 2 The raked weights were then trimmed to remove excessively high or low weight values. Trimming was performed to reduce the impact of the weights on the variance of the estimates and thus the standard error of the sample. Weights with a value higher or lower than the median plus four times the interquartile range were truncated to this threshold. While the trimming incurred some bias by decreasing the representativity of the sample this was more than compensated for by the increased stability of the weights and reduction of the variances.<sup>18</sup>
- 3 Finally, as inferential statistics were carried out in IBM SPSS the weights were normalised to align the sample size of the weighted data with the unweighted data and account for any difference in standard errors.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>16</sup> AAPOR (2020) APPOR Response Rate Calculator 4.1, American Association for Public Opinion Research, April, <https://www.aapor.org/Education-Resources/For-Researchers/Poll-Survey-FAQ/Response-Rates-An-Overview.aspx>

<sup>17</sup> E. Dal Grande et al. (2015) 'Health estimates using survey raked-weighting techniques in an Australian population health surveillance system', *American Journal of Epidemiology*, 182/6, <https://academic.oup.com/aje/article/182/6/544/82086>; D. R. Johnson (2008) *Using Weights in the Analysis of Survey Data*, Population Research Institute, Pennsylvania State University, [http://www.nyu.edu/classes/jackson/design\\_of\\_social\\_research/Readings/Johnson%20-%20Introduction%20to%20survey%20weights%20%28PRI%20version%29.pdf](http://www.nyu.edu/classes/jackson/design_of_social_research/Readings/Johnson%20-%20Introduction%20to%20survey%20weights%20%28PRI%20version%29.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> Dal Grande et al. (2015) 'Health estimates using survey raked-weighting techniques in an Australian population health surveillance system'; F. Potter and Y. Zheng (2015) 'Methods and issues in trimming extreme weights in sample surveys', *Joint Statistical Meetings 2015*, <http://www.asarms.org/Proceedings/y2015/files/234115.pdf>

<sup>19</sup> Dal Grande et al. (2015) 'Health estimates using survey raked-weighting techniques in an Australian population health surveillance system'; Potter and Zheng (2015) 'Methods and issues in trimming extreme weights in sample surveys'.

Table 1 compares the population parameters for the municipality of Kumanovo with the unweighted and weighted sample distributions for this study.

	Valid N*	Total unweighted**	Total weighted**	Parameter**
<b>Gender</b>				
Female	507	48%	50%	50%
Male	545	52%	50%	50%
<b>Age</b>				
15 - 19	77	7%	6%	6%
20 - 24	86	8%	8%	8%
25 - 29	82	8%	8%	8%
30 - 34	79	8%	9%	9%
35 - 39	90	9%	9%	9%
40 - 44	99	9%	9%	9%
45 - 49	93	9%	9%	9%
50 - 54	82	8%	9%	9%
55 - 59	88	8%	8%	8%
60 - 64	81	8%	7%	7%
65 - 69	87	8%	6%	6%
70+	108	10%	11%	11%
<b>Ethnicity</b>				
Albanian	255	25%	25%	25%
Macedonian	747	71%	62%	61%
Other	50	5%	13%	14%
<b>Highest level of education</b>				
Unfinished Elementary	41	4%	6%	6%
Elementary	219	21%	28%	28%
Secondary	607	58%	51%	50%
Higher	185	18%	16%	16%
<b>Settlement type</b>				
Urban	826	79%	79%	79%
Rural	226	22%	21%	21%

	Valid N*	Total unweighted**	Total weighted**	Parameter**
<b>Neighbourhood</b>				
<b>Zeleznicka</b>	15	1%	1%	1%
<b>11 Oktomvri</b>	58	6%	6%	6%
<b>11 Noemvri</b>	55	5%	5%	5%
<b>Nikola Tesla</b>	48	5%	5%	5%
<b>Goce Delcev</b>	58	6%	5%	5%
<b>Zelen rid</b>	16	2%	2%	2%
<b>Jane Sandanski</b>	14	1%	1%	1%
<b>Tode Mendol</b>	122	12%	12%	12%
<b>Braniteli</b>	68	7%	6%	6%
<b>Treta MUB</b>	53	5%	5%	5%
<b>Karpos</b>	55	5%	5%	5%
<b>Igo Trickovic</b>	16	2%	2%	2%
<b>Pero Cico</b>	57	5%	6%	6%
<b>Ajducka cesma</b>	14	1%	2%	2%
<b>BS Gojco</b>	58	6%	5%	5%
<b>Centar</b>	74	7%	7%	7%
<b>Pance Pesev</b>	45	4%	4%	4%
<b>Rural***</b>	226	22%	21%	21%

\*N = 1,052.

\*\*Percentages do not add up to 100% due to rounding.

\*\*\*Rural neighbourhoods are not disaggregated in the study, but include: Umin Dol, Novo Selo, Ljubodrag, Cherkeze, Rezhanovce, Bedinje, Gorno Konjare, Dolno Konjare, Lopate, Recica, Tabanovce, Cetirce, Karabicane, Susevo, Sopot, Romanovce, Brzak, Agino Selo, Dobrosane, Proevce, Supli Kamen, Pcina, Vince, Studena Bara and Vakv.

**TABLE 01** Comparison of unweighted and weighted data with population parameters for the municipality of Kumanovo

## Weighting procedures

The Bureau of Statistics for North Macedonia estimates that the population of Kumanovo is between 90,000 and 95,000. The upper estimate was used for sampling calculations. The sampling error for the unweighted version of this study was 3.00% at a 95% confidence level. Due to the increased variances caused by the post-stratification weighting, a design effect of 1.26 was introduced into the data. Based on Kish's Approximate Effective Sample Size formula this increased the estimated margin of sampling error in this study to +/- 3.38% at a 95% confidence level.<sup>20</sup>

	N =	Sampling error**
Unweighted sample size	1,052	3.00%
Approximate effective sample size*	835	3.38%

\*Deff = 1.26.

\*\*95% confidence level.

**TABLE 02** Sampling error for Kumanovo Community Perception Survey

<sup>20</sup> Displayr (2020) 'Design effects and effective sample size', April, [https://docs.displayr.com/wiki/Design\\_Effects\\_and\\_Effective\\_Sample\\_Size](https://docs.displayr.com/wiki/Design_Effects_and_Effective_Sample_Size)

## 5. Missing data

As is to be expected with a study of this size, missing data through item non-response was observed across a range of questions. The volume of missing data varied by question as did plausible reasons for its occurrence. Explanations for item non-response as well as SCN procedures for treating missing data are outlined below. All statistical procedures were carried out in IBM SPSS.

### Building Resilience Against Violent Extremism (BRAVE-14)

The percentage of missing values across the 14 variables that constitute BRAVE-14 ranged between 2% and 9%. In total 374 out of 1,103 responses were incomplete. IPRS reported that where item non-response occurred it was because respondents were unsure of or did not know their attitudes towards the statement at the time of the survey. Beyond this, no discernible pattern could be found to explain the missing values in the dataset or to suggest that their absence was dependent on either the values themselves or some other variable. As a result, SCN has chosen to treat this data as 'missing completely at random' (MCAR).

BRAVE-14 is a composite scale awarding respondents a resilience score ranging from 14 to 70, therefore item non-response could not be ignored without severely impacting the accuracy of the measure. Assuming that data is MCAR, a two-stage methodology was employed to treat the missing values, using an imputation approach to retain as much of the dataset as possible:

- 1 Responses with more than three missing variables across BRAVE-14 were identified and removed from both this measure and the rest of the dataset using listwise deletion. This removed 4.62% of responses, reducing the size of the dataset from 1,103 to 1,052 valid cases.
- 2 As an ordinal scale, two-way median imputation was then selected to estimate the remaining values and account for personal and item effect on the substituted responses.<sup>21</sup>
- 3 Finally, Levene's Test was employed to validate the resulting dataset and confirm that the imputed values did not produce a significant difference in the variances of the overall resilience scores ( $F = .005$ ,  $p = .945$ ).

### Awareness of, and attitudes towards, violent extremism and prevention in Kumanovo

The percentage of missing data in the Likert-type scales varied between 8% and 19% and 56% and 63% for the open-ended questions. Out of the 1,103 cases, 596 of the Likert-type-scale responses and 882 of the open-ended question responses were incomplete. Item non-response is predominantly explained by two factors. First, it is likely some respondents chose not to reply to questions to which they did not know the answer or they had no first-hand experience of the subject in question. This is supported by the high proportion of missing data in the questions relating to how hate and discrimination are addressed in schools and religious institutions. Second, the sensitivity of the open-ended questions, which investigated respondents' experience of, and response to, hate and discrimination by members of the general public and people they know personally.

For both the Likert-type scales and the open-ended questions, no systemic relationship could be found between either the propensity or values of missing and observed data. SCN has therefore also chosen to treat this data as MCAR. As values did not belong to a composite scale it was decided that no further action was needed to address the missing data beyond the listwise deletion applied to the dataset for BRAVE-14.

<sup>21</sup> | Eekhout et al. (2014) 'Missing data in a multi-item instrument were best handled by multiple imputation at the item score level', *Journal of Clinical Epidemiology*, 67/3, <https://research.vu.nl/ws/portalfiles/portal/42143216/chapter+3%3A+Handling+missing+data+in+a+multi-item+questionnaire.pdf>

## 6. Study Limitations

The nature of this study and SCN's programming in Kumanovo pose various challenges for measuring community perceptions in the municipality and evaluating the impact of the CAT accurately. These challenges and limitations are listed in Table 2 along with SCN's approach to mitigating them.

Factor	Risk or limitation	Mitigation
<b>Misreporting of respondents' attitudes</b>	<p>Reliance on self-reported attitudes rather than observed behaviours</p> <p>Misreporting due to the sensitivity of the research topic</p>	<p>Only partial mitigation possible</p> <p>Use of BRAVE-14 scale with questions framed around resilience factors that are less sensitive</p> <p>Awareness or attitudinal questions reviewed for their cultural sensitivity and designed to avoid explicit reference to extremism</p>
<b>Third party data collection</b>	<p>Data reliability cannot be guaranteed</p>	<p>Contractor selection followed stringent vetting and procurement processes</p> <p>SCN's local coordinators extensively consulted in selection process</p>
<b>Representativeness of the sample</b>	<p>Selection bias due to imbalances between the survey sample and the population</p> <p>Socio-demographic population parameters out of date</p> <p>Potential threat to external validity since youth under the age of 14 could not be surveyed for legal, ethical and cost reasons</p>	<p>Individual respondents randomly selected using three-stage probability sampling</p> <p>Statistical weighting adjustment performed to correct imbalances. Population parameters constructed referencing multiple sources</p>

Factor	Risk or limitation	Mitigation
<b>Item non-response</b>	Introduction of potential non-response bias	BRAVE-14: statistical adjustment performed to treat missing data using listwise deletion and two-way median imputation  Awareness and attitudinal questions: N/A, could not be mitigated
<b>Statistical adjustment of data (weighting and imputation)</b>	Causes potential threats to internal validity Reduced accuracy of data through distortion of variances, standard deviation and standard error  Inability to control for unknown confounding variables may introduce unforeseen biases	Statistical methods selected which reduce threat to internal validity Post-adjustment statistical tests and parallel analyses of raw data carried out to check divergence of original and recoded datasets  Large sample captured to reduce impact on data accuracy  Weighted and unweighted data made available for comparison
<b>Definition of resilience</b>	Definition of and attributes associated with resilience still contested	BRAVE-14 scale selected following extensive review of available research and survey scales
<b>Timelines for measuring project impact</b>	Long-term, community-level impact of the CAT will realistically emerge over several years; after this phase of SCN involvement concludes and the endline survey is conducted  Theory of change designed to track the CAT over 3-year implementation of the LAP COVID-19 has severely delayed implementation of the LAP	Only partial mitigation possible  Some change in community level attitudes expected, but small and confined to specific sub-populations  Separate evaluations to be conducted on large LAP activities  Long-term follow up highly recommended

**TABLE 03** Potential risks and mitigation factors

# Annex 2: Survey Instrument

## Demography

### 1 What is your gender?

- I. Female
- II. Male

### 2 What is your age?

- |            |             |
|------------|-------------|
| I. 15–19   | VII. 45–49  |
| II. 20–24  | VIII. 50–54 |
| III. 25–29 | IX. 55–59   |
| IV. 30–34  | X. 60–64    |
| V. 35–39   | XI. 65–69   |
| VI. 40–44  | XII. 70+    |

### 3 What is your ethnicity?

- I. Albanian
- II. Macedonian
- III. Other

### 4 What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- I. Unfinished elementary
- II. Elementary
- III. Secondary
- IV. Higher

### 5 Do you live in an urban or rural area of the municipality of Kumanovo?

- I. Urban
- II. Rural

### 6 What neighbourhood do you live in? (Open-ended question)

- I. Zeleznicka
- II. 11 Oktomvri
- III. 11 Noemvri
- IV. Nikola Tesla
- V. Goce Delcev
- VI. Zelen Rid
- VII. Jane Sandanski
- VIII. Tode Mednol
- IX. Braniteli
- X. Treta MUB
- XI. Karpos
- XII. Igo Trickovic
- XIII. Pero Cico
- XIV. Ajducka cesma
- XV. BS Gojco
- XVI. Centar
- XVII. Pance Pesev
- XVIII. Any rural neighbourhood

## Awareness of, and attitudes towards, violent extremism and prevention in Kumanovo

I will read you several statements in which you will need to choose one of the following answers: strongly disagree; somewhat disagree; neither agree nor disagree; somewhat agree; or, strongly agree.

- 1 Local authorities take social problems in the community seriously.
- 2 Local authorities work in the interests of all communities in Kumanovo equally.
- 3 Within schools, the occurrence of social problems such as discrimination, intolerance and hate are addressed effectively.
- 4 Within religious institutions, the occurrence of (churches, mosques and synagogues, etc.) social problems such as discrimination, intolerance and hate are addressed effectively.
- 5 I am aware of the existence and responsibilities of the Kumanovo Local Prevention Council.
- 6 I am aware of the existence and responsibilities of the Kumanovo CAT, i.e. Permanent Thematic Working Group on Extremism.
- 7 My municipality has a lack of tolerance for diversity (e.g. ethnic, religious, beliefs, etc.).
- 8 I have personally experienced or witnessed discrimination and hate against people because of their race, ethnicity, religion or other characteristics.
- 9 Who would you turn to if you experienced or witnessed discrimination and hate against people because of their race, ethnicity, religion or other characteristics? (Open-ended question)
- 10 Who would you turn to if you were worried about someone you know acting in a discriminatory and hateful way against people because of their race, ethnicity, religion or other characteristics? (Open-ended question)

## Building Resilience Against Violent Extremism (BRAVE-14)

I will read you several statements in which you will need to choose one of the following answers: strongly disagree; somewhat disagree; neither agree nor disagree; somewhat agree; or, strongly agree.

- 1 My cultural identity guides the way I live my life.
- 2 I trust authorities/law enforcement agencies.
- 3 In general, I trust people from other communities.
- 4 My community accepts that young people may use violence to solve problems.
- 5 I am willing to speak out publicly against violence in my community.
- 6 I feel supported by people from other communities.
- 7 I regularly engage in conversations with people of multiple religions/cultures and beliefs.
- 8 I am willing to challenge the violent behaviour of others in my community.
- 9 I feel confident when interacting with government and authorities.
- 10 I feel that my voice is taken into account when dealing with government and authorities.
- 11 It's important to me to maintain cultural traditions.
- 12 Being violent helps me earn the respect of others.
- 13 I am familiar with my cultural traditions, beliefs, practices and values.
- 14 Being violent helps show how strong I am.

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