

How does the securitization of Kosovo–Serbia relations impact the escalation of tensions and the role of media in shaping narratives?

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BACKGROUND

The continued securitization of relations between Serbia and Kosovo poses a serious threat to the stability of the area. Tensions have increased because of this process, increasing mistrust and conflict. The media has played a critical role in influencing popular narratives and perceptions, frequently enhancing political positions, and widening rifts in society. To address the underlying problems and advance regional peace, it is needed to comprehend the dynamics of this securitization and its implications.

CHALLENGES

Political Narratives. The portrayal of the Kosovo–Serbia dispute as an existential threat by political leaders has fostered a climate of fear and conflict. This narrative, often used to justify extraordinary measures, impedes progress towards peaceful resolutions and exacerbates regional instability.

Media's role in shaping Perceptions. State-controlled media especially in Serbia play a significant role in reinforcing disruptive narratives. The exaggerated and biased coverage further establishes stereotypes and nationalist sentiments, delaying reconciliation efforts and extending conflict.

Divergence in Public Perception. The lack of common ground between Kosovans and Kosovo Serbs, fueled by opposing media narratives, presents a significant challenge. This disparity in perceptions complicates dialogue and understanding, making peaceful coexistence and cooperation more difficult.

WAY FORWARD

- **Promoting Independent Media and Diverse Perspectives:** Strengthening independent media outlets and encouraging balanced coverage

can help mitigate the impact of state-controlled media narratives. This shift would contribute to a more informed and less divided public discourse.

- **Encouraging Inclusive Political Rhetoric:** Political leaders in both Kosovo and Serbia should adopt language that promotes cooperation and peaceful resolution. Moving away from securitizing narratives to a focus on dialogue and mutual understanding can pave the way for sustainable peace.

- **NGOs from Kosovo and BiH should advocate for institutional cooperation.** They should launch campaign dealing with this issue. Campaign would have to include politicians from both countries as well. As a part of campaign, NGOs can launch own media platform (web site, social media accounts) showing benefits from cooperation between countries. Organizing roundtable, seminars and publishing policy papers would draw media attention making more pressure in public for institutional cooperation.