
The USIP Learning Agenda: An Evidence Review

Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism: Assessing Missteps and Promising Community Approaches

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MARCH 2023



UNITED STATES
INSTITUTE OF PEACE
Making Peace Possible

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Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism

The United States Institute of Peace seeks to advance the field of peacebuilding by evaluating the evidence base supporting its core practices, such as dialogue and conflict analysis, engagement with religious leaders, and the prevention and countering of violent extremism. These systematic reviews identify effective programming and new approaches for further exploration. This evidence review paper evaluates the evidence and practice of an evolving approach to preventing and countering violent extremism: understanding and strengthening community resilience.

Preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE) is unique among peacebuilding areas. The field was initially shaped and influenced by a frenzied national security response to a perceived imminent threat from a global religious radical movement that sought the destruction of the West and its secular governments. Thus, the problem of violent extremism and its countering strategy were neatly encapsulated in an ideological paradigm that facilitated crisis decision-making rather than purposeful action in support of an evidence-based policy and practice. Today, in promoting a community resilience approach to P/CVE, it is critical to steer away from earlier ideologically influenced forms of community engagement by acknowledging that ideological remnants persist and continue to do harm to frontline communities; these forms of community engagement scapegoat communities for attracting violent-extremist networks and target them as “threats” for security force responses. Instead, the P/CVE field needs to adopt a radically different resilience approach that presumes and strengthens a community’s capacity to resist violent extremism.

Research Questions and Methodology

Violent extremism generally spreads through localized conflict in which extremist groups manipulate community, group, or individual grievances to gain position and traction. Thus, P/CVE will depend on how communities redeploy core capacities (information gathering, communication, leadership) to shape community responses to meet the threat—responses that require significant levels of local trust and community cohesion. In thinking about how to assess and support community resilience—including how to characterize and evaluate resilience capacity—it is critical to clearly define what resilience to violent extremism is and how it is measured.

Resilience is defined quite differently by different fields. In the field of engineering, resilience means the capacity to maintain the status quo or return to an original state after experiencing a shock. Ecologists study the resilience of complex, adaptive systems, and it is this

conceptualization that has the most promise in its applicability to social systems and violence. In the context of violence, resilience is the ability of a community, people, state, or region to prevent, mitigate, or recover from violence by adopting new processes, norms, and strategies for conducting their lives and adapting societal relationships in response to a violent shock or an uptick in aggression.

Violent extremism is different from other forms of violence: it is, at its core, an ideological struggle, unlike ethnic, secessionist, or criminal extremism, which involve contestations over land, resources, or access to political power. An ideology is an all-encompassing worldview that presupposes its own political and social truth. An ideological extremist worldview cannot coexist with another ideologically based system of belief, nor can it accept or show tolerance toward its adherents. It seeks to eradicate the opposing system, and its supporters, through coercion and violence.

A community's resilience to violent extremism resides in its capacity to counter ideologically driven groups that seek dominion over people and power. Jihadist extremism is rooted in a profound fear of erasure among people of Muslim faith, orchestrated by a liberal or secular order that has persecuted and oppressed them; examples include Ataturk's outlawing of Sufi orders in Turkey and Egypt's outlawing of the Muslim Brotherhood. The goals and tactics of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, al-Qaeda, and Boko Haram might differ: they might collaborate with local groups or demand their fealty, or they might establish a religious kingdom on Earth or seek it in the afterlife. But each group sees Islam as locked in an existential struggle with secular states that employ political and systemic violence, in particular, against followers of Islam. The grievances espoused by violent-extremist groups regarding corrupt, venal state actors and institutions and their persecution can be legitimate. Community resilience to violent extremism depends, in many cases, as much on the ability of local leaders to manage and counteract the effects of state predation—or accounting for state weaknesses in the local delivery of security, rule of law, and services—as on directly countering or preventing violent-extremist operations within the community. In other words, the ability of a community to acknowledge and respond to citizens' legitimately held grievances regarding poor, weak, exclusionary, or predatory governance appears central to preventing and countering the pull of violent-extremist ideology.

This evidence review paper presents the findings of an evidence review that aimed to

- evaluate the evidence base for identifying and assessing community resilience capacities in the context of violent extremism;
- evaluate the evidence base regarding the effectiveness of programs that are designed to specifically support and strengthen community resilience;
- examine the evolution of core fields of P/CVE practice—youth, gender, and religion—to determine what, if anything, they say about community resilience;

- explore how current programs and interventions that seek to counter terrorism and violent extremism may, in fact, be reinforcing the “dark” social capital (the systems of violence and discrimination) that reinforces the drivers of violent extremism; and
- review two areas of peacebuilding practice—local peace committees (LPCs) and hybrid governance—and how they might contribute to community resilience to violent extremism.

These different lines of inquiry invited two fundamental research questions: What are the factors that underlie community resilience to violent extremism, and what is the evidence base that supports them? How strong is the evidence base for community resilience practices that address violent-extremist threats, and what does that mean for implementing community resilience programming in P/CVE policy and practice?

The mixed-method evidence review included the following, in the order given:

- a quantitative analysis of the quality of evidence on community resilience programming and research that has identified actionable resilience factors, which nonetheless could be improved in terms of data transparency and reproducibility;
- key informant interviews with P/CVE community leaders on youth, gender, and religious engagement, who outline needed evolutions for their sectors and their relationship to community resilience;
- a critical review of the literature on community resilience to violent extremism that explores the types of social cohesion that are critical for preventing or resisting violence; how and what types of bad governance weaken resilience to violence; and the systems of community dark capital (existing systems or patterns of violence) that are the vectors through which extremist groups enter a community; and
- two qualitative, evaluative case studies that assess the effectiveness and nature of two peacebuilding practices that may have promise for strengthening community resilience to extremist violence: LPCs and hybrid governance.

This study makes key recommendations on how the policy, programming, and research communities can validate and strengthen community resilience approaches in the prevention and countering of violent extremism.

Community Resilience: A Policy and Programming Plea

Over recent decades, research has widened the lens for understanding the root causes of violent extremism, reframing its threat as an interplay of complex dynamics rather than a composite list of risk factors, such as youth unemployment or political exclusion. A number of seminal studies and policy and program reviews have moved the field beyond the radicalization of deviant youth as a key factor for the spread of extremist groups and violence. For

example, research examining the way socioecological factors contribute to youth violence has pinpointed state-sponsored discriminatory violence, in particular against young men, as a strong determinant of involvement with violent-extremist groups.¹ In more traditional societies, youth are excluded from community leadership roles and the ability to achieve status as adults in many ways. Research shows, for example, that youth cannot afford the bride-price for wives, though marriage and children are the path to leadership in their communities; that age brackets for youth are extended even beyond the age of forty, consigning the very young to decades of disregard; and that traditional leaders reestablish ever-higher barriers to adulthood in rewriting the rules of the power game.²

A seminal study by Mercy Corps has established that lack of status in the community, not lack of employment, is the stronger determining factor for youth affinity with violent-extremist groups, underscoring the potency of social-political barriers and discrimination as a factor in youth vulnerability. In many respects, when youth do radicalize, their motivation is rooted in a universal desire for community belonging and meaning that has been systematically, unfairly, or brutally suppressed.³ More attention and research are needed on the community socioecological factors creating risk among youth, particularly governance strategies (both informal and formal) and policies that systematically discriminate against them. The perpetrators, patterns, and systems that oppress youth need further study to understand their impact in creating youth vulnerability to violent extremism. Is it the direct experience of state-perpetrated violence by an individual or peer? Is it a young person's immediate and shocking loss of community status (loss of land, access to employment) caused by powerful political forces that leave that person little recourse? Does prolonged, systematic discrimination against young persons based on their ethnicity or religion and punctuated by a formative event mobilize a peer group, driving them to join violent-extremist groups?

It is critical that any community resilience approach to P/CVE not return to a failed school of thought on youth radicalization—one that associates their deviance with the qualities and characteristics of certain groups and communities. Instead, it must focus on the deeper, more hidden issues, enumerated above, at the intersection of youth and community resilience. What social and governance relationships and policies at play in communities have been able to protect their youth from violent-extremist recruitment, and how can they be replicated? Perhaps an even more pertinent reframing would explore how and why youth overwhelmingly choose the path of peace and nonviolence in the face of the broad-based, systematic discrimination they face in many countries and locations around the world. What explains youth resilience, and how can it be reinforced and replicated in the communities in which they live?

In similar ways, research has shifted the earlier ideologically driven perspective of communities as fertile grounds of radical recruitment. The new framing of communities as effective first-line responders (that is, more effective than top-down, state interventions) was reflected in the United States' adoption of community-oriented approaches to countering extremist recruitment and violence in 2015.⁴ Early socioecological research on youth protective

and vulnerability factors considered broader community patterns, although the research often focused exclusively on collective deficits rather than group resiliencies and strengths. While these early studies moved the field beyond a focus on individual deviance, they did feed into the “suspect community” construct by placing the responsibility for youth vulnerability to radicalization squarely on the communities in which they lived.⁵ Other research critiqued state-based interventions in Muslim communities, calling out the lack of evidence behind these policies while documenting the negative effects.⁶ This second generation of community-based research often applied frameworks for evaluating community capacity—evolutionary because they moved beyond the exclusive focus on community weakness, although the analytical framing was often grounded in Western political theory. (That is, whether the framing was applicable to immigrant communities or developing and fragile states was never tested or validated.)

The most promising research, however, has explored community agency and resistance to violent actors through rigorous comparative and inductive research methods. Ashutosh Varshney, Ami Carpenter, Oliver Kaplan, the Berghof Foundation, and Lauren Van Metre compared communities that tipped into violence with those that resisted.⁷ Their research established emergent qualities and patterns in nonviolent communities that did not exist in communities that engaged in violence. This research has had a formidable impact by acknowledging that many frontline communities have developed strategies and capacities to resist violent actors nonviolently. These studies not only validate community agency but also establish community authority on nonviolent resistance—a way of thinking that aligns with a major shift in the peacebuilding field; the locally led peacebuilding by Pamina Firchow and Roger McGinty’s *Everyday Peace Indicators*; Severine Autesserre’s *Peaceland*; and both Peace Direct and Conciliation Resources, which support local communities at the forefront of peacebuilding work through small grants and participatory program design.

This paper seeks to advance the field of P/CVE by calling for a focus on building the resilience of frontline communities to prevent their operational, political, and economic capture by violent-extremist groups; the establishment of recruitment to violent extremism and the supporting financial networks and safe havens in communities; and the weakening of community resilience sources and capacities by corrupt, predatory state actors and international interventions that reinforce community dark capital (that is, the systems of violence that feed the grievances driving community and youth support for violent-extremist governance, operations, and recruitment).

These systems of dark capital are often strengthened and enabled by international counterterrorism policies, leading to a pernicious feedback loop in which counterterrorism operations reinforce and strengthen the very local grievances that violent-extremist groups exploit, as well as undermine the community systems of resilience. Thus, international counterterrorism strategies and operations hit communities from both sides, increasing risk and tearing apart their resiliencies to violent extremism. We do not purport to advance community

resilience as a developed P/CVE approach. To do so would require a concerted effort to direct research, evaluation, practice, and policy reviews to answer critical questions on the viability of community resilience as an approach, such as the following:

- Are community resilience capacities similar across cultural and conflict contexts and, if understood and validated, could this lead to an evidence-based prevention practice? Or is resilience highly localized and contextualized, requiring the rapid deployment or expansion of research and assessment teams to assess community resilience—where it exists, how it is being degraded, and how it should be strengthened in the light of increased risk or presence of violent extremism?
- Can international actors build, support, or strengthen community resilience capacities without doing harm or delegitimizing them? If so, how?
- What strategies have communities adopted that degrade their resilience to violent-extremist groups? For example, community-based armed groups, ethnic militias, and so on? Erosion of local conflict resolution, balancing mechanisms?
- How can government presence in and support to frontline communities be managed to enhance resilience and reduce risk? Can this be accomplished by the international community? By strengthening democratic norms, processes, and institutions? And if so, how? Through security sector reform? And what types?
- An important aspect of community resilience is social capital, but how does that capital need to be configured (interlocking networks, bridging, bonding) or enacted (trust, collaboration, collective action, coordination) to resist violent extremism most effectively?

Finally, while we assert that community resilience is a promising P/CVE approach that should be methodically and systematically explored, the effort must be sustained through international and national commitments to frontline communities and a willingness to support and advocate their agency, expertise, and voice in the development of resistance strategies. It must also recognize and reject previous ideologically motivated approaches to community engagement that stigmatized communities as suspect—as hotbeds of youth religious radicalization that need to be targeted for social reprogramming and security interventions. This policy and the programs that supported it have been debunked by research and evidence, as noted earlier in this paper. However, community stigmatization still drives many state-led P/CVE strategies in countries such as Burkina Faso, Mali, the Philippines, and Mozambique and drives these communities to embrace violent-extremist groups. To reinforce the new framing—that communities have critical capacities, networks, and strategies with which to manage and prevent violence—this paper examines two areas of community, bottom-up practice: LPCs and hybrid governance structures and actors. It also describes how, when successful, the practices prevent violence and violent extremism by shoring up the systems of social capital that are the foundation of community resilience.

Assessing the Evidence

This mixed-method review of the quality of evidence on community resilience—its factors and capacities and its supporting programming—seeks to quantitatively assess the research base and, in the process, offer academics, policymakers, and implementers a framework for understanding and evaluating existing evidence and gaps. To determine the state of P/CVE practice on other core lines of effort—youth, gender, and religion—we staged informant interviews of leading experts who have worked at the intersection of policy, practice, and research. The purpose of these interviews was to assess the effectiveness of their fields in mitigating the spread of violent extremism in comparison to community resilience approaches and to determine whether and how these fields might feed into resilience practice. The other pieces of this research methodology included an in-depth review of the literature for what it says about resilience and effective programming (articles that were coded and assessed in the quantitative review on research quality) and two case studies on promising practices in fostering community resilience to violent extremism—LPCs and hybrid governance—where an effort was made to include the work of local researchers and evaluators.

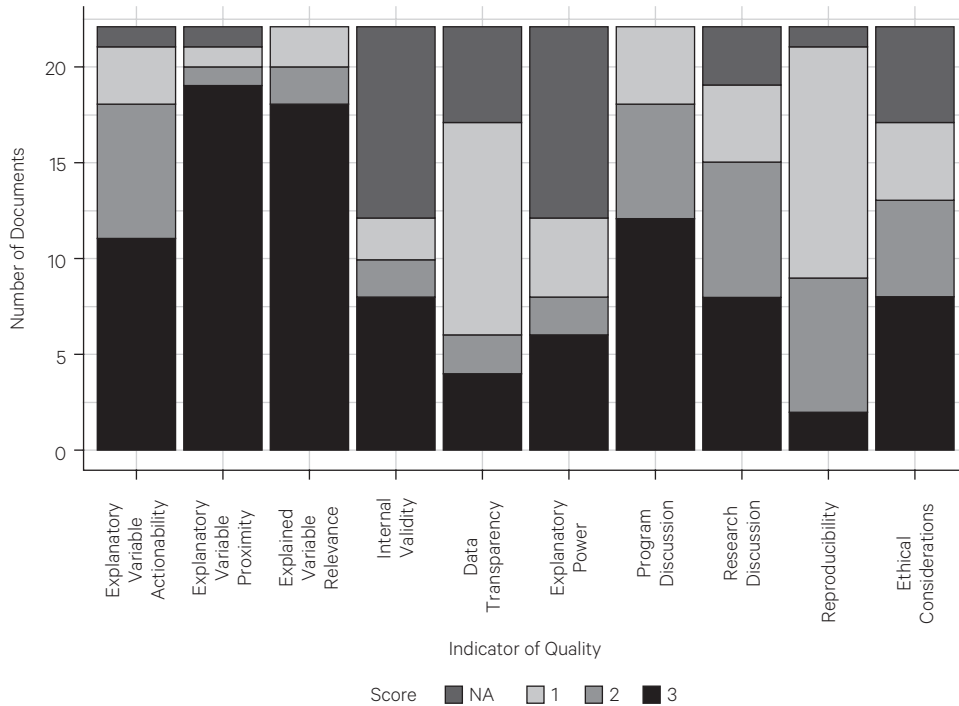
REVIEW OF EVIDENCE QUALITY

We identified relevant documents through keyword searches and a review of recent documents from relevant forums.⁸ We especially sought out documents that were highlighted in the field for their quality. This collection is not a systematic or representative sample of P/CVE community resilience documents; instead, we focused on collecting the highest quality and most-often cited documents to highlight exemplary work and identify weaknesses in even the most informative work. For primary documents (research articles and program evaluations), we coded multiple indicators of quality that were informed by other evidence assessments and our own experience.⁹ The main indicators are summarized in appendix A.¹⁰

This endeavor was limited in some important ways. First, the scoring criteria were not completely objective. Second, most documents were reviewed by only one person, so scores may vary by each person's interpretation of the codebook. Third, as the P/CVE community is small and connected, bias may have affected the scoring of some documents. We make any personal connections explicit for the documents highlighted within this paper. Fourth, we scored only program evaluations and research articles; after early attempts, we decided that primary, secondary, and conceptual pieces serve different purposes and would be difficult to compare. We also found that resource guides and toolkits were especially difficult to evaluate, as they rarely cited sources to support their recommendations.

We examined thirty-two documents on community resilience and evaluated the evidence quality of the twenty-four research articles and program evaluations. (See appendix B

Figure 1. Ratings of P/CVE Documents on Community Resilience across Quality Dimensions



for the list of research studies.) Their scores are shown in figure 1. We found that low scores were actually rare in some topics, especially the actionability and proximity of the explanatory variable and the explained variable relevance, and in program and research discussion. We also found that some types of analysis in community resilience research often adopted methods that did not allow for measures of internal validity and explanatory power. Thus, we found that there is still significant room for improvement in terms of data transparency and reproducibility.

We highlight *Resisting War: How Communities Protect Themselves* by Oliver Kaplan for its substantive nature and for his methods and transparency.¹¹ Kaplan’s project combines case studies of five towns and interviews with multiple sources of observational data. He describes the methodology in detail, including transparency in the case selection and how he deals with ambiguity and contrasting accounts. While he does not make all of his data publicly available, he provides multiple views of the data. He also includes out-of-sample cases, which were not used in the formation of the theories of community resistance as a test of those theories.

As part of this evidence review paper, we conducted interviews with community-of-practice experts (in other words, experts who had conducted major meta-evaluations of their field; managed communities of practice made up of researchers, practitioners, or policymakers; or

spoke prominently about the state of their field based on their own extensive research, practice, and policy experience). (See appendix C.) These key informant interviews indicate that core areas of P/CVE practice are evolving, or need to evolve, in ways that support whole-of-community, or community resilience, approaches. Youth, gender, and religious P/CVE programs could thereby reinforce and strengthen the resilience of frontline and at-risk communities in new and innovative ways.

Youth

A major effort of the US government, which has had promising results for youth P/CVE programming, is a recently completed comprehensive evidence review on positive youth development funded by the National Resource Council and conducted by the Interagency Working Group on Youth Programs.¹² Positive youth development is rooted in prevention and recognizes that previous efforts to address youth problems, such as delinquency, self-harm, and radicalization, were single-issue and risk-focused endeavors. It is a more comprehensive approach that emphasizes youth resiliency—how protective factors in a youth’s environment and community can be strengthened to prevent young people from falling into adversity. The recently conducted evidence review identified multiple domains of youth programming that enhanced their positive development: strengthening youth assets and their agency through skills-building; creating opportunities for youth to contribute to their communities and engage with leaders and decision makers; and supporting a healthy enabling environment for youth development, including positive relationships with adults and peers, safe spaces tailored for youth, a sense of belonging, exposure to positive norms and expectations, and youth-friendly services.¹³

The applicability of positive youth development to P/CVE and the issue of youth radicalization was examined in the study through interviews with young people who had joined Boko Haram. In many ways, positive youth development is a process of reradicalization: redirecting youth agency and instilling the desire for status and belonging toward positive outcomes by strengthening their skills and their networks of support. The researchers acknowledged that not enough is known or documented regarding effective positive youth programming for the most marginalized—an area of possible exploration for the P/CVE field and communities engaged in positive youth development. In addition, more research and evaluation need to be done by sector. For example, we know that youth employed in the agricultural sector in the Sahel may be exposed to violent conflict, food insecurity, and climate shocks. What does the programming of positive youth development look like for youth in this sector, in comparison with that of young urban entrepreneurs? This includes determining how positive youth development approaches would work in highly securitized communities, where governments are not necessarily constructive partners and little trust exists between youth and political and security actors.

Gender

To advance the field of gender in relation to the prevention of violent extremism requires the policy community to look beyond stereotypical ideas of women's roles and its reflexive nod to gender inclusion. Terrorist groups incorporate and elevate gendered roles as part of their recruitment and retention efforts. The ways that these gendered roles are manipulated, abused, and implemented are critical to terrorists' organizational structure, their political and social worldviews, and their operational and strategic effectiveness. Yet gender roles are vastly understudied, given their importance: how terrorist groups structure concepts of masculinity and femininity among members is crucial to their legitimation of violence and how they maintain social cohesion.

Understanding intersectionality—the way gendered norms dictated by terrorist worldviews traverse socioeconomic, ethnic, and religious identities—is also critical. To break free of current P/CVE programming that stereotypes women and their gendered roles also requires a much more sophisticated understanding of the roles women play in terrorist groups and the roles they assume when their communities are captured by extremist groups. Much of the groundbreaking thinking on women and combatant groups suggests that women play powerful noncombatant roles in affirming male participation, recruiting, and so on. Too much analysis of groups such as the Islamic State has focused on women as abused, as victims. There is not much understanding of how women respond when confronted by violent actors: Do they resist in small, everyday acts? In community collective action? The work of Julia Zulver on high-risk feminism would be highly instructive to the field of P/CVE; it resists the binary view that women are either peacebuilders or victims to examine how women navigate environments of systematic violence with a strategic mix of collaboration and resistance.

This nuanced perspective of gendered identities and actions is critical for understanding terrorist operations and how communities respond to them in identity- and gender-based ways. It is also critical for programming and policy success in the response to violent extremism, for how extremist networks and operations can be resisted, how women and men are reintegrated into communities, and how safe spaces can be created for recovery of individual genders in communities that have been occupied or targeted by extremist groups. This means abandoning the current generic approaches to gender and P/CVE for more localized, nuanced interventions that reflect the ways in which women exercise influence differently in diverse community settings and reveal variations in women's risk to and participation in violent-extremist groups. While community responses and violent-extremist roles may be highly gendered, individual responses to violence or the threat of violence are a complex calculation of risk, survival, principled response, and personal interest.

Transitional justice programs in Colombia have introduced the idea of complex victimhood: that victims have been perpetrators and collaborators and perpetrators have been

victimized. To deny recognition and compensation of complex victims is to exclude large segments of populations caught in violent conflict—and often results in their failure to transition to peace and nonviolence. Women and men, particularly members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, queer/questioning, and intersex community, experience violent extremism in highly gendered ways; however, their choices within the constraints and opportunities associated with gender are complex. Moving beyond binary perceptions of men (as perpetrators, victims), women (as peacebuilders, victims), and other sexual orientations (as demonization, marginalization) is imperative to preventing recruitment, gender-based violence, acts of sexual hate, harassment, and repression and to more effectively reintegrate members of violent-extremist groups back into their communities. This would mean adopting measures that safeguard against the repetition of the violent events suffered, which means recognizing the victimhood of collaborators and some perpetrators of violent extremism and tackling the gendered stereotypes that may prevent their full integration or right to partial or full reparation in order to prevent the social risk of their continued cleaving to violence and violent groups.

Religion

The religious engagement advocated by the peacebuilding field rests on an understanding of the multiple roles religious leaders play in their communities. Religious leaders are educators, counselors, judges, governance actors, community leaders, and role models. Programming that engages religious leaders in these diverse capacities advances peace and nonviolence along multiple lines within a community. For example, in Pakistan, the International Center for Religion and Diplomacy has sponsored programming focused on strengthening the critical-thinking skills of religious educators to incorporate into their teachings, recognizing how such skills are a protective factor against radicalization.¹⁴ Exposure to violence is another significant risk factor for youth radicalization. In their role as counselors and confidants, imams have opportunities to address violence-related trauma in youth with training and support. For example, the US Institute of Peace is building the capacity of religious leaders in trauma healing, which can safeguard at-risk youth from engaging in violence or joining violent groups.¹⁵

In the end, however, any P/CVE programming that involves religious leaders must ask what it is that the field is trying to change in terms of the spiritual dimensions of religious thought and behavior. This requires better religious literacy among practitioners and policymakers engaged in the field and a deeper understanding of the local, community context and the multiple roles of religious leaders in strengthening (or weakening) social cohesion, addressing collective and individual trauma, and mediating (or driving) local grievances—capacities that are critical to community resilience.

Community Resilience to Violent Extremism

As an approach to countering violent extremism, community resilience is not a default middle-of-the-road option, situated between top-down state interventions and individual radicalization prevention programs, which have been largely discredited. Community-led efforts, in fact, make a lot of sense. First, communities are the locus of violent-extremist activity: they are where the recruitment networks of violent extremists are embedded and their operational cells, financial sources, and systems are located. Second, extremist groups exploit local grievances to gain a foothold in communities, leading to a conflict that is so localized that only communities themselves understand the underlying dynamics and appropriate responses. Finally, a growing research and programmatic focus on community activism and agency amid violence, or the risk of violence, illuminates a set of capacities and strategies that communities successfully deploy. What are the most effective local capacities and strategies to resist community capture by violent-extremist groups?

There is a distinct pattern to violent-extremist infiltration of communities, characterized by a medley of overlapping ties (vectors that allow violent actors to enter a community); community fracture; youth exploitation and marginalization; and predatory, abusive, or exclusionary governance actors. Mapping the systemic violence that extremists exploit is critical to analyzing how and whether communities can resist them. Decades of research have validated the importance of social capital (the networks of relationships among people who live and work in a particular society, enabling that society to function effectively) in preventing violence and in postconflict recovery. As Ashutosh Varshney describes in his seminal study on community resilience to urban riots in India, these social networks facilitate learning, trust, information exchange, and collective decision-making—the capacities needed to effectively respond to the threat of violence.¹⁶ In the same way, in any community, there is also dark social capital: the networks and relationships that enable venal, violent systems to function effectively and maintain resilience. These social and dark-capital networks can exist in parallel or even reinforce each other. In communities that are resilient to violent extremism, strong networks of social capital can counteract, or even break down, dark capital.

Dark Capital and Extremist Violence

OVERLAPPING TIES: LINKING INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL NETWORKS

In urban settings, extremists—and their ideas—enter communities through overlapping ties, or established vectors by which external actors can connect to groups internally. Ami

Carpenter, in her book on community resilience to sectarian violence in Iraq, observes that rural-urban tribal connections were the conduit through which extremist groups entered Baghdad communities.¹⁷ In communities globally, in countries such as Kosovo, Niger, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Kenya, Mozambique, and Côte d'Ivoire, the conduit for violent extremists has been itinerant imams who enter through community mosques. Mosques are not only sites of youth recruitment, but also significant revenue channels that provide financing to extremist groups and their leaders.¹⁸ In Kosovo, for people who traveled to live or fight with the Islamic State, the recruitment effort was conducted in mosques by a specific group of imams from Macedonia with ties to Kosovo. Their religious education tied them to networks in the Middle East and Gulf countries.¹⁹

While the roots and affiliation of the growing extremist threat in Mozambique's Cabo Delgado Province are not completely clear, locals affirm that extremist leaders espouse the ideas of the deceased Kenyan cleric Aboud Rogo Mohammed, whose sermons in Swahili have spread rapidly through Mozambique's Swahili-speaking North.²⁰ Niger's Diffa region has maintained deep historical ties with Nigeria's Northeast, created when the two regions were unified under a traditional political administration, Kanem-Bornu, which existed for more than ten centuries before falling to colonialism. Maiduguri, in Nigeria, is a regional center of Islamic education and a conduit through which Boko Haram's teachings quickly spread to Niger's Southeast: Nigerien youth—who heard Mohammad Yusuf's teachings and attended his mosque in neighboring Maiduguri—formed a movement within the central mosque in Diffa, Niger, condemned the Izala Society for criticizing state corruption while maintaining links with the government, and translated Yusuf's teachings into the local Kanuri language.²¹ In a statistical analysis of how social capital can strengthen group cohesion around violence, *The Dark Side of Social Capital: A Cross-National Examination of the Social Relationship between Social Capital and Violence in Africa*, Ludovico Alcorta and colleagues note that when individuals are connected to larger, global networks, leaders can more readily mobilize them to collective action by exploiting the ideas around shared, global grievances that are rapidly diffusing throughout the network.²² Furthermore, if these individuals associate with a singular identity, ethnic or religious, and not with multiple identities—including, above all, with a national identity—then they more intensely feel collective grievances and are more easily mobilized to collective action. Thus, these local-global connections of marginalized youth (who are stripped of identities other than that for which they are being excluded) through itinerant imams are potent systems of dark social capital, according to this study on what types of social networks are more prone to violence.²³

THE FRACTIONALIZATION OF COMMUNITIES

Social vectors channel violent extremists and their ideas, injecting them into a highly fractured religious tableau that, for some communities, makes it difficult to mount a coherent counter-response. In Kosovo, the fractionalization of the Muslim community began in 2008, when the

country's Islamic community—which managed local mosques, selected imams, and ordered the themes for Friday prayers throughout the country—had a crisis of legitimacy. Following the 1999 war, two schools of thought emerged within the association: one that Kosovo should promote its own brand of Hanefi Islam stemming from the Ottoman Empire and another that wanted to open up the country to external Islamic influences. When the Kosovo Hanefi faction moved to dominate the association, it lost control of the mosque system; illegal mosques and breakaway imams emerged throughout Kosovo and began to recruit youth.²⁴

Mozambique's Muslim community is fractured along national and local lines, with tensions between Moroccan Muslims in the South and African Muslims in the North and locally, in the North, between Sunni Sufist communities and Wahhabist Salafist communities. Beginning in 2008, the government's external financial and religious engagement grew, including issuing visas for foreign missionary organizations to reside in Mozambique and for its youth to attend religious schools throughout Africa and the Middle East. With this expanded engagement, incidents of violence and disrespect against state-sanctioned mosques grew, and finally, in 2017, so did incidents of extremist violence.²⁵

In Kisauni, Kenya, the site of infamous police raids on the Masjid Swafaa mosque in 2014, the community has historically had a Shia-Sunni divide, but Muslim groups have further split, according to residents: "Even if people differed in small aspects, like how to perform prayers, or their stand on jihadism, they opt to form their own sect rather than resolving the issue in a scholarly way."²⁶

In-group bonding, as validated by many studies, affirms and strengthens a group collective identity that is not moderated by interaction with other groups and leads to a sense of superiority and bias against others.²⁷ When confronted with an existential or real threat, bonded groups are easily mobilized to collective action and violence. The effects of strong in-group relationships can be attenuated by bridging ties, engaging everyday associations, or working with members of other groups.²⁸ These intergroup relationships break down bias based on group identity, provide avenues of communication and reassurance when tensions rise between groups, and establish networks of trust that can be tapped when elites manipulate group perceptions about the other. The fractionalization of the Muslim community can lead to in-group bonding based on strict adherence to religious beliefs and prevent intragroup interactions with other sectarian groups that could erect their collective resistance to extremist inroads into the community. Extremism does not flourish in communities because they are potent incubators of radicalism; it flourishes because the networks that can be used to strategize and mobilize against it are broken.

THE DESTRUCTION OF COGNITIVE CAPITAL

A troubling aspect of any analysis of drivers of violent extremism is the use of the passive voice—a pernicious rhetorical device used to describe acts of violence in ways that render

perpetrators invisible and shift the focus onto the victim, such as “the victim was murdered.” Yet, in literature on preventing or countering violent extremism, there is an even more pervasive tendency to identify the perpetrator as a vague, ambiguous phenomenon, as implied in the statement, “individual radicalism is driven by local grievances.” A recent report by the United Nations (UN) Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms while Countering Terrorism has noted that “the link with international jihadism is more tenuous on the ground than the global rhetoric suggests. Study after study reveals that the experience or perception of abuse and violations by government authorities are determining factors that contribute to the level of vulnerability to violent extremism, or resilience thereto.”²⁹ This finding is validated by a UN Development Programme survey on extremism in Africa, which finds that 71 percent of those polled identified government action as the critical factor that drove them to join a violent-extremist group. The passive voice, therefore, directs attention away from the powerful political actors and state institutions that drive youth to violent extremism while holding out in front its victims—the communities and youth that are exploited by them.

KENYA CASE

In Lauren Van Metre’s research of six communities in Kenya, it was not the effects of long-term structural systems of injustice that participants attributed to violent-extremist risk: it was direct acts by corrupt, venal political actors (so-called democratic representatives) that stripped local youth of status. For example, in Kenya’s Coast Province, politicians exploited communal-land tenure systems, whereby communities for generations had lived and worked the land without formal proprietary rights. Politicians used their access to the state bureaucracy to issue titles for these communal lands and assign them to political loyalists. Stripped of their land, many youth lost access to employment and economic and political status. In addition, the influx to the province of wealthier up-country Kenyans, who were able to corner local land and business markets, was also disrupting networks of community associative trust and disenfranchising youth. Family elders were capitalizing on the higher real estate prices, selling land that had been in families for generations—housing complexes that had been rented to families of different ethnicities, who lived side by side. When these communal complexes were sold, interethnic associations were disrupted, and the next generation, which had been raised with the expectation of taking over as landlords, was displaced. Not only was the situation increasing intergenerational tensions, but the influx of up-country Kenyans was perceived as a political power move within a highly polarized political landscape. Up-country Kenyans were affiliated with the (perceived Christian/anti-Muslim) party in power, while the Coast Province was aligned with the opposition.

Since independence, Kenyan politicians have employed youth militias and gangs in the lead-up to and during elections to disrupt opposition rallies, intimidate opposition voters,

seize communal and rivals' land to distribute to political loyalists, and, most egregiously, drive rival ethnic groups from their land in advance of the vote.³⁰ Economic and political reforms, including structural adjustments, decentralization, and political party reform, have improved and strengthened this collusion.³¹ The current illicit triangle between politicians, gangs, and police controls service delivery—electricity, security, transportation—to the poorest of Kenya's urban neighborhoods. These sustained systems of corruption fuel political candidates' campaigns popularly and financially, provide gangs with steady income streams outside of electoral cycles, and attract police protection rackets. At the same time, gangs provide politicians political cover. They are scapegoated in a cynical political game whereby politicians blame gang violence for the nondelivery of government services and political promises even as they collaborate with them.³² In a masterful stroke of political deflection, the corrupt political class blames communities for the moral breakdown that allows gangs to exist and thrive. For those gangs that seek greater autonomy from the political class, or rival gangs that challenge a politician's turf, extrajudicial actions by the police help politicians manage the temerity of youth gangs.

The links between state-sanctioned killing, torture, disappearance, and political imprisonment and violent extremism are well established, notably in a study of government violence in 159 countries over twenty years. The study shows strong empirical evidence that increased levels of state violence lead to increased levels of violent extremism by already existing violent-extremist groups. If a major group of this sort did not yet exist, above-average levels of state-sponsored violence in a country doubled the risk that one would emerge.³³ The repression of dissent has a similar effect: it increases the chance of group violence in that state with a clear sense of grievance toward the government.³⁴ In Kenya, political violence perpetrated by security services against young men is a legacy of colonial times and occurs systematically and with impunity. In fact, Kenya's highly securitized counterterrorism operations strengthened these institutions of state-sponsored violence, which regularly targeted ethnic Somali and Muslim communities in Coast Province, driving more and more youth, in turn, into violent extremism.

Globally, however, state predation takes more direct forms: elites exploit the institutions that are meant to address collective needs and instead use them to extract community wealth and resources. Many political party representatives do not engage with constituents; instead, they prey on them. To protect their criminal activities, they co-opt or starve official security forces or create private militias, generally made up of local youth, to protect their economic rents. In other words, the very defining features of democracy—political parties, relationships between representatives and constituents, and institutions of justice and security—become the mechanisms for elite predation, in turn undermining democracy and the state's legitimacy. Alcorta and his colleagues' study discusses the way cognitive social capital—peoples' identity, norms, and values—affect their willingness or reluctance to use violence. Those who believed using violence was justified to achieve political goals (a small 3 percent of those surveyed) were most likely to have strong attachments to a singular identity, either ethnic or national

(most likely an attachment to a dominant ethnic or racial group associated with the state). Those with multiple identities—ethnic and national—were most likely to oppose the use of violence, believing it was never justified. Heavy-handed and predatory state violence undermines trust in and identification with the nation among citizens and youth (who are its most likely targets), in the process weakening social cohesion wrought by a shared identity with citizens from other ethnic, social, and religious groups.

DARK CAPITAL AND RURAL COMMUNITIES

Rural neglect—the retreat of the state in areas that need governance of resources—in countries such as Kosovo, Mali, Niger, and Kenya has led to the intrusion of violent-extremist groups in particular circumstances where traditional balancing mechanisms have weakened. In Kosovo, following the war, the UN administration, and subsequently the national government, largely ignored rural community economic and social development. As a result, Saudi charities proliferated in the Kosovar countryside, providing education and health and food services normally provided by the state. Exploiting rural poverty and fragmentation, the Saudi Joint Committee for the Relief of Kosovo and Chechnya had a captive community for its fundamentalist ideology that rejected the Islam traditionally found in the Kosovar countryside—a religious practice that combined Islamic traditions and promoted tolerance and inclusion.³⁵

In Mali, the retreat of the state administration in the North has been ongoing since 2012, when, with the collapse of the regime in Libya, a Tuareg armed group returned to Mali and ignited an armed rebellion. The state presence is primarily security focused, with minimal civilian administrative offices. For example, by 2019, only 23 percent of civil administrators were employed in duty stations throughout northern Mali. Where civil servants are present, they are perceived as a threat to the burgeoning illicit economy through which many armed groups are funded, in addition to taxing local populations. As state actors have retreated, alternative actors have taken on local governance responsibilities, but they have not been able to unify all ethnic groups, as competition for water has increased with climate change. Access to water resources is now the purview of the tribal or armed group that controls that territory and no longer a collective resource, as it was under state territorial administration. When land changes hands owing to armed struggle, contestations become more intense.

In some cases, where single ethnic groups have had a long-held, historical claim to the land and water, customary leaders have been able to adjudicate use. In areas where multiple ethnic groups reside, customary leaders struggle to adjudicate use of water without reinforcement from the state. In these cases, extremist groups move in to control access to water through these fractures in community cohesion. In other cases, such as in the regions of Kedal and Menaka, the government has sided with a particular conflict actor, the Imghad tribe, which has thrown the Menaka region into a yearslong competition between progovernment and proautonomy forces. Since the French intervened in 2013, Kedal and Menaka have been

caught in multiple protracted conflicts within and among groups, complicated by the presence of international and radical armed groups. These conflicts have destroyed the social trust that previously balanced tribal relations in these areas. As a result, local communities have created atomized community-based armed groups.³⁶

Niger has experienced a similar pattern of dark social capital that sustains extremist power and infiltration. When customary balancing mechanisms of tribes rely on the marginalization of one group over another, alliances with external actors drive support for extremist groups and for recruitment. Black Tuaregs (a subcaste within the Tuareg tribe) and some Fulani pastoralist groups are now perceived by state and international forces as a threat based on their perceived or actual marginalization; they are cast as fully complicit with violent-extremist groups, but in the context of their relationship with the state. Thus, as in Mali, the political and security opportunities presented by international forces or militant groups have subsumed traditional, customary balancing mechanisms in Niger. As security has unraveled, ethnic groups that are lower in the power hierarchy have formed community-based armed groups. Both community-based armed groups and extremist groups have engaged in “chief hunting,” further destroying the communal cohesion that solidified the economic interdependencies that prevented intercommunal violence. As state security forces crack down on the transhumance corridors that Fulani pastoralists depend on and farmer communities continue to expand, Fulani (and Black Tuareg) youth, faced with an existential threat to their status and livelihood, are vulnerable to violent-extremist recruitment and messaging and join in significant numbers.³⁷

Community Resilience to Violent Extremism: Community Capacities

Most strategies to prevent violent extremism focus exclusively on the symptoms of the problem, either at the broad, societal level—service delivery, job creation, education curriculum (critical thinking, civic education)—or at the individual level—youth marginalization and radicalization. If community resilience approaches are brought into play, it is generally to address issues of social cohesion that are a result of these breakdowns; the approaches aim to smooth over community fault lines (community cleanups, sports) rather than address the root causes of the breakage. This is often the criticism that local organizations and practitioners on the ground have of P/CVE practice: that it is designed to pacify communities with targeted, narrow interventions that work in the short term because they reduce symptomatic effects. Job training for youth is a case in point. Providing young people with viable skills may resolve issues of unemployment. However, at heart, the issue is not unoccupied youth; the issue in many societies in which violent extremism thrives is the systematic exclusion of young people from power. While the literature on prevention of violent extremism often cites local grievances or youth marginalization as significant drivers of violent extremism, it rarely seeks to shift the political

power dynamics—the dark capital drivers—behind them or work with communities to strengthen their resilience to violent extremism by strengthening community cohesion.

What does research say about community resilience to violence, and how might that introduce new areas of P/CVE practice? Several studies focused on community resilience to armed groups have shared findings regarding how communities resist them. In *Community Resilience to Sectarian Violence in Iraq*, Ami Carpenter notes that the old Baghdad communities were more resilient to sectarian violence because rural-urban tribal connections, conduits for violent-extremist groups entering Baghdad, had been severed for decades.³⁸ Thus, monitoring and disrupting these conduits of recruitment to violent extremism are critical for community resilience.

In Kenya, communities that tapped into existing informal security networks to report to traditional chiefs on stranger activity were able to identify suspicious actors and activity. In one neighborhood, a community had formed networks to monitor electoral violence that were also used to observe and report on other types of violence, including extremist networks. In another community in Mombasa, a group of women had earlier formed an alliance to stop a serial rapist and continued their security monitoring to prevent other types of criminal and violent activity, believing that it also increased the risk of rape for women. These local, informal security networks, however, had to have certain characteristics to maintain community cohesion and not feed into destructive, or dark, capital. First, they had to be defensive, to protect and prevent, unlike offensive vigilante groups that might invite intergroup violence or attract violent actors from outside the community.³⁹ (Carpenter’s research reinforces this point; in Baghdad, community security networks that monitored and prevented violence were more effective than those that joined the fight and saw violence escalate.) Second, there needed to be multiple, interlocking informal networks: a lone network could be manipulated—turned into an informant network, where community members might provide false information for payment or retribution. Multiple networks, on the other hand, could validate one another’s findings and provide broad, diverse perspectives on community goings-on. Multiple networks could also provide anonymity to community members reporting suspicious violent-extremist activity, which was critical, as informants were often targeted by either security forces or violent-extremist groups.

Oliver Kaplan, in his multimethod study on how communities resist armed groups in Colombia, provides some insights into how rural communities might counter violent-extremist groups.⁴⁰ According to Kaplan, those communities that successfully repelled armed group occupation or violence had three critical characteristics: They were apolitical and did not ally with any particular armed or political movement. They had existing decision-making mechanisms in place before the conflict. And they demonstrated collective resistance to armed groups, which forced those groups to decide whether to punish the entire community or leave it independent.

Kaplan’s research reinforces the vulnerabilities of communities in the Sahel, which have been forced to make political alliances with either international forces or violent-extremist groups at the same time that their decision-making systems (that is, their customary leaders) are weakening. Moreover, owing to ethnic or tribal cleavages or the marginalization of subgroups within the community, they are unable to mount collective action against violent-extremist groups.

Resilient communities also have bridging mechanisms across community divisions that help manage or prevent violence. In his *Ethnic Conflict and Civic Life*, Ashutosh Varshney notes that these cross-community groups were LPCs or civil society groups. In Kenya, they might be local business or religious leaders who could reach out across conflict lines to provide reassurance when the risk of violence rose or could help end cycles of retributive violence after community bombings or attacks. Following a market attack in Kisauni by violent extremists, for example, Christian leaders reminded their constituents, who were mobilizing to conduct retributive violence against Muslim neighbors, that Muslims were also victims in the attacks. Communities can share information, provide reassurances, and dismiss inflammatory rumors through these all-important bridging relationships. They can also organize collective resistance and support the development of effective community strategies to counter violent-extremist incursions—strategies that work for all residents in the community.

Finally, communities that were able to manage the state or substitute for the functions of the state were resilient to violent extremism. In contexts of violent extremism, the state has either adopted extralegal or abusive practices in support of counterterrorism strategies or become itself a conflict actor. Political actors may have preyed on communities to collect illicit rents, undercutting the legitimacy of the state as a protective force. Communities that can contain or limit exposure to predatory state actors—for example, by reassuring security forces that they have the capacity to counter extremist groups and limiting security force operations—are more resilient. Heavy-handed security operations not only increase youth vulnerability to violent-extremist messaging, but they also undermine the community’s ability to share information and develop countering strategies to extremism. Afraid of inviting unwanted security force assaults should they name the violent-extremist threat or identify those at risk, communities go silent and cannot engage in collective action. In other words, security force abuse hits communities doubly by increasing their risk and undermining their resilience. Thus, as demonstrated in multiple research studies, constructive engagement with the state, whether through managing state abuse or working in partnership, is crucial for resisting or preventing violent extremism.⁴¹

In rural communities, hybrid governance models can play a critical role in countering violent extremism in areas where the state has limited or no presence or where the government has ceded its authorities to traditional or informal leadership. The county of Wajir, in Kenya, is

located in the northeast near the Somali border, where al-Shabaab has been increasingly active, even organizing one of its most deadly attacks on Kenyan soil in the neighboring county of Garissa, killing 179 students and teachers at Garissa University. In 1992, following postelection violence, a group of women from a local market organized a peace-and-dialogue group to stop further cycles of violence. The Wajir Women for Peace Group soon expanded to form the Wajir Peace Group, inclusive of all tribes in the country. Women's groups and local peacebuilders organized a larger, all-clan dialogue that resulted, in 1994, in an all-clan agreement, the Al-Fatah Declaration, to end the violence and establish a permanent council of clan elders that established an early warning system and engaged in local peacebuilding and conflict resolution forums. The tribal council, to this day, continues to work with the county commissioner through a local government directorate of peace and cohesion—a form of community-government collaboration that is seen as a potent barrier to extremist violence, especially in light of the county's proximity to Somalia and al-Shabaab networks.⁴²

According to local communities, Niger's High Authority for the Consolidation of Peace—a national organization established in the 1990s following a series of Tuareg rebellions from 1990 to 1995 in both Mali and Niger—is playing a constructive role amid the increasing extremist violence on the country's borders with both Mali and Nigeria.⁴³ While different in scope and scale from the local Wajir mechanisms, the social cohesion patterns for ensuring rural resilience are the same: inclusive networks of diverse tribal actors (women, civil society, youth) connected to the government whose longevity and experience with different forms of violence demonstrate their ability to adapt and learn. If they are to resist violent-extremist recruitment or capture, it is critical that these models of hybrid governance are not exclusionary or repressive against certain classes or groups. (It is through the most marginalized that violent-extremist groups can enter communities.)⁴⁴

How Counterterrorism Strategies Reinforce Dark Capital

YOUTH CAPTURE

Community resilience practice must take into account not only the patterns of social cohesion that strengthen community capacity to prevent or recover from violence (bonding, bridging, vectors, vertical) but also the dark social capital that reinforces systems of violence at the community level. It is not enough to reinforce relationships of resilience without mitigating or dismantling the systems of violence that violent-extremist groups exploit.⁴⁵ Counterterrorism strategies promoted by the international community and the United States that reinforce and sustain these dark networks compromise this effort, which is why governments and political leaders so readily adopt (co-opt) them. Especially in cases where political predation and corruption fuel the systemic violence, counterterrorism strategies secure the very pinnacles of dark capital power.

For example, the manipulation of youth by a country's political actors—organizing youth into gang, vigilante, and criminal groups to protect and increase politicians' economic rents—is a global phenomenon.⁴⁶ How do counterterrorism approaches sustain and strengthen these pernicious forms of malgovernance? Kenya's antiterrorism laws, for example, have given latitude for heavy-handed police action, reinforcing already existing collusion between political actors and the police in the recruitment and management of youth militia and gangs. In their justification for these laws, political leaders divert blame from their role, or that of the state, in driving violent extremism while scapegoating disaffected youth and their communities—reinforcing a pernicious narrative that shields entrenched political rentier systems. Finally, anti-terrorism operations against violent-extremist recruitment networks and operations now look like attacks by the corrupt political class on a rival system of youth capture—that employed by violent-extremist groups. Especially for those youth who have directly experienced the dark forms of political corruption and predation in the guise of democratic politics, violent-extremist groups do not look particularly different, except that they offer opportunities for the dispossessed. Given the sclerotic, exclusionary leadership in many fragile states and the lack of opportunities for professional advancement, the appeal of youthful, ambitious violent-extremist leaders is a potent promise of mobility and agency, as opposed to the alternative—membership in politically sponsored gangs and militias that the political class will cynically abandon or scapegoat for their own political advantage.

YOUTH MARGINALIZATION

The field of neuropsychology has opened up new thinking on youth radicalization, which points to behavioral and normative relationships between marginalization, sacred values, and violent extremism. Individuals who experience abrupt, acute acts of marginalization and loss of status become strongly bonded to their in-group: they may be willing to fight and die in defense of that group and its values. The rigidification of their group identity and their extreme loyalty to that group can be mapped in neural scans, which show strong activity in the rules-based part of the brain, compared with activity in that part of the brain that involves judgment, weighing and calculating when values must be protected or whether other considerations are more important. Strong in-group bonding is also strongly associated with a person's willingness to sacrifice for the group and engage in unethical, violent behavior on its behalf. Marginalization also has been shown to transform nonsacred values to sacred values, so that individuals accumulate more and more values that require protection.⁴⁷

In Kosovo, Mali, Niger, and Kenya, profound systems of marginalization are often the result of abuse of international policies or corrupt national government, at times sanctioned by counterterrorism policies. In Kosovo, many people who traveled to fight with the Islamic State were former combatants in the Kosovo Liberation Army, whose status after the war was sharply diminished and for whom there was little opportunity, owing to the lack of international

support for the countryside. In Kenya, Muslim youth who had lost access to communal lands owing to political corruption or through parents' or grandparents' sale of family holdings (their inheritance) to up-country Kenyans were perceived as highly vulnerable to violent-extremist recruitment. Also vulnerable were Kenyan youth who had experienced abuse at the hands of the security sector, who had increased latitude to target Muslim communities under new counterterrorism laws. With the escalation of violence following the involvement of international forces in the Sahel, Fulani and Tuareg pastoralists in Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso, long marginalized by the state, have chosen to align with violent-extremist groups. In addition, both groups continue to support slavery, even after its prohibition and, in some countries, criminalization. Black Tuareg youth, the slave cast in Tuareg society, and Fulani youth—the most marginalized of the marginalized—make up most of the Islamic State and al-Qaeda recruits in the Sahel.

The dark capital of systemic exclusion of youth is intensified by bad governance, such as the selling of communal lands for personal gain or retraction of state presence or services and counterterrorism strategies and operations that target groups or individuals through state-led discrimination or violence. The already marginalized have strong in-group affiliations; punctuated moments of acute exclusion by governance actors then cause even lesser values to become sacred, strengthening an individual's willingness to sacrifice and commit violence on behalf of the group. Research has shown that when these individuals' identities become singular (that is, as they abandon broader national or tribal identities, owing to the exclusionary acts of governance actors, which can be sanctioned by counterterrorism strategies and operations) and, at the same time, they are exposed to external ideologies and ideas from international networks, violence becomes acceptable to them. Thus, counterterrorism strategies and operations that further scapegoat already marginalized groups and individuals expand their set of sacred values and their willingness to sacrifice for their in-group by committing acts of terrorism and violence to protect that group, among other things.

Community Resilience to Violence and to Violent Extremism: The Research Base

Resilience research studies have incorporated science-based research methods, including clearly articulated hypotheses and methods that test them and validate or triangulate the findings, awareness of and methods for managing bias, exploration of alternative explanations, and incorporation of ethical approaches. The primary focus here is on those studies that address the resilience of urban communities in three areas: networks of social cohesion, security, and engagement with the state. In general, each of these studies concludes that

communities with little or no violent extremism had developed strategies and exhibited significant agency in addressing the threat. They had similar vulnerabilities to communities with active violent-extremist recruitment and operational cells, but they had been able to self-organize. However, community activism, adaptation, and agency were not enough for any of those communities. Their relationship with the state was critical; in fact, in many ways, the state was a determining factor. This addresses head-on what has often been a critique of the community resilience approach to violence and violent extremism: that it can be a strategy by states to relieve them of local responsibilities by highlighting the effectiveness of community agency and leadership. In fact, vertical cohesion, between communities and governance actors, is a critical aspect of any system of community resilience.

Social Cohesion, Social Capital, and Resilience: The Research Base

The first generation of community research studies emerged out of the individual radicalization thread that dominated the field of counterterrorism and countering violent extremism in the initial years. Some researchers were consumed with deciphering what, in an individual's environment, was driving radicalization. Other studies focused on the possible role that community organizations and leaders could play in countering radicalization networks and mitigating youth risk to recruitment. This initial phase of research was tainted somewhat by the “suspect” community approaches prevalent at the time: that weaknesses in the socioecology of communities were responsible for the infiltration of recruitment networks and the vulnerability of youth and that instrumentalizing community leaders and organizations in the fight against violent extremism would shore up youth resistance to recruitment.

A second generation of studies on community resilience focused on community responsibility—in many ways, a counter to the suspect community approaches. Here, many researchers emphasized either the lack of evidence or faulty assumptions regarding community factors driving youth vulnerability to violent extremism. For example, the European Institute of Peace's forward-looking survey of Molenbeek-Saint-Jean, a community in Brussels with known numbers of people who traveled to live or fight with the Islamic State, shows that the community, in fact, rejected fundamentalism and its appeal to youth, sought better relationships with the police, whom they trusted, and were open to building better relationships with communities outside their predominantly Moroccan immigrant base. Others noted that it was national political scapegoating and targeting of communities and individuals within them that entrenched their vulnerability and weakened their collective response—that is, their resilience. This second generation of research challenged the assumptions of the first generation that the risk factors for violent extremism resided within communities themselves and expanded

the scope of research to consider important externalities, such as the role of the state, systemic discrimination and marginalization, and so on.

A third generation of research is rooted in the growing influence of the peacebuilding field on preventing and countering violent extremism and its focus on the prevention of violence in general. This research is primarily inductive; it makes no assumptions regarding community risk or resilience to violence; rather, it investigates community comparative cases to explain why among communities with similar risk, some fall into violence and others do not. There is also the assumption that communities have agency and authority as frontline actors in resisting violent extremism and should not be interpreted through the values and interests of external actors. This third generation of research has identified a number of resilience factors across different communities and contexts of violence, including defensive security postures; interlocking, informal security networks; the monitoring and shutting down of vulnerable vectors; bridging social cohesion; and constructive engagement with state actors that keeps the state out, in the case of conflict actors.

However, community resilience research has not evolved to a level where it can inform practice, for a number of reasons: The research describes community resilience networks at high levels but not how they are governed, how they manage membership, or how trust was established. It also does not establish how communities learn, adapt, strategize, and implement their resistance strategies. Finally, it does not establish whether resilience is an organic process, whether at-risk communities can learn from other communities, and whether international actors can strengthen or even create resilience networks in communities without delegitimizing them.

A number of studies have begun to look specifically at the nature of social cohesion as it contributes to community resilience to violence. This is a critical area for further research, given its role in strengthening resilience. A recent Mercy Corps study on the Tillabéri region in Niger has established that working trust was the only cohesion factor that prevented community violence. Collaboration, shared understanding, coordination, and collective action, as types of social cohesion, did not yield violence prevention outcomes. Meanwhile, Oliver Kaplan's study of communities in Colombia that resisted armed groups found that collective action was the determining factor that contributed to their nonviolent resistance. What types of social cohesion work (trust building, collective action, collaboration) for violence prevention and under what circumstances must be better understood, including how violence, state repression, and security sector abuse unravel systems of community cohesion. In addition, more research needs to be conducted on the role of international and national actors in programs focused on building and strengthening community cohesion: Can external actors fund, lead, and participate in these efforts without delegitimizing them? What does effective external support look like, and, if cohesion is built over time, how long must these processes be sustained? Finally, what are other international and national actors doing in the same space: Are they reinforcing the systems of dark, violent cohesion or weakening community resilience

in ways that undercut the very processes they are trying to build and strengthen in a community?

It is broadly acknowledged that local grievances provide opportunity for violent-extremist exploitation, but there has been little study of which grievances are of particular consequence, whether they are systemic or proximate, and how they interact with youth, who are the primary targets of such recruitment. Anecdotes from Kenya and the Sahel demonstrate that it is a combination of the systemic marginalization of a class of land use and an acute act of exclusion and loss of status caused by governance actors (elected politicians, customary leaders) that creates an opening for radicalization. More attention certainly needs to be paid to the role of land tenure and violent extremism, the impact of state political corruption and security abuse at the local level, and, finally, how systems of dark capital—sustained networks of violence—are created or reinforced by the state and international actors in ways that invite extremist violence. It is also clear that engagement with and management of the state—civil servants, local government officials, governors, political representatives—are critical factors in community resilience. State actors can back or facilitate locally negotiated agreements; provide security, health, and education resources; and translate local needs to national authorities to counter and prevent violent extremism. Communities can only achieve resilience with a dispassionate, unbiased, responsive state or hybrid governance system; they are at risk when that state or system favors certain actors on the ground or participates in the marginalization of one group by another. More research and evaluation need to be done on governance and the prevention of violent extremism, research that addresses the following questions:

- How can the impact of corrupt political actors on community risk of violent extremism be mitigated? What is the relationship between political corruption and youth recruitment—is it a sustained system of exclusion? Punctuated incidents? How do the effects of corruption interact with other violent-extremist recruitment risks?
- If the state cannot sustain a presence locally, given security risks, how can effective governance support for communities be implemented? What are the critical state capacities that communities need to sustain their networks of resilience?
- How can state-sanctioned marginalization of ethnic, tribal, or rural groups, which increases vulnerability to violent extremism, be resolved?
- How can international actors incentivize good governance while respecting state sovereignty? How can international actors refrain from contributing to the bad governance problem?

Finally, in many ways, the established research on the role of social cohesion and the prevention of violence still rests on the old paradigm of the foundations of ethnic violence: ethnic bonding, ethnic bridging, and elite manipulation. There is a critical need to conduct

more research across communities and different violent-extremist contexts to validate the social cohesion dynamics that prevent or enhance violent extremism. This research is critical, as the international community and national governments are feeding into or participating in the systems of dark capital that violent-extremist groups are exploiting. These systems are unseen for many reasons, including the persistence of ideological assumptions, narratives perpetuated by powerful state actors to strengthen or hide their illicit networks, or the perennial impulse to blame the victim to protect existing power structures.

Promising Approaches to Community Resilience and the Prevention of Violent Extremism

This effort to examine the evidence on preventing and countering violent extremism and to identify promising new approaches to stanching its spread has centered on community resilience. Two promising areas of community resilience practice are LPCs and hybrid governance.

Local peace committees have largely been organized as a grassroots response to communal and ethnic violence, where the state has been largely absent. In the 1990s, the committees were either incorporated into or established as a result of formal peace settlements, such as in South Africa and Burundi. They have not been systematically considered or used for countering or preventing violent extremism. This section explores the challenges and opportunities LPCs would present if they were incorporated as a P/CVE practice. Hybrid governance is a bit of a different study. The breakdown or weakening of hybrid governance structures has provided opportunities for violent-extremist groups to proliferate in many countries. The question is how and whether the two practices can be reconstituted as a frontline force for P/CVE.

LOCAL PEACE COMMITTEES

Local peace committees arose in the 1990s in response to a confluence of several factors: evolutions in thinking in the peacebuilding field on the importance of localization and local cultures of peace, an explosion of civil society and community efforts to prevent and resolve burgeoning intrastate wars in Africa and around the world, and the recognition that elite-negotiated peace deals alone could not deliver peace. In 2013, the movement became formalized as a peacebuilding approach with the publication of Andries Odendaal's *A Crucial Link: Local Peace Committees and National Peacebuilding*, published by the US Institute of Peace.⁴⁸ The book, which focuses exclusively on formal LPCs (those that were mandated in formal peace agreements in South Africa, Kenya, and Burundi), led to a community of practice around infrastructures for peace (I4P) that included the following:

- robust research focused on cross-national comparative case studies to tease out the conditions of success for LPCs that contributed to the building of I4P;
- funding provided to LPCs in Libya, Mali, Nigeria, Niger, Iraq, Kenya, and others through practices initiated by the UN Development Programme and UN Peacebuilding Fund; and
- the Infrastructures for Peace initiative, formed by the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict, creating a learning hub for civil society networks to forge peace infrastructures in their countries.

This evidence review focuses on the burst of I4P research and practice between 2014 and 2018. While the initiative tapered off after about 2016, the UN Development Programme is currently funding some LPC work in Iraq. The Global Partnership hosted an I4P regional conference in West Africa in 2020, although the conference report reads somewhat like a plea, or an advocacy campaign, to recognize the value of peacebuilding efforts by funding them.⁴⁹

Local Peace Committees: The Research Base

Most research on LPCs focuses on committees established by formal peace processes, such as those in South Africa and Northern Ireland, where a peace agreement created an architecture that structured community participation. However, in other cases, such as Burundi, LPCs existed before the peace agreement and were officially incorporated into it.⁵⁰ Emerging out of this comparative case-study analysis is a consensus on what formal LPCs can and cannot do, how they should be structured and resourced for success, and their impact on social cohesion and community resilience. More research is needed on informal LPCs, as they hold important insights on indigenous conflict-resolution practices, the way communities negotiate inclusion, and the relationship between LPCs and community resilience to violence. This focus on LPCs grew into a larger research interest in established I4P and relationships between communities and governments within the system.

Local peace committees have existed as organic, bottom-up institutions in Africa for decades. Their value was recognized in South Africa when negotiators observed that black communities were unlikely to engage with the state and government institutions that had overseen apartheid. To gain popular buy-in for the peace process and citizen engagement in peace implementation, the settlement institutionalized LPCs and mandated them to conduct local dialogue, build tolerance, and engage the community in problem-solving exercises. The post-apartheid transition in South Africa was extremely volatile, and the LPCs were credited with mitigating its most violent effects. In 2013, Andries Odendaal's comparative analysis of LPCs in South Africa, Sierra Leone, Northern Ireland, and Kenya launched the I4P community of practice, identifying the capacities, and limitations, of formal LPCs. According to Odendaal, formal

LPCs excel at resolving the everyday conflicts that communities experience—disagreements that, in times of escalation or recovery from violence, become acute. They use dialogue, problem solving, and information sharing in the effort to prevent violence. They cannot enforce peace when armed groups are promoting violence, nor can they address violence’s structural causes, especially when they are rooted in the policies of the state.⁵¹

Research indicates that LPCs do not only facilitate resolution of community conflicts, but also transform behaviors and norms, helping community members to gain confidence in nonviolent methods for resolving conflict and to learn to trust one another.⁵² They also contribute to issue transformation, which can then lead to structural transformations over the long term. Dialogue fundamentally reframes conflict issues, as participants increase their knowledge and gain multiple perspectives, potentially reaching compromise. And as compromises are reached, power dynamics in the communities can shift over time, leading to structural change.⁵³

While peace committees can have significant transformative effects locally, their affiliation with a national structure is a distinctly mixed bag. Where LPCs have been externally imposed, they must focus first and foremost on establishing their legitimacy by clarifying their roles and responsibilities vis-à-vis other local institutions, confronting community concerns and suspicions regarding its activity and demonstrating complete transparency in its activities and mandate. When national actors and institutions push their own agendas on LPCs or put pressure on them to exercise position and authority, they weaken committees’ fundamental power—to provide a space for consensus and compromise. The relationship between LPCs and local governance actors can also be both problematic and promising. The committees can strengthen the social cohesion that makes local governance possible, overriding the rule of armed actors. They can drive local agreements that allow elections to occur peaceably and armed actors to reintegrate. Where local government has been devastated by armed conflict, LPCs can insert themselves into the political system and supersede the authority of local government officials.

Much of the research on informal LPCs is rooted in the African experience, where peace committees have been plentiful as states have withdrawn from conflict-affected areas, such as Wajir, Kenya, and throughout Burundi in the 1990s.⁵⁴ These committees often drew on the customary conflict-resolution practices of local institutions, such as the *bashingantahe* (a widespread informal justice mechanism) in Burundi.⁵⁵ Their roots in customary practice, however, have had mixed effects on community peace. As they were designed to reestablish contact between individuals and groups that had been in conflict, their goal was community harmony and reconciliation: inclusive, win-win solutions achieved through dialogue and joint problem solving.⁵⁶ But these informal LPCs also reflected the power dynamics in their communities. If a community was male-dominated, so were the LPCs. If age was associated with power in a community, the LPCs would be populated with the older generations. Committees

in highly patriarchal communities, in these cases, often ended up reinforcing, rather than dismantling, the systems of exclusion that undergirded local violence.⁵⁷

A cross-case study analysis of informal LPCs, including cases in the Philippines, Colombia, Kenya, and Somaliland, describes successful committees as being rooted in communities that have significant resilience—“social networks, existing structures and development-oriented social norms and values . . . [that] became building blocks for their peacebuilding.”⁵⁸ They also shared another resilience capacity: the ability of the community to come together to creatively advance their collective economic well-being. Individuals in the community expressed confidence in their own agency and the unique role they played in contributing to the community’s health and development. In these resilient communities, citizens would take ownership of a peace process, in the same way that they would own other community needs—development, security, and so on. The capacities that they harnessed for development were used for local peace processes—the very definition of resilience. These resilience capacities—social trust, individual agency, inclusive networks—in the initial response to violence allowed the community to come together “to ensure a common concern and vision and they charted a better and preferred peaceful future.”⁵⁹

The committees explored in the study differed significantly from formal LPCs engaged in the implementation of a peace settlement. Whereas these formal LPCs were more successful when engaged in everyday conflict resolution, informal LPCs addressed significant conflict and violence head-on. A meta-evaluation of LPCs in conflict-affected communities conducted by Peace Direct shows that they are highly effective in situations of long-term chronic conflict, where state involvement is often missing. They engage in local dispute resolution for serious conflicts—such as farmer-herder battles, escalatory violence, electoral violence, and engagement with armed militias. Furthermore, and highly relevant to P/CVE, LPCs, when they engage with youth, are a highly important protective factor. Youth involvement in LPCs, especially in societies where youth are excluded from formal political, social, and economic structures, are less vulnerable to recruitment in violent-extremist and other armed groups. When participating in LPC events and dialogue, young people were able to create their own vision of peace and work actively to realize it. This exercise, according to the evidence, prevented youth engagement in violence, increased their participation in democratic processes and institutions, and improved their perceptions of other groups within the community.⁶⁰

Comparing the research findings on formal and informal LPCs raises some critical issues and gaps that should be explored before LPCs are drawn into P/CVE work. First, many countries in the Sahel and the Horn of Africa are developing infrastructures for P/CVE, approving national security strategies that call for community engagement and support. How these LPCs are incorporated into that infrastructure is critical for the types of violence they can address: committees associated with the state seem to have less authority to resolve major incidents to violence, whereas local committees in highly resilient communities (where social trust and

individual agency are present) have significant capacity and authority to deal with violent actors and core community conflict. How LPCs establish their authority in the community and the impact on their capacity to resolve conflict needs to be further researched and understood.

Moreover, more research needs to be done on failed LPCs, and on LPCs that initially failed and then succeeded, to ensure that the conditions for success for P/CVE are understood and implemented.

Finally, a critical factor for LPC success or failure appears to be how and in what community power context committees exercise inclusion. Studying those dynamics is critical to the effectiveness of LPCs within P/CVE: for example, an LPC pushing for inclusion in a highly exclusionary society may help prevent youth recruitment to violent extremism but risks a loss in authority with community leaders for resolving other community conflicts.

Local Peace Committees in Practice

Several program evaluations of LPCs in Burundi, the Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, Niger, and Senegal yield interesting best practices that should be considered for future programming.⁶¹ Each program had an extensive, multifaceted evaluation phase and focused on a unique aspect of LPCs.⁶² In 2005, Search for Common Ground worked with LPCs in ten Côte d'Ivoire villages that had experienced significant levels of violence in the north, west, and center of the country. The project used multiple, mutually reinforcing efforts to build local support for peace that then legitimated the work of the LPCs. These efforts included enhanced training for LPC facilitators and expanded training to include new facilitator cohorts of youth and women. The project also recognized the importance of strengthening a local culture of peace to enhance the LPC's work. It included participatory theater and radio programming to educate community members on the importance of nonviolent approaches for resolving conflict. While the evaluation did not provide information on the outcomes in social cohesion and violence prevention for these communities, it did reinforce the point that building a community culture of peace cannot depend solely on LPC dialogue. Committee efforts must be reinforced through a variety of avenues that communicate to the community more broadly the social norms and behaviors associated with peace and what makes it a viable alternative to violence.

A UN Peacebuilding Fund effort in Niger from 2015 to 2018 focused primarily on strengthening the position of youth and women in the community through the work of international organizations in support of LPCs throughout the country. The cross-programmatic evaluation noted that it was not enough to implement programs specifically on women and youth's inclusion. All programming designed to support local peacebuilding committees—economic, development, health, security, conflict resolution, and the like—had to be linked together with the common goal of strengthening inclusion to fully realize cumulative community social change.

A critical component of this intensive work was a robust intersectionality analysis on youth and women and their relationship to violence and violent extremism through the multiple roles they played in a community. The inclusion work succeeded when it did not assume or treat either youth or women as a homogeneous group. For example, certain subgroups of youth and women were more at risk for violence than others, depending on their socioeconomic, political, cultural, religious, or ethnic identities. Guided by this risk analysis, the programs strove to meet beneficiaries and recipients where they were. In particular, programs had to be specially designed to ensure the participation of the most marginalized women and youth, including by providing childcare, enhancing their learning and participation through preparatory activities, securing travel, recruiting them through their trusted leaders, and so on.

A US Agency for International Development–funded project in the Central African Republic from 2016 to 2019 sought to establish LPCs in eight neighborhoods in the city of Bangui and six in mining areas in the southeast region of the country. The evaluation of this effort reinforced the need for LPCs to be fully integrated with civil society and local government in these communities, which required a much greater level of technical skills development of LPC members to give them the confidence and capacity to form better partnerships. In addition, the project needed to fund more and better joint meetings between LPCs, local government, and civil society partners to ensure agreement regarding local conflict resolution strategies and roles. Finally, thought had to be given to how to make the committees self-sustaining—that is, how they could make money for their organizations in ways that did not undermine their local legitimacy. This final point regarding donor dependency and self-sustainment was reinforced by an assessment of LPCs in Casamance, Senegal, which showed the harmful effects of donor-led efforts. The commodification of LPCs in Senegal’s competitive donor market for civil-society funding had inverted LPC incentives: the committees predominantly responded to donor demand rather than local community input regarding the issues they addressed and the methods they used. The result was that, in general, the committees in Casamance addressed the symptoms of the conflict, not the root causes, and were perceived by locals as partial actors.

The final evaluation of LPC work in Burundi resulted in two tools that were designed to enhance local community engagement in the work of the committees and international support for them. The evaluators brought together civil society organizations, international donors, members of LPCs, and traditional leaders to brainstorm ideas based on their existing experience working with such committees. The project resulted in a set of dialogue questions to enhance community engagement and better outcomes from LPC dialogue on the nature of peace the community wanted and the means for getting there. The questions were accompanied by a set of visual prompts—images that would spur discussion in illiterate communities and lay the foundation for a more in-depth conversation on the following questions:⁶³

- How should we deal with the past?
- Is our purpose to stop violence or find responses to structural causes?
- Are we working toward grassroots peace or comprehensive peace?
- Should we deal with peace directly or indirectly through development?
- What degree of vertical collaboration do we seek?
- Who should be included in our efforts?
- What are our sources of inspiration—external or internal?
- What is the role of traditions and customs or customary institutions?
- What relation should we establish with state institutions?
- Will this be a permanent or transitional structure?

In addition, videos were developed to assist international organizations by laying out the complex decisions that communities have to make, with LPC mediation, to integrate the responses to these questions into local peacebuilding strategies.

Local Peace Committees and Community Resilience to Violent Extremism

This evidence review hypothesizes that the slowing of the I4P initiative may owe in some part to the layering of counterterrorism operations onto many of today’s current conflicts. This leads to what must be a fundamental question: Can LPCs strengthen community resilience to violent extremism and become effective mechanisms for either preventing or countering violent extremism? Several policy-level dilemmas must be addressed before exploring the evidence and programmatic base for LPCs and what this means for preventing and countering violent extremism.

As noted, LPCs fall into two categories—formal and informal. As many countries adopt UN national counterterrorism action plans or national security strategies for countering terrorism, it is possible that LPCs could be part of a state-community infrastructure for preventing and countering violent terrorism, where these strategies call for community or civil society engagement.⁶⁴ In most countries that have currently adopted LPCs—Côte d’Ivoire, Kenya, Niger—LPCs are already tackling other manifestations of violence, such as electoral or secessionist violence. In this case, could currently existing LPCs also work to prevent or counter extremist violence? The fundamental issue is whether an I4P for addressing one type of violence can be used for addressing another, especially in the context of violent extremism, where the infrastructure is dedicated to an entirely different objective, namely, winning the war on terror.

There is an increasing effort in West Africa, Kenya, and other countries affected by violent extremism to engage communities constructively in national counterterrorism strategies, such as Kenya’s county action plans. These efforts pose fundamental policy contradictions around the legitimate use of violence, the internationalization of local conflicts, and the role of the state that could potentially complicate the work of LPCs. The war on terror and the

national counterterrorism strategies that support it incorporate a rigid morality that grossly undermines peacebuilding efforts, as seen in Afghanistan, Mali, Kenya, among other places. The only option in counterterrorism is to defeat terrorist groups and any group associated with them; negotiated outcomes are not acceptable.

The conflict binary (win/lose) imposed by counterterrorism has severely complicated local peacebuilding efforts in several ways. First, governments seize on these internationalized narratives to demonize entire groups that have historically challenged the state (through secession, autonomy, insurgency) when associated factions or individuals align with violent extremists. In many cases, violent extremism allows the state to shift the conflict narrative, either to rationalize historical discrimination by the state or to direct attention away from the role of the state in these localized conflicts. The conflict narrative shifts from local grievances to the international spread of jihadism, limiting the ability of LPCs to deal with the historical root causes of the conflict. This deflection also eliminates a core component of an I4P: the state, which has now diverted attention from its role in and responsibilities for the conflict or is simply no longer a presence on the ground.

Second, the internationalization of the conflict fundamentally transforms the localized conflict as conflict actors realign along new resource and incentive structures. The changing conflict ecosystem is just such a case in central Mali, where Fulani tribes are now associated with JNIM (Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin) and where Dan Nam Ambassagou (which draws its members from the primarily non-Muslim Dogon communities) have been aligned with Mali security forces. What conflict would local LPCs be solving when extremist violence becomes intertwined with localized violence? And do the committees have the capacity to address increasingly complex, dynamic systems of violence? A recent report by the RESOLVE network on the border conflicts in Niger, where the team had conducted extensive interviews, notes a phenomenon that was impeding community resilience to violence: the community calls the condition psychosis and describes it as a community-wide paralysis (part physical and part mental) in the face of violence, as conflict becomes too complex for communities to identify the entry points for its resolution.⁶⁵

Another critical issue for considering the formation of, or partnering with, informal LPCs to prevent or counter violent extremism is the principle Do No Harm. The committees will need to protect against the risk of infiltration by violent-extremist actors. In the Sahel, Syria, and Afghanistan, extremist groups target I4P to infiltrate and control communities. The assassination of traditional governance leaders, community police, and civil society and moderate religious leaders is the first line of any violent-extremist offensive; violent-extremist groups understand their role in community resilience and local I4P. Communities at risk for violent extremism have sometimes contributed to that risk with their extreme marginalization of youth by traditional or local government leaders. (For example, youth in the lowest castes of the Tuareg ethnic group's caste system are joining violent-extremist groups in significant numbers in Mali and Niger.) Thus, LPCs in those communities might be

prone to elite capture or reflect community power dynamics, exacerbating the systems of marginalization that already exist or experiencing significant political backlash if they were to press for more inclusion. Finally, informal, community-centered LPCs are challenged by the issue of scale and violent-extremist mobility, especially in communities located on national or regional borders. A strong community peace response to violent extremism may push these groups to neighboring communities or across borders, where they can become stronger and return. Without a cohesive strategy, sustained support, and a basic infrastructure to ground their community efforts, informal LPCs would have little chance of long-term resilience.

What, then, are the conditions for engaging LPCs for community resilience to violent extremism? First, mapping the power and presence of LPCs in rural communities at risk of, but not yet subject to, violent extremism can and should be incorporated into any prevention strategy to determine how successful they are in working with governance actors; engaging all groups in the community; and resolving everyday, historic, systemic, and electoral violence.

These committees should be educated on the dynamics of violent extremism, how to conduct an analysis of the community's risk for violent extremism, and how to develop a prevention strategy with community groups (especially those most likely to be affected by violent-extremist recruitment and operations) and with the local government and security actors. This should include a Do No Harm analysis so that LPCs can understand the risk to themselves and to their members should violent-extremist groups increase their presence and operations locally. The committees should also be briefed on the contradictions between the country's counterterrorism and peacebuilding strategies so that they have agency and choice in navigating the contradictions between these conflicting agendas.

Where LPCs are connected to a national-local I4P, such as around electoral violence and political reconciliation in Kenya and Côte d'Ivoire or as part of a peace process in Niger, it is critical that leaders be briefed on these infrastructures, at both national and local levels, and on how electoral violence intersects with extremist violence. For example, extremist groups now exploit the political polarization around elections to disenfranchise Muslim voters from secular states or piggyback on opposition critiques of the state to reinforce their recruitment narratives on state corruption and predation as reasons for youth to join their extremist ranks. Extremist groups also exploit historical grievances in communities that have been subject to state discrimination and marginalization, such as particular tribes in Burkina Faso and Niger. I4P that have been put in place to address issues of historical and systematic exclusion should be educated on how those issues play into extremist hands in order to advocate for prioritization in terms of resources and capacity. This is not to say that these I4P should be harnessed by P/CVE and counterterrorism strategies and programs. It is to say that supporting them to fulfill their mandates will likely have P/CVE effects, and these should be monitored, analyzed, and measured.

HYBRID GOVERNANCE

The Role of Hybrid Governance in Conflict Management

It is frequently noted that violent extremism spreads in regions where the administrative apparatus of the state is weak or nonexistent. But the reality is much different. Governance exists in all regions, towns, and communities: if institutions of the state are not present, civil society, armed groups, or traditional leaders assume governance roles, providing services, security and justice, and rule of law. In many communities around the globe, it is traditional or customary leaders who interact with residuals of state administration locally to provide local governance.

This relation between formal government, local state administrators (governors, civil servants, mayors), and traditional leaders, who derive their authority from the customs and traditions of a particular area, has been a common form of governance throughout many areas of the world, including Africa, Asia, Central Asia, the Near East and the Middle East. Thus, the idea that violent-extremist groups proliferate where the state is not present cannot be supported. Even the concept of hybridity, which implies a blending of formal state and informal customary systems, is not entirely accurate. Hybridity is often a complex constellation of formal and informal institutions that engage in the governance space, continuously vying for legitimacy and power. This institutional multiplicity can lead to a continual and dynamic process of reordering and renegotiation. Many violent-extremist groups proliferate in areas where the systems of hybrid governance have collapsed or weakened or where a constellation of institutions engage in violent conflict to assert their power and legitimacy.

To assess the usefulness of hybrid governance in preventing the proliferation of violent-extremist groups, it is critical to understand how the deterioration of traditional governance as a dynamic balancing mechanism has contributed to the spread of violent-extremist groups. Several factors explain the crisis of hybrid governance in the Sahel. In northern Mali, the authority of customary leaders has rested on a symbiotic relationship with state authorities in the administration of governance, especially since 2012, when the government devolved significant power to local entities. When the state retreated following the rise in extremist and armed group violence and the failure of the peace accords, the authority, legitimacy, and capacity of customary leaders at first rose. They attempted to step into the governance gap to adjudicate community access to critical resources, such as water and land, but only achieved mixed results.

When a state administers these resources, they are perceived for the most part as a collective good. When customary leaders associated with particular tribes step into resource administration, these resources are increasingly perceived as tribally owned. Thus, the legitimacy of traditional leaders as equitable adjudicators of resources is not collectively understood or exercised in reality. In regions where ethnic or tribal identity in the Sahel has not been contested, resources have been managed peacefully. In regions where multiple tribes exist,

contestations over resources have further fractured tribal groups, leading to ever proliferating conflict. In moments when the Malian state has intervened, the state has been perceived as partial to colonial-established tribal alliances, further exacerbating local resource conflicts.

As conflict has escalated, traditional leaders have had to govern in partnership with armed groups—state security forces, community-based armed groups, local vigilante groups, or violent extremists. Traditional leaders have discussed how the proliferation of armed groups has greatly undercut their authority and legitimacy. As community grievances and conflicts have proliferated, violent-extremist groups have entered the picture, further weakening the governance and conflict-resolution authority of traditional leaders. As violent-extremist groups have looked to consolidate local control, they have targeted traditional leaders in assassination campaigns, especially those who have or are perceived to have collaborated with the state. They have also recruited from tribal groups that have suffered the most from a long-standing colonial hangover: the state’s discriminatory, divide-and-conquer rule. Tribal groups like the Fulani, Tuareg, and Peul, which have borne the brunt of state antagonism and predation, have accepted jihadist rule as a protection against the state: “On the one hand, villagers suffer jihadists’ constraints on religious practice and tradition. . . . But some Peul in particular see the Islamic State affiliate as a necessary bulwark against a state that has preyed upon them.”⁶⁶

The other factor that has contributed to the breaking apart of hybrid governance, and its capacity for balancing competing community interests, has been international actors. In the Sahel, the UN peacekeeping mission, the involvement of international development actors, and the regional counterterrorism intervention introduced incentive structures that shifted community alliances in ways that have further undermined customary authority and its ability to manage community conflict dynamics.⁶⁷

Thus, the Sahel case prefaces the ways in which hybrid governance systems can work in traditional, rural societies where the state has not invested in a robust administration. First, there is often an implicit or explicit division of responsibilities between informal and formal governance systems, which provide legitimacy to both. Weak local state administration is bolstered by its interaction with informal governance systems in terms of information flow, prioritization of citizen needs, avenues to push state policies to communities and provide services, and so on. Customary leaders enjoy enhanced legitimacy, by being designated as integral to official governance, and enhanced status, owing to their ability to communicate and deliver on community needs and interests. However, as seen in the Sahel, the mutual legitimacies and authorities are both weakened when the state is seen as a partial, conflict actor or when traditional leaders use this relationship to extract benefits—in this case, security—only for certain groups. Hybrid leadership is also weakened when the state or system of customary leadership fails to balance the needs and interests of the multiplicity of institutions that inhabit the governance space and hence becomes part of the competition for legitimacy and power.

A significant issue that must be raised in the Sahel regarding governance, in addition to control of natural resources, is land tenure. Traditional governance systems alone do not seem to manage contested land tenure well, and access to land and dispossession from it is a major driver of violent extremism, both in the Sahel and in other countries, such as Afghanistan and Iraq. The US Institute of Peace initiated programming in Afghanistan to address this weakness: customary leaders had the responsibility of deciding local land-tenure issues that were then registered in a state-managed database to ensure fidelity to the ruling. In many instances, especially in conflict-affected countries with significant numbers of displaced persons, the oral rulings of customary leaders become lost or misremembered, igniting another round of local conflict. While the issues in the Sahel around land tenure are both similar and different (access to communal lands by herder-pastoralist communities, the shrinking of arable land owing to climate change), strengthening hybrid governance capacity on resource management and land tenure in at-risk communities seems to be a prevention strategy for preventing and countering violent extremism.

A final insight from the Sahel regarding hybrid governance and its capacity to manage the community conflict dynamics through which violent-extremist groups infiltrate is that the international community must have greater awareness of the impact of its activities and actions on hybrid governance structures. Its overly securitized approaches contribute to the rise in armed groups as communities self-protect from now-multiple conflicts—international, state-local, and local. As armed actors become more powerful, the legitimacy of customary leaders declines. Where development work does occur, in many cases the funding has been captured by elites, both in capitals and locally; these elites are then incentivized to respond to the interests of donors rather than those of citizens.⁶⁸

Strengthening Systems of Hybrid Governance: Policy Impediments

The research and practice base on reconstituting or strengthening systems of hybrid governance to recover from or prevent violence was substantial in the wake of the 1990s ethnic conflicts and the nation-building efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan following the 9/11 attacks. However, many of these studies and policies were not without significant institutional bias. First, the state-building interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq were primarily focused on extending formal state administrative systems into rural communities or “mimicking” customary structures and integrating them into national governance structures, such as the National Solidarity Program in Afghanistan. Preserving, strengthening, and integrating customary systems is often more of a puzzle and rarely a governance priority of international institutions, donors, or the development arms of other national governments. State-centric institutions are wired to fund projects that support Western conceptions of the state. Second, customary institutions are generally exclusive, patriarchal systems that do not mesh with the democratic institutions, norms, and processes that many governance donors prefer. They are often seen

as an impediment to democratic governance rather than institutions that can be reformed or engaged with. Governments in fragile states can view traditional and customary systems with some suspicion—as competitors for citizen loyalties, impediments to state rule, and historical enemies of the national government, especially if that government is dominated by a particular ethnic or tribal group. Finally, in the area of peace processes, the field of hybridity discusses local and customary actors as those who subvert or bastardize national peacebuilding efforts to maintain local power and control over local conflict dynamics.

The focus of strengthening hybrid governance to manage violence and serve citizen interests should not be on forging institutional relationships and capacities but on understanding the political outcomes of such governance. In some cases, those political outcomes will build and strengthen community resilience to violence and violent extremism. In other cases, the political machinations of hybrid systems will reinforce dark social capital, resulting in systemic violence against groups and citizens—the vulnerability that extremist groups exploit.

Hybrid Systems of Land Management

In the early years of the twenty-first century, many African countries, with support from international financial institutions such as the World Bank, embarked on rural land reform, recognizing that competition over land was becoming extremely fierce and even violent and that customary systems were ill equipped to resolve the growing competitions.⁶⁹ The weaknesses in customary leaders' management of land tenure were multifold and included the following:

- increasing demand for natural resources;
- increasingly massive relocations of populations seeking land, such as the flight of livestock producers owing to drought and resource degradation, the return of emigrants from neighboring conflict-affected countries, the pursuit of new agricultural pioneering ventures such as cotton production and government-sponsored development projects, and the eradication of river blindness;⁷⁰
- tension between customary and state land tenure rulings; and
- an independence-era national legal system that sought to eliminate customary leaders' authority on land tenure.

The reforms were also billed as an opportunity to create economic capital and an entrepreneurial base in rural communities by creating a market in land. Much of the land reform efforts were based on neoliberal concepts of the privatization and securitization of land ownership in order to drive economic development and growth. There was also recognition that previous attempts to eradicate customary land management systems had been counterproductive. Thus, there was a significant nod to recognizing and integrating rural customary systems, such as the documentation and registration of customary land users; assigning land rights to customary users and collectives; and physically surveying boundaries to make

customary tenure clear.⁷¹ In the effort to create a rural land market, many countries in Africa attempted to deregulate land sales; in cases where customary systems dominated, this often meant the state devolving legal authority to local entities, as was the case in Burkina Faso.⁷² There was also a simultaneous reregulation of land as countries sought to register customary decisions on land ownership in state-run databases to provide greater security to land markets.⁷³

These blended, hybridized land management reforms, which were rooted in neoliberal traditions but incorporated customary system realities, have had some perverse effects that may have some relationship to the spread of violent extremism—although this relationship must be researched and tested. The first unintended consequence of these reforms is that they have actually made it easier for wealthy urbanites, international corporations, and investors to acquire communal lands because their boundaries are clearly delineated, as are the terms of ownership. The issue of the sale of these large-scale landholdings to investors and corporations must be examined as a potential driver of violent extremism. With the insertion of the state into local land tenure issues and the integration of customary leaders into state systems, clashes have occurred locally between national elites and their brokers at the local level.⁷⁴ Wealthy, nationally politically connected individuals at the local level have used the hybrid system to challenge the authority of customary leaders there. These local “hot shots” pretend to represent national political interests to adjudicate land deals, while lining their pockets.

One such issue is the sale of large-scale communal and state landholdings to international and national investors with the promise of creating local jobs, stimulating the local economy, and providing access to new agricultural technologies. Some research suggests that these large land sales have numerous negative effects: increased local food insecurity, environmental degradation, inadequate compensation for the land sale, and increased land conflicts.⁷⁵ While the link to large-scale sales of land has not been directly studied, several studies on community dynamics and violent extremism have pinpointed communal land sales by political officials and traditional leaders—and the immediate triple dispossession of youth from community, employment, and status—as a key driver of youth membership in violent-extremist groups.⁷⁶ This is an area that needs to be further researched and studied as a critical hybrid-governance P/CVE issue.

As these new, hybridized land tenure systems have taken hold, a critical issue has been the shifting structure of landholdings. A hope of the new rural land market system had been a bottom-up consolidation of landholdings as some rural farmers increased their economic wealth. Instead, the system has generally resulted in increasingly smaller rural farmer landholdings, as the competition for arable land grows and urban investors take advantage of the land-titling system to acquire rural lands. In reality, the idea that better resourced landowners would buy land from the unproductive rural poor (thus creating capital for the poor and potentially jobs) has in many cases not occurred. Poor people have sold at prices lower than the

value of their land, as a result of distress sales; and land-grabbing local elites, working with state officials, have taken poor people's lands in areas where customary tenure does not offer statutory protection.⁷⁷ As the new land reforms dispossess the poorest of the poor either through corruption or through market forces, the link between further marginalization of the most marginalized in rural communities and the risk for violent extremism should be studied.

While the links between land tenure, political corruption, marginalization, and youth dispossession and violent extremism have been discussed anecdotally by communities in key informant interviews and focus group discussions, this issue needs to be researched further. The relationships intuitively make sense, and if they are proved and validated, they introduce a cautionary note regarding hybrid governance, not as an approach for P/CVE, but as a driver of it. In any case, the current hybridization of land reform has introduced a corrupt political class into local rural communities and has caused a further impoverishment of some rural poor and potentially their dispossession from the land. In other words, in terms of community resilience to violence and violent extremism, it has introduced or strengthened systems of dark capital in some rural communities, even as it has introduced a market in rural land that is at times more transparent and secure—factors that are critical to reducing local struggles over land ownership.

Hybrid Security Systems

Local, customary security organizations have long been a presence in African communities. Fostered and supported by colonial administrations as part of their dividing and conquering of colonies by elevating certain ethnic groups over others as a mechanism of political control, ethnic militias and vigilante groups were used in conjunction with colonial security forces to monitor and put down other ethnic groups that were being excluded by the state.⁷⁸ The Malian state has used a similar system of ethnic alliances, hybrid governance, and community-based armed groups in Central Mali by enlisting the Dan Nam Ambassagou, an ethnic militia made up primarily of non-Muslim Dogon fighters, to assist its security forces in battling extremist groups and their perceived local Fulani tribal associates. The result in Central Mali has been the proliferation of armed and violent-extremist groups and a significant deterioration in the resilience of local communities and their ability to manage localized conflicts.⁷⁹

Thus, the Kenyan government's incorporation of customary security norms and institutions into a nationwide effort to prevent and counter violent extremism is an informative case for this study. The government of Kenya established the Nyumba Kumi initiative after the Westgate Mall terrorist attacks. It is a community policing model based on Tanzania's customary policing, which itself is based on Tanzanian communal values and the African *ubuntu* philosophy of social connectedness.⁸⁰ The premise behind Nyumba Kumi is that neighborhoods (in this case, organized in units of ten blocks) share a common interest in a safe and prosperous

community and that, if organized, community members will work with one another to get to know neighbors, monitor activities in their neighborhood, and report any suspicious activities to local and customary leaders.⁸¹ The intent of this strategy was also to improve community relations with the police, who were generally seen as predatory and abusive actors. Local leaders could report community “intelligence” to security officials without exposing members to police harassment and abuse. With this buffer in place, police would receive better intelligence and perhaps grow to trust and improve relations with communities, as they began to perceive them as partners in countering crime and terrorism. In form, Nyumba Kumi has all the characteristics of a resilient system: engaging horizontally across community lines and vertically with traditional and security leaders and having the capacity to manage predatory governance actors.

Both the Tanzania and Kenya cases are insightful because they are instances where the state has attempted to harness or integrate customary systems and norms into national policy. Communities in Tanzania have long engaged in a customary local policing practice called *sungusungu* vigilantism, whereby organizations were founded by communities in the 1980s to stem the rising rates of violent cattle raiding to which the state was not adequately responding. The *sungusungu* were governed by a group of village-level leaders publicly selected by the community and funded by villagers with a small remuneration in either cash or food. All able-bodied men were required to arm themselves to participate in defending the village in a raid. The *sungusungu* system also administered justice: cattle raiders were whipped and tortured.⁸² The ruling party of Tanzania, the Chama Cha Mapinduzi, recognized the practical benefits of this growing crime prevention movement. In addition, it was extremely complementary to the party’s ideological support for socialism and grassroots mobilization.

The Chama Cha Mapinduzi promoted and incorporated the *sungusungu* with local administration and designated them an official organization of the state in 1989, with the amendment of the People’s Militia Act to give the *sungusungu* the equivalent powers of a peace constable. Their authorities and responsibilities expanded under the Chama Cha Mapinduzi to include state administration functions such as collecting taxes and enforcing citizen participation in volunteer nation-building projects.⁸³ When the party’s fortunes diminished, and multiparty rule was instituted in Tanzania in 1992, the power of the *sungusungu* in urban communities declined, although their presence in rural communities, which did not depend on political party patronage, remained, as did their cultural prominence in Tanzanian society.

In 2006, the Tanzanian government introduced a new community policing strategy called *ulinzi shirikishi* (collaborative security), whereby citizens were required to form security committees that would conduct night patrols, investigate reported crimes, and resolve disputes. With this new form of collaborative security, the government intended to draw on society’s cultural comfort with community policing structures such as the *sungusungu*, although in both form and substance these reforms were tangibly different. A first-order difference was that the *ulinzi shirikishi* were to collaborate with police, while the *sungusungu* had long operated independently from the police. Their relationship was largely antagonistic.⁸⁴

A research study of the ulinzi shirikishi system in Tanzania that looks at the political outcomes from the blending of customary and official police security institutions indicates why it was problematic. First, a reliance on customary, community-based systems should not be the cheap alternative to the provision of security. Even customary systems require resourcing, which in the system instituted in Tanzania fell on the shoulders of community members. In fact, the largest burden fell on the poorest of citizens, who, if they could not provide remuneration and payment, were required to serve greater amounts of time. Second, community-based systems suffer from bad governance as well. In many communities in Tanzania, there was little accounting for the funds that were spent on security. And when security becomes commercialized, wealthier residents, who can pay more for additional services, receive the bulk of security rather than their poorer counterparts, who are often more at risk of being victims of a crime.⁸⁵

While modeled on the Tanzania community-based policing system, there were problems grafting a system from another country and culture into the Kenya context. The first issue was related to constitutionality. Kenya's criminal code contains stipulations for citizen arrests that were assumed in Nyumba Kumi, leading frequently to mob justice or the abuse of suspected criminals, especially in the absence of alternative dispute resolution mechanisms. The second issue was the lack of guidelines for establishing community security systems under Nyumba Kumi, leading to a confusion of roles and responsibilities and a lack of transparency and oversight. Often, Nyumba Kumi organizations were the victims of elite capture by community members who saw them as a source of revenue or by local criminals who sought to dominate them. Finally, Nyumba Kumi organizations tended to exclude youth, even though they are most frequently the victim of crimes or engaged in criminal activity. Often, the exclusion was at the hands of community elders. Community polling demonstrated support for greater youth involvement to give youth a source of employment, to include them in community decisions on security that affect them, and to give them more leadership roles and responsibilities.⁸⁶ Thus, in the absence of state guidelines for implementing Nyumba Kumi, the local systems of dark capital asserted themselves in many community initiatives, including the systematic discrimination against youth and elite capture of community resources and assets.

Hybridity

In the early years of this century, the World Bank conducted a series of major studies on customary justice systems, investigating how they interacted with formal rule-of-law systems and what more could be done to strengthen the legitimacy and complementarity of both. No such major study has been conducted on traditional, informal governance and the state: how the two interact, where each might have more legitimacy, and how hybrid systems succeed and how they fail. Yet for practitioners involved in preventing and countering violent extremism, the issue of hybridity is critical, as violent-extremist groups proliferate in areas where this structure of governance is the norm. Hybrid governance space is best defined not as the

juncture between formal and informal systems but as a place of governance fluidity, where state and customary actors and institutions create governance linkages and straddle multiple boundaries. Their negotiated relationships fill governance gaps in good and bad ways, sometimes driving toward good governance outcomes and sometimes promoting their parochial interests. While good at preventing conflict by balancing a multitude of actor and group interests, “these orders are not structured to manage complex emergencies” that require collective, sustained response.⁸⁷ Thus, strengthening hybrid governance may be best suited for preventing violent extremism and communities at possible or imminent risk for violent extremism. In terms of countering violent extremism and hybrid governance, the focus must be on the principle of Do No Harm, recognizing that violent shocks, such as extremist group operations and international responses to them, may quickly unravel the negotiated relationships that underpin hybrid governance systems.

The research cases for this section focus on the Sahel and the Somali-Kenyan border, where violent groups increasingly dominated the governance landscape but where, in the case of Kenya, hybrid governance succeeded in preventing violence. In the other case, the Sahel, hybrid governance structures fell like dominoes. In between both cases lie powerful lessons learned regarding how hybrid governance models can prevent violence, but as such violence increases, they contribute to the “unraveling.” Ken Menkhaus’s research on the mediated state and the peacebuilding efforts of women in Wajir, Kenya, is a seminal study on hybridity and peace.⁸⁸ In the early 1990s, as land and resources became scarce, three Somali clans that inhabited Wajir began to increasingly compete for economic and political dominance. During the 1992 elections, each clan felt threatened by the outcome, anticipating a loss of status and resources should the other clan win. With so much at stake, violence around the elections in Wajir was significant.

A group of women in Wajir intervened to stop the postelection violence and formed a peace committee that grew to include members of the local professional class. Together they convened a meeting of clan leaders who negotiated and committed to a set of principles to govern peaceful relationships among them. Local businesspeople then raised money to fund community peace activities, and a new district commissioner enjoined the peace committee and local leaders to establish an early-warning network to stop violence before it happened or escalated. This meant resolving everyday disputes and punishing local crimes, using customary Somali practice rather than formal Kenyan rule-of-law systems. The entire set of relationships was formalized in the establishment of the Wajir Peace and Development Committee, which was chaired by the district commissioner and formalized government-civic collaboration in support of peace and nonviolence. Three important lessons regarding hybrid governance and peace can be taken from this experience: such efforts must find ways to bridge competition between civil society and traditional leadership to support local peace efforts, to act quickly to resolve local disputes and committed crimes before they escalate, and to cement civic-governance partnerships to prevent violence, recognizing that neither entity can go it alone.

There are several other insights that Menkhaus does not note but which are relevant to both Wajir and the Sahel. First, the state did not attempt to undercut local, grassroots peace efforts but instead joined and further legitimated them. Often in moments of shock and crisis, state actors in hybrid systems will inject themselves as conflict actors to assert their power and control, further exacerbating the crisis, as has been seen in the Sahel as the Malian state has sided with different armed factions. Second, the Wajir peace committee recognized that conflict fundamentally changes local power dynamics and transforms incentives for peace and violence. The previous balance of interests that had preserved the peace, and on which hybrid systems depend, was gone. The politics of hybrid governance needed to be immediately renegotiated to establish new balancing mechanisms, such as the 1993 Al Fatah peace declaration negotiated by the clans. Third, once violence erupted, a culture of peace needed to be reestablished through concerted efforts to bring the community together around peace activities, dialogue, and so on.

How rapidly hybrid systems can unravel in the face of violence—as evident in the case of the Sahel—is quite instructive and an argument for strong, intense interventions to prevent violent extremism by strengthening hybrid governance systems in at-risk regions. As armed groups proliferate in the region, traditional leaders at the local level are rapidly losing authority and legitimacy owing to the withdrawal of state institutions that formalized and supported their governance authorities. They are under increased pressure by external groups to gain access to their territory and by internal groups to provide them access to resources; the microdynamics of fragmentation is leading to increased intercommunal violence. This intercommunal breaking apart is allowing violent-extremist groups to create ethnic alliances with certain communities, which the state counteracts with its own alliances, and thus the fragmentation spreads at the intermediate level. The international intervention to prop up the Malian state has led to counteractions by jihadist groups to seize more and more territory.⁸⁹ Without the glue of institutions, norms, and processes, these systems of governance, based on tactical negotiations and dynamic interplay, cannot reconstitute their political alliances in the face of rapidly escalating violence, and the incentive structures of hybrid actors are thereby fundamentally changed. Their propensity to balance political relationships is now based on a new calculus of violence. There is no institutional drag to prevent this rapid spiraling and fragmentation.

Establishing a Research and Practice Base: What Is the Best Governance Model for the Prevention of Violent Extremism?

The P/CVE field has struggled with the issue of governance and what model is appropriate for managing the proliferation of violent-extremist groups, especially in gray areas where the state is minimally present or largely absent. The material that follows examines a number of recent

studies of the Sahel—conference reports, research, programming summaries—that address this issue, and the recommendations are distinctly mixed. Some studies recommend hybrid governance structures where customary systems, in fact, play a prominent role in reconstituting the state. Others are distinctly statist and put forth a model where a “healthy” state (that is, one guided by democratic principles) is established in rural communities with a supporting architecture that is inclusive, transparent, and accountable. Finally, a research study conducted by a local organization in Cameroon recommends political decentralization as the preferred governance approach for preventing violent extremism. We may be drawing more distinctions in this section than the research warrants, but these studies do raise an important issue that must be addressed regarding governance and the prevention and countering of violent extremism: If poor governance is a key driver of violent extremism, is the issue structural or qualitative? That is, does the structure of governance matter for reestablishing the legitimacy of governance in regions suffering from upticks in violence and violent extremism, or is it a matter of improving the ability of the system to govern regardless of that system?

With the proliferation of violent-extremist groups in the Sahel, several regional conferences have been organized to look at the breakdown in governance in rural communities in Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso. These exchanges have been impressive in their scale, participation, and expertise. The first, a 2017 regional meeting organized by the International Institute for Peace, the UN, and the Swiss Federal Department for Federal Foreign Affairs in N’Djamena, included 100 participants from northern, central, and western Africa looking specifically at issues of governance and rising violence in the Lake Chad Basin.⁹⁰ Participants broke into three working groups to assess state-citizen relations, political participation, and inclusive dialogue. The crosscutting issue was clearly the necessity to control and manage external interventions to prevent them from undercutting the development of local and sustainable solutions to preventing violence, including how to balance the plethora of state and international security, political, socioeconomic, and development responses and the linkages between them at the local, national, and international levels.

THE HYBRID GOVERNANCE MODEL

The recommendations called for a central role to be played by traditional leaders—first and foremost, that state, regional, and international actors should consolidate customary governance structures where they have local legitimacy. According to participants, the state must play a leading role in incentivizing these empowered traditional governance structures to exercise greater inclusivity in communities by creating national and local frameworks for the participation and funding of youth and women and by promoting initiatives by youth and women within these nationally led efforts. This approach should, above all, prioritize and favor local solutions to local conflict dynamics through the dialogue, public-private partnerships, and community coexistence facilitated by traditional ethnic and religious leaders. The issue of

viable local governance structures was prioritized by participants over the current excessively securitized approaches to violence in the Lake Chad Basin. Participants demanded that security forces, deployed locally, reflect the ethnic and religious makeup of the communities in which they serve and that security actors no longer be allowed to provide humanitarian assistance in conflict-affected areas, which politicizes assistance. Instead, civil society should be the primary deliverers of humanitarian aid, even in areas with high levels of violence. Regional organizations should develop a standard set of principles and training on human rights and international humanitarian law for all security services so that they operate in the same way according to these norms.

The call for the strengthening of hybrid structures of governance was also reinforced in a research study by the Clingendael Institute and a development approach implemented by the UN Development Programme in fifteen countries in Africa from 2016 to 2019. In a research study on hybrid governance systems and conflict resolution in Mali (Kidal and Ménaka), Niger (Tahoua region), and Libya (Fezzan), Clingendael researchers conducted 323 in-depth interviews and thirty-four discussion groups with citizens, customary leaders, and local and state governance actors, asking how customary leaders maintained their legitimacy while engaged in local governance in highly fragile contexts where state presence is limited.⁹¹ The results of the interviews were then briefed to local research teams, academic experts, nongovernmental organizations, and members of the international community. The recommendations from this study were based on the research finding that customary leaders in these regions were largely seen as legitimate representatives of state institutions.

Given that legitimacy, customary leaders should be engaged by national and international actors as programmatic allies for reinforcing governance, stability, and security in areas with limited state presence. Their customs should be codified and standardized to solidify and make clear the relationships among customary leader authorities, governance, and judicial decisions. This would improve local perceptions of governance and rule-of-law objectivity, and it would also make possible a comparison of local customary law and international norms of human rights. Customary leaders should also receive training to ensure their neutrality and objectivity in their governance and judicial decisions. To further enhance the leaders' standing as governance actors, the Clingendael study recommends holding a region-wide dialogue on the place of customary leaders in contemporary democratic governance systems in the region.

The study notes that most customary leaders form alliances with armed groups not for ideological or political reasons but out of survival. International and national actors should not assume that these alliances subvert the ability of customary leaders to mediate local conflicts with the goal of achieving a base level of stability that can then be supported in other "development" ways. Customary leaders should be encouraged to engage in local mediation to help prevent the spread and escalation of local conflicts before they become broader ethnic conflicts or are co-opted by violent-extremist groups.⁹² The UN Development Programme's efforts

have also reinforced a central role for customary leaders in a multiyear, multicountry, multilevel effort to prevent violent extremism. The programming divided its fifteen beneficiary countries into different categories of risk: violent-extremism epicenters (Libya, Mali, Nigeria, and Somalia); secondary countries (Cameroon, Kenya, Mauritania, Niger, Chad, and Tunisia); and countries at risk (Morocco, Uganda, the Central African Republic, Sudan, and Tanzania). The programming was implemented in six areas—socioeconomics, law and security, demobilization and reintegration, media and technology, community resilience, and gender initiatives—at the regional level, working with the African Union, and also on national and local levels. At the local level, work with traditional leaders was seen as a critical factor in reinforcing the linkages within communities that reinforced their resilience. In certain contexts, the traditional leaders were asked to establish a committee of elders to conduct this resilience work.⁹³

THE STATIZATION MODEL: STRENGTHENING THE SOCIAL CONTRACT

A second conference—sponsored by the government of Cameroon; the African Center for International, Diplomatic, Economic, and Strategic Studies; the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs; the UN Regional Office for Central Africa; and the UN Regional Office for Central Western Africa and the Sahel—was held in Yaoundé on November 27 and 28, 2017.⁹⁴ The meeting included representatives of political, civil society, and international organizations from the Lake Chad Basin and western and central Africa. The recommendations coming out of this meeting also focused primarily on governance and the role of the state, encouraging countries to adopt the prevention of violent extremism as an approach that could support improved governance and conflict-resolution outcomes. However, participants suggested that state authority, and not traditional and customary leadership, should be reasserted in rural, marginalized, and abandoned regions—the strategic goal being to establish a new rapport between the state and citizenry based on the paradigm of the utility of the state. It was critical that the reinstatement of state administration in rural communities be reinforced through the establishment of a governance architecture at the national, regional, and local levels that provided venues for citizens to participate in state decision-making on issues that impact them.⁹⁵

Participants also agreed that the state, in the process of reestablishing its authority in these areas, needed to federalize and support any and all citizen initiatives that promoted collective peace and national belonging as a broad-based attempt to restore the state-citizen social contract. Finally, participants believed that economic and peacebuilding programming should support this restatization, including a more fair and equitable distribution of wealth; education reform to include values of peace and nonviolence; and local dialogue among state officials, security institutions, civil society, and citizens. That the role of hybrid governance as a P/CVE factor was contested between the two gatherings of regional elite suggests that for some regions and communities, restatization was the preferred outcome.

The gathering of officials in Yaoundé also emphasized the role that prevention of violent extremism could play in creating a unifying strategy for local and national governments, security forces, media, civil society, and regional organizations, working from a robust research agenda that would mobilize researchers and experts to deliver usable empirically based studies and recommendations of strategic value to decision makers.⁹⁶ This would mean supporting and sustaining countries' research centers and think tanks to focus their work on understanding the deep-rooted causes of violent extremism, initiating studies on the roles of women in violent extremism, and proposing policy and programmatic options based on that research. The participants recommended that the analytical frameworks on preventing violent extremism, developed as a result of this research, be used to structure exchanges on preventive efforts among different relevant stakeholders. They suggested that civil society and media cohorts at all levels—national, regional, and local—be trained on the causes and promising remedies of violent extremism and that civil society and media be mandated, in turn, to educate the general public in local languages on how to diagnose and peaceably respond to threats of violent extremism. This idea of prevention as a strategic organizing framework extended to regional organizations as well: Conference participants demanded a regional strategy for sharing information and research and communicating on preventive tactics to pool knowledge, experience, and approaches, with an aim of reinforcing the capacities of different actors in addressing violent extremism. Participants also took a much harder line on the issue of security force involvement, demanding the condemnation of human rights abuses by the security sector and their adherence to a strategy of preventing violent extremism.

THE DECENTRALIZATION MODEL

Yet another research study, by Mvondo Hervé, has recommended that decentralization is the appropriate response to violent extremism.⁹⁷ In fact, he asserts that the participation of populations in the management of local affairs should be the first component of a P/CVE response. Communities most at risk for violent extremism have generally been pushed aside by governance actors; reinforcing the communities' own local governance capacity, especially when accompanied with economic development support, has resulted in their solidarity with national efforts to eradicate violent extremism. This research shows that communities with decentralized governance authorities are more likely to engage violent-extremist groups and to report violent-extremist supporters to local governance and security officials.

However, to be effective in the prevention of violent extremism, these decentralized political functions must be inclusive and democratic, and they must reinforce democratic processes and norms. To bolster local, decentralized democratic governance, the state must play a role. It must commit to the full disclosure of information on violent-extremist threats posed to a community and the measures being taken by the state to combat them. The state must

also guarantee the right of local communities to self-government while, at the same time, helping these local governments, which are under the strong influence of violent-extremist groups, to provide basic services. This would have an immediate impact of lowering youth recruitment levels, as would the expansion of youth programming to include employment opportunities.

EVIDENCE

We recently evaluated the quality of research and monitoring and evaluation in major fields of P/CVE practice and found that the field overall suffers from a deficit of evidence to support its youth, gender, and religious engagement programming. This was not the case with research and evidence around community resilience practice, which was of a slightly higher quality than other sectors. That said, to better support communities on the frontlines of violent extremism, or at significant risk, we recommend funding a “next generation” of research that (1) includes a cross-study comparison to identify and validate a set of community resilience capacities across cultural and conflict contexts that will set the stage for a robust preventing violent extremism practice; (2) studies the interplay between community resilience capacities and external interventions to determine if and how they can strengthen those capacities without doing harm or delegitimizing them; (3) identifies and learns from failed community strategies to resist or prevent extremist recruitment and violence; (4) examines the interactive effects of predatory, corrupt governance and community resilience to violence; and (5) explores the types and configurations of community social capital (overlapping, bridging, and bonding) and their enactment (trust, collaboration, collective action, coordination) that contribute specifically to community resilience to violent extremism, as opposed to ethnic, communal, or sectarian violence. This last point is particularly important. The bulk of research on social capital and violence focuses on ethnic violence and how elites mobilized “bonded” groups, and how the absence of conflict was often explained by “bridging” capital (that is, organizations that could mediate between ethnic or religious groups to prevent or de-escalate violence). The social capital networks around violent extremism look very different in terms of the conflict lines extremists exploit and the interactive networks that communities mobilize for peace. Understanding these different social dynamics around extremist violence and validating new, evidence-based social capital models is critical to advancing community resilience programming. Finally, in embarking on a robust research agenda around community resilience, a first step should be convening practitioners working on communities to reduce extremist recruitment and risk. All of our interviewees emphasized that while there is a troublesome lack of evidence in the field of P/CVE, practitioners, who rarely have time to reflect and write on programming successes, “know what works” and what has failed. Gathering that knowledge could establish a solid evidence base and generate a new set of research questions.

PROGRAMMING

The fields of counterterrorism and countering violent extremism, largely driven by national security and ideological imperatives, have ignored some hard lessons learned by the peacebuilding, development, and governance fields around playing into local conflict dynamics and even sometimes escalating and broadening violence. Earlier approaches to engaging communities have instrumentalized or scapegoated them, increasing the risk of violent extremism, inviting heavy-handed state interventions, and exacerbating existing patterns of marginalization and exclusion or structural violence. Any new approach to community engagement, even one intended for good to build resilience, must incorporate contextual and conflict analysis and Do No Harm principles to avoid the worst practices of the past and to not invite new forms of violence and conflict. This means analyzing the impact of well-intended actions and policies on communities, especially counterterrorism operations by the state and international actors, as well as how they are affecting community resilience capacities and strategies and the systems of violence that exacerbate local conflicts and grievances that drive community and individual support for violent extremist groups. Once these conflict dynamics are understood, programs must be continuously adapted to, above all, preserve community capacities and strategies to prevent and counter violent extremism.

Program implementers must commit to support for and integration of better research and evidence, especially around understanding how communities mobilize and respond to violent extremism. Promising research has been done around informal security and early warning systems, community strategy development, and the characteristics of successful bridging organizations; this research must be expanded on and the findings must be incorporated into community resilience programming. Many of the major programmatic lines of effort around P/CVE, such as youth, gender, and religious engagement, have employed new thinking and evidence that support and strengthen community resilience approaches. These efforts have explored positive youth development and socioecological strengthening; women's community roles and how they interact with extremist recruitment, operations, and group cohesion; and religious leaders' diverse community roles and the prevention of violence. Again, supporting a robust research agenda to accompany community resilience programming does not have to mean committing exorbitant amounts of funding; small experiments could be built into programming to test new approaches and strengthen analytical frameworks. Carefully adopting and implementing approaches from other fields, such as the peacebuilding community's LPCs and the governance field's hybrid governance programs, could support promising avenues for building community resilience in new conflict contexts.

POLICY

A focus on building community resilience to extremist violence and recruitment, however, requires the P/CVE field to abandon and counter disproved ideologically based paradigms that

reinforce community and individual deviance framing. The scapegoating of individuals, groups, and/or communities, which continues to this day, allows predatory and corrupt state actors to maintain their control by manipulating long-standing historical divisions in society that have marginalized and discriminated against them and justified state violence historically and under newly adopted national counterterrorism strategies often legitimated by international actors. A strong antidote to state-enforced community fragility is to center P/CVE programs in peacebuilding and democracy and governance and to adapt counterterrorism and P/CVE policies accordingly. Political and social transformation should be the focus of P/CVE policy and not security imperatives. Knowing that local actors adapt governance and peacebuilding interventions to secure their own political power and status—strategies of hybridity—all community resilience programming must keep an eye on how efforts to build bridging capital among groups and create informal security and early warning networks might be ripe for elite capture. Policies on building community resilience must be adaptive and take into account the very real possibility of co-optation and capture by elites and the networks of dark capital that continue to exist in communities. A key factor established in research and evaluations of community resilience programming is vertical relations with the state in addition to horizontal capital across community social groups. Policy frameworks on community resilience and countering violent extremism must include governance at their very core; they must focus on strengthening hybrid governance systems, establishing better connections between communities and national-level institutions, and combatting political corruption. Without a focus on the role of the state in driving violent extremism, community resilience programming could easily revert to the old policies of scapegoating communities or framing them as suspect and morally delinquent, a framing that often results in approaches that further degrade communities' resilience and increase their risk to violent extremism.

Appendix A

INDICATORS OF RESEARCH QUALITY

Variable	Description
Explanatory variable: Relevance	How relevant is the explanatory variable for P/CVE work?
Explanatory variable: Actionability	How actionable is this explanatory variable for P/CVE work?
Explained variable: Type	Is the explained variable based on observations or responses? If responses, are there efforts to mitigate response bias?
Explained variable: Relevance	How relevant is the explained variable to P/CVE?
Internal validity	Does the piece adopt methods to better determine the link between the explanatory and explained value and minimize the possibility of outside variables having a confounding effect?
Explanatory power	Is there a discussion of how well the researchers explain the outcome?
Data transparency	Is the data publicly available?
Reproducibility	Is the methodology publicly available? (qualitative notes, survey questionnaire, quantitative software)
Research framing	Does the piece situate itself within existing research, engage with its own limitations, and identify areas for future research?
Policy and practice cogency	Are the piece's policy and practice recommendations specific, actionable, and logically consistent with the data and analysis?
Ethics consideration	Does the piece actively engage with the ethics and cultural sensitivities of the intervention and data collection?
Funding transparency	Does the piece acknowledge its funders and potential conflicts of interest?

Document type: What type of document is it? We sorted documents into eight different types. Research articles and program evaluations are primary sources that collect, analyze, and present data. Literature reviews (systematic or nonsystematic), resources guides, and meta-reviews are secondary sources that summarize and interrogate primary work. Theoretical pieces and toolkits are conceptual documents that focus entirely on theoretical concepts with little empirical data.

Major theme: What was the major thematic area of the document? We collected documents focused on four different themes: youth, gender, religion, and community resilience.

Explanatory variable: What exactly is the input or explanatory variable that is being measured in the document? This is sometimes called the program, treatment, intervention, or independent variable. When multiple explanatory variables are reported, we tracked the one that seemed most relevant to P/CVE.

Explanatory variable, actionability: How actionable is the explanatory variable on a scale from 1 (low) to 3 (high)? Explanatory variables that include a program such as job training or mentorship are highly actionable since additional programs can be created. Explanatory variables that include immutable characteristics such as a subject's age and gender are less actionable. Research with low actionability explanatory variables may still be valuable to our understanding of how to apply programs, similar to how a medication's efficacy varies with a patient's age.

Explanatory variable, proximity: How proximate is this explanatory variable to P/CVE work on a scale from 1 (low) to 3 (high)? A high proximity explanatory variable is closer to the violent-extremism process and more likely to have a direct and meaningful effect, such as enrollment in vocational training and cash transfers for youth.⁹⁸ A low proximity explanatory variable is something less likely to have a direct and meaningful effect, such as whether a vocational training program is present in the subject's country.

Explained variable: What exactly is the output or the explained variable (sometimes called the outcome, result, or dependent variable) measured in the document?

Explained variable, type: What type of data is being explained; is it based on observations or responses? If based on a response, are there efforts to mitigate response bias, such as a survey experiment (for example, list experiment) or a game (for example, dictator game) to observe behavior?⁹⁹

Explained variable, relevance: On a scale from 1 (low) to 3 (high), how relevant is this explained variable to P/CVE work? A high relevance explained variable is more likely to be related to violent-extremist behavior, such as measuring whether a subject committed violence. A low relevance explained variable is less directly related to violent-extremist behavior, such as tracking whether a job training program increased a subject's skills.

Data type: What type of data is used in the document? Is it qualitative data, such as described in case studies, key informant interviews, or focus groups? Is it quantitative data, such as descriptive statistics or cross-section, time-series, or panel data? Or is it some other type of data, such as ethnography, systems analysis, or meta-analysis?

Internal validity: On a scale from 1 (low) to 3 (high), what level of internal validity is possible given the methods that are used in the document? Methods that minimize the possibility of outside variables confounding the result, such as a randomized control trial, allow for a high level of internal validity. Methods that fail to control for outside variables may have results driven by other unobservable factors, leading to false positives where a relationship is found where none actually exists.¹⁰⁰

Explanatory power: On a scale from 1 (low) to 3 (high), how much discussion is there about how well the analysis or the model explains the outcome? A document with a high level of discussion of explanatory power may include out-of-sample predictions. A document with a low level may report a goodness-of-fit statistic such as the R^2 but does not discuss it. Considering the explanatory power of an analysis is important because inputs can have greatly varying effect sizes even if they have the same statistical significance.¹⁰¹ Out-of-sample analysis is useful to prevent overfitting where a model or analysis gets so good at explaining the available data that it fails to generalize to out-of-sample data. For example, the models developed by the Political Instability Task Force perform well on the in-sample time period, but

performance decreases as we move to recent times, suggesting that the drivers of instability are changing over time.¹⁰²

Data transparency: On a scale from 1 (unavailable) to 3 (directly available), how available is the data analyzed in this document. For example, the document “Reducing Crime and Violence: Experimental Evidence from Cognitive Behavioral Therapy in Liberia” has the data directly available on the publication website.¹⁰³ Data transparency and reproducibility (discussed below) are important for allowing others to review and attempt to reproduce the research with the same data. Data analysis can include several seemingly inconsequential decisions that may inadvertently lead to greatly varying results.¹⁰⁴ Data transparency allows for different teams to conduct their own analysis and identify what small assumptions may lead to different conclusions.¹⁰⁵ These efforts can also catch minor errors and dissuade data fabrication.¹⁰⁶ Data transparency is important for both quantitative and qualitative data.¹⁰⁷

Research framing: On a scale from 1 (poorly) to 3 (strongly), how well does the document engage with existing research, its own research limitations, and areas for future research? As an example of strong engagement, in “‘If Youth Are Given the Chance’: Effects of Education and Civic Engagement on Somali Youth Support of Political Violence,” the authors review the existing literature on education/civic engagement and political violence, are up front about the limitations of their research design, and raise several questions for future research.¹⁰⁸

Policy and practice cogency: How suitable are the document’s recommendations for policy and practice on a scale from 1 (low) to 3 (highly)? Are they specific, actionable, and connected to the data and analysis? For example, the report “Does youth employment build stability? Evidence from an impact evaluation of vocational training in Afghanistan” recommends decoupling employment and stabilization interventions after finding that a program that successfully impacted economic outcomes for participants had almost no impact on outcomes theoretically related to political violence.¹⁰⁹

Reproducibility: On a scale from 1 (unavailable) to 3 (directly available), how available is the methodology for the document so that someone else could reproduce the analysis or attempt to replicate the study? For a survey, this would include the questionnaire and the sampling methods. For data analysis, it would include the software code used to prepare the data and create the results and figures. For example, the study “Can Social Contact Reduce Prejudice and Discrimination?” includes an online appendix with information on the case selection, sampling, survey questions, and behavior games, as well as a Dataverse Project repository with data and analysis files for replication.¹¹⁰ Reproducibility is important for allowing others to reproduce the study (repeat the research with the same data) and replicate the study (repeat the research with new data, often in a different context).¹¹¹ This goes for qualitative and quantitative methods.¹¹² Replication may be especially important for P/CVE when there is a particular concern that programs or interventions that work in one context may not transfer to another.¹¹³

Ethical considerations: On a scale from 1 (low) to 3 (high), how much does the document engage with ethics and cultural sensitivities of the content? Research is not without its risks, both to the researchers and the research subjects. This is especially true for P/CVE research, which often focuses on sensitive subjects, traumatic experiences, and harmful actors. In the United States, academic research has government guidelines, but program evaluations often fall into a gray area.¹¹⁴ Regardless of government standards, all research and evidence reviews should consider the risks involved, how they can be mitigated, and whether they are worth the benefits.

Funding: Who funded the document’s creation? Are there any other relevant financial interests? We only listed “no funders” if there was an explicit declaration that there was no funding; otherwise, we listed “unknown.”

Appendix B

RESEARCH AND EVALUATIONS ASSESSED IN THIS STUDY

Ludovico Alcorta, Jeroen Smits, Haley J. Swedlund, and Eelke de Jong, “The ‘Dark Side’ of Social Capital: A Cross-National Examination of the Relationship between Social Capital and Violence in Africa,” *Social Indicators Research* 1, no. 49 (2020): 445–65, <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11205-019-02264-z>.

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Appendix C

PRACTICE LEADER INTERVIEWEES

Jessica Baumgardner-Zuzik, senior director for Learning and Evaluation, Alliance for Peacebuilding

Anais Caput, design and learning specialist, Search for Common Ground

Chantal de Jonge Oudraat, member of the board of directors, Women in International Security, Wilson Center Fellow

Cassandra Jessee, director of YouthPower Learning

Peter Mandaville, professor of government and politics, Schar School of Policy and Government, George Mason University

Hilary Matfess, assistant professor, Josef Korbel School of International Studies, University of Denver

Andrew McDonnell, National Endowment for Democracy, author of four International Center for Religion and Diplomacy studies: “A New Vision for Countering Violent Extremism in Tunisia,” “Religious Actors Addressing Violent Extremism,” “Countering Violent Religious Extremism in Pakistan,” and “Engaging Salafi Religious Actors in Morocco”

Nyambura Mundia, founding director of Usawa Inc. and lead convener of Women Leaders’ Hangout, Kenya

Melissa Nozell, program officer for Religion and Inclusive Societies, US Institute of Peace

Franziska Praxl-Tabuchi, Global Center on Cooperative Security

Saji Prelis, director of Children and Youth Programs, Search for Common Ground

Rachel Walsh Taza, program manager for Children and Youth, Search for Common Ground

Acknowledgments

This report benefited greatly from the research assistance of Analise Schmidt, who conducted and cataloged the literature review in French and English, analyzed and coded relevant research, and generated the bibliography and endnotes.

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114. We score a document that has Institutional Review Board (IRB) oversight but no other discussion of ethics as a 2 (medium).

