

2nd Authors' Workshop 'Research on Resilience, Peacebuilding, and Preventing Violent Extremism: A Complex Systems Perspective on Sustaining Peace

15 December 2022

On October 4, 2022, the JICA Ogata Sadako Research Institute for Peace and Development held the second authors' workshop related to the ongoing research project on resilience, peacebuilding, and preventing violent extremism via video conference. Following the outcomes of the first authors' workshop held on December 16, 2021, the participants updated the project adviser Cedric de Coning of the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI) and the research team on their progress and recent developments in their case studies. Additionally, the second authors' workshop welcomed two new authors, Kari Osland of NUPI and Just Castillo Iglesias of Pompeu Fabra University, who are contributing to the theoretical framework and the Iraqi case study, respectively.

Ako Muto, Executive Senior Research Fellow at JICA Ogata Sadako Research Institute, presided over the workshop and explained its objectives. It was immediately succeeded by de Coning's discussion on the project's theoretical foundation, "Linking Resilience, Peacebuilding, and Preventing Violent Extremism in Complex Social Systems." Together with Osland, de Coning stressed that peacebuilding interventions should address the social, economic, and political marginalization in communities to prevent and counter violent extremism. He iterated that conflict-stricken societies are especially complex social systems, which suggests that they are inherently dynamic, non-linear, and unpredictable. He then introduced adaptive peacebuilding as a methodology to cope with uncertainties and sustain peace in complex systems.

Rui Saraiva, Research Fellow at JICA Ogata Research Institute, presented his case study related to preventing violent extremism in Cabo Delgado, Mozambique. Since 2017, Cabo Delgado has been experiencing a multitude of threats to peace and security in the form of insurgency, natural disasters, infectious diseases, and food insecurity. However, ongoing responses have been focused on a 'security-first' approach, which has been insufficient to address socio-economic grievances and sustain peace in the region. Moving away from military interventions, Saraiva highlighted alternative and holistic community-embedded approaches. He identified that developing essential local infrastructures to bolster sustainable development in the region while supporting farmers and agriculture cooperatives, as well as faith-based organizations, will enhance community resilience and contribute to preventing violent extremism in Cabo Delgado.

Ako Muto examined the state's role and challenges in peacebuilding, prevention, and countering violent extremism in Syria. The unclear linkages between resilience and preventing and countering violent extremism (PCVE) can be gleaned from the protracted nature of conflict and the international community's divided stance on supporting the Syrian government. Disagreements persist over whether to support the government despite the international community's agreement to defeat ISIL and counter violent extremism. In the case of Syria, although foreign CVE is often conducted from a hard security perspective against the rise of violent extremism in contexts affected by intrastate armed conflict, the relationship between state sovereignty and P/CVE, as well as peacebuilding and resilience, remains unclear. She asserted

that violent extremism could easily recur in conflict settings when state sovereignty is undermined, and there is only little support for maintaining community resilience.

Just Castillo Iglesias, adjunct professor at Pompeu Fabra University, investigates Iraq's case on reconciliation and social cohesion in preventing violent extremism. According to Iglesias, the complex post-Daesh system in Iraq faces challenges in reintegrating divided communities as a product of the almost two-decade conflict, forced displacement of people during the counter-insurgency campaign, and marginalization of communities due to their alleged affiliation with Daesh. He added that security-based approaches are ineffective in strengthening the Iraqi social fabric; thus, community-led approaches are more appropriate. He further discussed that his research would explore the links between peacebuilding interventions programmed that promote social cohesion and resilience and the prevention of violent extremism. He would also examine the success-facilitating and success-hindering factors that underpin the effectiveness of the peacebuilding interventions.

Florian Krampe, Director of Stockholm International Peace Research Institute's (SIPRI) Climate Change and Risk Programme, delivered an informative presentation on environmental peacebuilding's contribution to preventing and countering violent extremism in Somalia. Krampe stressed that climate change exacerbates existing vulnerabilities in conflict-affected areas. However, climate change mitigation and adaptation initiatives can also open up new opportunities for humanitarian, development, and peace interventions to strengthen social cohesion and community resilience. In Somalia, the security landscape is already being transformed by climate security risks. At the same time, the Somali government and its international partners have made a concerted effort to climate-proof some of its peacebuilding efforts and integrate conflict sensitivity into some of its climate adaptation and mitigation programs. Together with De Coning, his book chapter analyzes the effectiveness of environmental peacebuilding and its contribution to preventing violent extremism in Somalia.

Laura Berlingozzi, postdoctoral researcher at the Sant'Anna School of Advanced Studies in Pisa, presented a community resilience gender-based approach to violent extremism in Niger. Over the past decade, the Sahel region has faced a multidimensional crisis at the crossroads of intertwined challenges, including illegal migration, drug trafficking, inter-communal and inter-ethnic rivalries led by self-defense militias and jihadist insurgencies that have expanded their territorial control since the early 2000s. Niger is at the center of these dynamics as a jihadist uprising associated with the Islamic State and Al-Qaeda. Berlingozzi's chapter investigates how local actors navigate the spaces where multidimensional crises are present in implementing humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding activities. Based on the semi-structured interviews conducted during her extensive fieldwork in Niger, her chapter would uncover how local actors and local communities perceive, shape, and co-construct resilience mechanisms to violent extremism with gender aspects and to what extent the measures are effective.

Bin Ni, associate professor at Hosei University, analyzed the impact of economic factors on the rise of violent extremism in Africa. Concerning the drivers of violent extremism, much of the knowledge is based on the experience of countries in the Middle East, North Africa (MENA), and South Asia. By contrast, little is known about what determines violent extremism in other parts of Africa, particularly the sub-Saharan region, let alone from the economic perspective. Ni's study

seeks to empirically investigate how socioeconomic factors affect violent extremism and other political and terrorism-related determinants using data gathered from various sources such as the Armed Conflict Location and Event Dataset (ACLED), Penn world table, political variables, and the Global Terrorism Index. His initial findings revealed that increased unemployment leads to more violent extremism, the terrorism index positively affects violent extremism, and political factors can suppress violent extremism. For the future direction of this study, Ni will look at how to prevent violent extremism from the dimension of economic resilience.

Udeni Appuhamilage, adjunct faculty at the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, examined the role of emotions and identities in preventing violent extremism in Sri Lanka, drawing from the events of the 2014 Aluthgama Anti-Muslim riots and the 2019 Easter Bombing. The local jihadist National Towheed Jamaat's affiliation with ISIS and the Buddhist extremists' affiliation with the Bolu Bala Sena allow them flexibility and adaptability to operate in the communities. Appuhamilage's research explores the psychological impact of violent extremism on survivor communities and its reflection on local reconciliation movements. Her initial findings reveal that emotions and collective identities aid in healing and reconciliation in survivor communities, yet attention to these psychological dimensions are absent in state interventions. Therefore, her research analyzes how the nexus between psychological impacts and local reconciliation efforts can inform PCVE policies and practices.

Miyoko Taniguchi, professor at Miyazaki Municipal University, examines the role of development agencies in strengthening community resilience to violent extremism by looking at the Bangsamoro case in the Philippines. Despite the increasing recognition of the importance of dealing with violent extremism from the Countering and Preventing Violent Extremism (CPVE) and peacebuilding, little research has been done on how hard-liner counterterrorism (CT) and CPVE are complementarily operationalized in complex settings. Looking at the case of Mindanao, considered one of the most complex and protracted for over four decades, Taniguchi aims to examine the role of development agencies, particularly the Australian government, in partnership with the Asia Foundation in strengthening communities' resilience. Specifically, she seeks to examine how the concepts and theory of resilience have been translated into peacebuilding and PCVE policies and practices and propose an effective approach to community resilience, emphasizing the inclusion of youth in the development process.

The presentations were followed by feedback and comments from the project advisor, de Coning, who had much faith in the project after learning about the authors' efforts and their multi-disciplinary approach to understanding resilience to violent extremism. However, de Coning reminded the authors that a resilience-based approach is not an entirely new approach. Therefore, he encouraged the authors to engage more in questions that answer the following questions: What makes mechanisms that make a participatory resilience-based approach to preventing violent extremism more effective than a security-based approach? How will these mechanisms work, and how will they make a difference? Furthermore, he stressed that the violent extremism framing situates the authors, to a degree, in the security-based approach. By contrast, the authors have unpacked societal, political, and economic factors which suggest that violent extremism could be a symptom of a greater problem. Therefore, the solution should identify the different types of resilience, from financial, livelihood, and psychological, which are the counterparts to the

vulnerabilities and fragilities in society. Identifying the problem is linked to identifying the resilience we want to focus on as an alternative.

Before the second authors' meeting concluded, Kaito Takeuchi, Research Officer of JICA, informed the participants about the preparations for the Third Authors' Meeting in Tokyo, Japan, from January 31 to February 2, 2023. The final workshop will convene the authors, editors, and the project advisor to discuss and systematize the project's research findings and develop an open-access research-based edited volume aiming at diverse readers across the globe, including scholars, policymakers, practitioners, and students.

