Description of document:	US Agency for International Development (USAID) Reports on Countering Violent Extremism 2018-2019
Requested date:	10-November-2018
Release date:	30-September-2021
Posted date:	04-July-2022
Source of document:	FOIA Request U.S. Agency for International Development 1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW USAID Annex, M/MS/IRD, Room 2.4.0A Washington, DC 20523 Fax: (202) 916-4990 Email: foia@usaid.gov USAID FOIA Public Access Link

USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

September 30, 2021

TRANSMITTED VIA EMAIL

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Re: FOIA Request No. F-00028-19
Final Response

The U. S. Agency for International Development (USAID) regrets the delay in responding to your Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request. Unfortunately, USAID is experiencing a backlog of FOIA requests. Please know that USAID management is very committed to providing responses to FOIA requests and remedying the FOIA backlog.

This is the final response to your November 10, 2018 FOIA request to USAID. You requested a copy of the reports, risk assessment(s), study(ies), Statement of Work for the contract/award, and other work products for Management Systems International, AIDOAATO1700028.

For your information, Congress excluded three (3) discrete categories of law enforcement and national security records from the FOIA. See 5 U.S.C. § 552(c) (2006 & Supp. IV (2010)). This response is limited to those records that are subject to the requirements of the FOIA. This is a standard notification that is given to all of our requesters and should not be construed as an indication that excluded records do, or do not, exist.

USAID conducted a comprehensive search of the Bureau for Management, Office of Acquisition and Assistance (M/OAA) and Bureau for Asia (ASIA) for documents responsive to your request. The search produced a total of 374 pages. Of those pages, we have determined that 147 pages of the records are releasable in their entirety, and 227 pages are withheld in their entirety pursuant to Title 5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(4) and (b)(6).

FOIA Exemption 4 protects "trade secrets and commercial or financial information obtained from a person [that is] privileged or confidential." Further, FOIA Exemption 4 covers two distinct categories of information in federal agency records: (1) trade secrets; and (2) information that is (a) commercial or financial, and (b) obtained from a person, and (c) privileged or confidential. Under the first subset, a trade secret is defined as "a secret, commercially valuable plan, formula, process, or device that is used for the making, preparing,

compounding, or processing of trade commodities and that can be said to be the end product of either innovation or substantial effort." See Public Citizen Health Research Group v. FDA, 704 F.2d 1280, 1288 (D.C. Cir. 1983). In this instance, none of the information withheld was deemed a trade secret. Rather, all the information withheld under Exemption 4 is appropriate for withholding under the second subset of information.

We reviewed the responsive document, the submitter's objections to release, and relevant case law, and we determined that portions are exempt from disclosure under subsection (b)(4) of the FOIA and must be withheld in order to protect the submitter's confidential commercial information. Within the records, we withheld reporting data compiled by MSI.

FOIA Exemption 6 exempts from disclosure information about individuals in personnel or medical files and similar files the release of which would cause a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy. This requires a balancing of the public's right to disclosure against the individual's right to privacy. The privacy interests of the individuals in the records you have requested outweigh any minimal public interest in disclosure of the information. In this instance, the release of such information could subject the individuals to threats, intimidation, harassment, and/or violence. For these reasons, any private interest you may have in this information does not factor into the aforementioned balancing test. Within the records, we withheld the identity of MSI personnel.

If you require any further assistance or would like to discuss any aspect of your request, you may contact Starr Lewis, the assigned FOIA Specialist by phone on (202) 710-2036 or at slewis@usaid.gov. You may also contact USAID's FOIA Public Liaison, Christopher Colbow, at foia@usaid.gov.

Additionally, you may contact the Office of Government Information Services (OGIS) at the National Archives and Records Administration to inquire about the FOIA mediation services offered:

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National Records and Archives Administration
8601 Adelphi Road-OGIS
College Park, Maryland 20740-6001
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Telephone: (202) 741-5770; toll free at 1-877-684-6448
Fax: (202) 741-5769

You have the right to appeal this final response. Your appeal must be received by USAID no later than 90 days from the date of this letter. To protect its workforce from COVID-19, USAID is implementing maximum telework. Our FOIA professionals are therefore working from home and do not have access to postal mail and fax machine. Accordingly, if you would

like to appeal this disclosure determination, please send your appeal to foia@usaid.gov, and address it to the Deputy Director of the Bureau for Management, Office of Management Services. In addition, please include your tracking number F-00028-19 final response in your email.

There is no charge for this FOIA request. As this concludes the processing of your request, it will be closed.

Thank you for your interest in USAID and continued patience.

Sincerely,

Christopher Colbow, Chief
FOIA Public Liaison
FOIA Officer/Agency Records Officer
Bureau for Management
Office of Management Services
Information and Records Division

Enclosures: Responsive Records (147 pages)

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FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

APPROACHES TO EVALUATING COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM PROGRAM OUTCOMES

A Descriptive Review with Options for Future Study

FINAL October 18, 2019

Prepared by Gwendolyn Bevis, Lynn Carter, Jacob Patterson-Stein, Jill Tirnauer, and C. Christine Fair of Management Systems International, a Tetra Tech Company, for review by the United States Agency for International Development.

APPROACHES TO EVALUATING COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM PROGRAM OUTCOMES

A Descriptive Review with Options for Future Study

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AI-OAA-I-13-00042/AID-OAA-TO-17-00028

Cover Photo: MSI, USAID Harmoni Project, Indonesia

DISCLAIMER

The authors' views expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

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FIGURES

ACRONYMS

ACLED	Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project
AOAV	Action on Armed Violence
BFRS	Not an acronym, refers to a database of violence in Pakistan initiated by Bueno de Mesquita, Fair, Rasul, and Shapiro
CERP	Commander's Emergency Response Program
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CVE	Countering Violent Extremism
DRG	USAID Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance Office
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FORSATY	Favorable Opportunities to Reinforce Self-Advancement for Today's Youth
GTD	Global Terrorism Database
IEP	Institute for Economics and Peace
IDP	Internally Displaced Person(s)
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MSI	Management Systems International, A Tetra Tech Co.
NIWETU	Niwajibu Wetu
OTI	Office of Transition Initiatives
P4P	Partnerships for Peace
PVE	Preventing Violent Extremism
SATP	South Asia Terrorism Portal
SCORE	Strengthening Community Resilience Against Extremism
SIGACTS	Significant Activities Database (U.S. Defense Department)
TOC	Theory of Change
UCDP	Uppsala Conflict Data Program
UN	United Nations
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USIP	United States Institute of Peace
USG	U.S. Government
V-DEM	Varieties of Democracy Project
VE	Violent Extremism or Violent Extremist
VEO	Violent Extremist Organization

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This review seeks to inform United States Agency for International Development (USAID) evaluation of countering violent extremism (CVE) programming in Asia and globally by exploring two research questions:

1. Under current conditions, is it possible to develop a model or methodology to test the relationship between CVE programming and extremist violence?
2. What high-level outcomes other than violence reduction might be linked to CVE programming? What approaches could be used to measure such outcomes?

USAID defines violent extremism (VE) as "...advocating, engaging in, preparing, or otherwise supporting ideologically motivated or justified violence to further social, economic, and political objectives." In practice, the threat posed by religiously motivated violent extremist groups has drawn primary concern. Violent religious extremism can and often does function in combination with aggrieved ethnic identity groups pursuing communal advantages. VE's defining elements include a desire to reorder society in line with a given ideology and the interests of the group proclaiming the ideology, pursuit of sociopolitical and economic objectives, and a willingness and capacity to use violence as a tactic to pursue these objectives.

How individual and community incentives and risk factors, structural conditions, enabling factors, and external triggers interact to produce extremist beliefs, support for VE actors and actions, recruitment into a violent extremist organization (VEO), or violence itself is not fully understood. Correspondingly, CVE programs occur in diverse settings and encompass a variety of interventions and intermediate outcomes. The amount of USAID financial investment in CVE programming in a given country is often small relative to the scale and complexity of the VE problem and its drivers, limiting the change to which a program can aspire and for which it might reasonably be held accountable.

Challenges to measuring impact include the context specificity of VE and CVE programming, the difficulty of proving causality, limitations of data validity and availability, lack of monitoring and evaluation resources, and the absence of widely accepted measures of dependent and independent variables.

Question 1. It is in theory possible for USAID to create a model to examine the relationship between CVE programming and extremist violence. But there are substantial challenges in doing so, particularly where violence is rare, such as in Indonesia, and where program size is modest and interventions diverse and targeted at multiple levels (local to national).

Evaluating the relationship between CVE programming and extremist violence has three major elements: understanding how to model the relationships among numerous programmatic and extra-programmatic variables; valid data on extremist violence; and valid data on predictors of such violence, not least USAID CVE program data. This review found that:

- Understanding of how to model the relationships among the complex variables at work in extremist violence and in CVE programming remains limited. CVE theories of change (TOCs) remain untested, weakly tested, or tested with contradictory findings in different contexts, so developing better-evidenced "lower-level" TOCs on which models can be based is an important task.
- Existing violence databases have serious limitations, including incomplete coverage (for example, not all countries are included, and data are not always current) and unreliable or absent coding of extremist violence.

- USAID program input data, except in the Office of Transition Initiatives Anywhere database, do not typically include the necessary time and location specifics to evaluate relationships to VE. Information on soft activities such as government capacity building or youth training may not include adequate geolocation data.
- Isolating USAID contributions requires including other possible factors in the model, such as police and military actions that could affect violence. These factors range into the hundreds in the best analyses, are not always fully understood, and often lack valid data. However, omitting important potential factors can seriously weaken the evaluation's validity.

The robust within-country evaluations this research team reviewed of development aid's influence on violence entailed demanding empirical requirements and extensive resources to gather data on the outcome (violence), the intervention, and relevant control variables (for example, military presence or actions, proxies for government control of the area, and terrain data). The paucity of comparable studies of donor programs' relationship to stabilization and conflict reflects the magnitude of the challenge of modeling this relationship.

Expert evaluators could create a model for a single-country evaluation. But obtaining and using all the necessary data would require extensive time, money, and staff to ensure granular data across CVE programs, collect or augment violence data, collect data for other relevant factors, clean and merge data, and conduct time series analysis, along with high-level econometric skills. Evaluations that overcome the data issue would require substantial and sustained USAID investment in data collection and management related to its own activities.

Because CVE programs are often small relative to the VE problem, evaluating links between programming and progress on intervening factors that mitigate violence, rather than on actual violence reduction, is more likely to reveal an association. Rigorous evaluation of such interventions can also provide important information for maximizing resources, preventing harm, and examining links between aid and violence reduction. Also, violence should not be the sole concern, as it is one tactic among many. Extremist organizations that stop short of violence are embedding in communities; trying to undermine or overthrow governments to replace them with theocratic regimes; and promoting policies and practices that threaten pluralism, inclusion, the welfare of "out" groups, and even the foundations of the international state system itself.

Question 2. A growing body of evidence identifies key factors that may be amenable to CVE programming. The table below summarizes findings on the best-evidenced outcomes and their measurement.

Outcome Category	Outcome	Links to VE	Programming	Limitations	Measurement Tools
Outcomes linked closely to VE phenomena	**1. Reduced (vulnerability to) VEO radicalization and recruitment**	• Radicalization yields passive and active support. • Recruitment expands membership.	• Developing cognitive resources, fostering positive character traits, and altering values and perceptions. • Providing alternative opportunities, constructive engagement.	• Difficult to pinpoint who is at risk. • Few may be recruited.	• Interview-based methods: surveys, psychometric and cognitive assessments. • Observational methods.
	2. Reduced community support for VE	• Many VEOs seek to embed themselves in local communities. • Communities that support a VEO do not share information with the gov't about VEO activities, may provide various practical forms of support, and create an environment in which more individuals may be recruited.	• Altering attitudes and practices. • Addressing underlying grievances. • Offering alternatives to VEO-provided benefits.	• Where "support" is due to fear and intimidation. • Where support is less needed due to other readily available resources.	• Surveys. • Focus group discussions (FGDs). • Community assessments.
Outcomes linked to important VE drivers	**3. Improved service provision and increased government legitimacy in vulnerable communities**	• VEOs often provide services to gain support. • Good gov't services incline citizens to prefer gov't over VEO control.	• Conditions for effectiveness: Small-scale, with visible benefits, contingent on citizen cooperation, and in relatively secure environments.	• Research is drawn from conflict and un- and under-governed environments. • Some populations hard to reach. • Gross corruption and insecurity can limit gains.	• Administrative data. • Community mapping. • Surveys and FGDs.
	4. Reduced marginalization and inequality	• Backed by solid research, especially when aligned with ethnosectarian divisions.	• Programs seeking to create inclusive, fair, and plural societies.	• Progress in reducing inequality will be insufficient if the gap between groups stays the same.	• Administrative data. • Surveys. • Indices.

Outcome Category	Outcome	Links to VE	Programming	Limitations	Measurement Tools
		• Groups can mobilize, especially when geographically concentrated. • Influences community support and radicalization and recruitment.	• Improved services and efforts to remedy disparities.	• Perception may diverge from reality.	
	5. Improved respect for human rights, political rights, and civil liberties	• Solid research backs this driver; state oppression and violence are major drivers of terrorism and civil conflict. • Often linked to marginalization of specific groups.	• Most CVE projects are not framed according to this outcome. • Giving aggrieved minorities or marginalized youth greater agency and political voice and more "space" to express and obtain redress for grievances.	• The most authoritarian states can generally limit nonstate violence until they engender protest and even collapse. • Endogeneity problem; terrorism/violence erode rights, yield state violence.	• Surveys. • Administrative data and secondary sources. • Expert/stakeholder panels.
	6. Reduced social or group conflict	• Well established that conflict correlates positively with terrorism. • Political vacuum. • One side seeks VEO support.	• Increasing social cohesion or peace building. • Address grievances and disparities.	• Often difficult to address.	• Violence databases. • Media monitoring. • Surveys.
Outcomes linked to improved local capacity to address VE	**7. Increased capacity and willingness of government and civil society to address VE**	• Critical to achieving other high-level outcomes linked to VE.	• Gov't: policy development and implementation and staff capacity building at national and local levels. • Civil society: research, advocacy, and service delivery.	• Resource, security, political economy gaps. • Transnational great power and VE influences. • Willingness to avoid overreaction.	• Institutional capacity assessment. • Policy benchmarking. • Network analysis.

Challenges to evaluating these high-level outcomes are similar to those for evaluating the links between CVE programming and violence reduction. Nevertheless, many of these outcomes can be rigorously evaluated using surveys, administrative data, indices, and expert panels. Such methods must be embedded in a larger design that:

- Carefully links interventions to a TOC, building out programs' existing TOCs to include all relevant factors and relationships.
- Targets populations, locations, and changes that might be affected by programming, operationalizing any complex outcome concepts (such as resilience).
- Identifies the units of analysis: individuals and their aggregates and/or communities/groups/institutions.
- Leverages within-sample comparisons across populations, subpopulations, locations, other fixed factors, and/or time when the construction of comparison groups is not possible.
- Attends to both perceptions and reality, particularly of marginalization and inequality.
- Builds in rigorous triangulation to address data validity problems.

Evaluating programs on these outcomes will also require that USAID collect granular, comparable, and consistent data on baseline situations and interventions, as well as other factors, and that it provide adequate funding for such evaluations. Given the nascent state of CVE evaluation, USAID Missions and USAID more generally might consider embedding CVE program evaluation in a larger learning agenda, not to expand the challenges but to zero in on key questions about what works and does not work as well—or to test key "micromodels" of links between programming and violence—and to focus resources on these.

INTRODUCTION

This review, commissioned by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Asia Bureau, seeks to inform USAID evaluation of countering violent extremism (CVE) programs in Asia and globally by exploring the following two research questions:

1. Under current conditions, is it possible to develop a model or methodology to test the relationship between CVE programming and extremist violence?
2. What high-level outcomes other than violence reduction might be linked to CVE programming? What approaches could be used to measure such outcomes?

The analysis is based on a review of U.S. government (USG) policy documents; USAID and other program guides; publicly available descriptions and evaluations of USAID CVE activities; and relevant academic research and literature reviews, including more than 20 violence databases (see Annexes 1 and 2).

This review seeks to provide a starting point for further investigation and learning. Its audience includes all those overseeing, implementing, and measuring CVE program results. The review therefore presents both technical material and broader concepts in simple language but with enough detail to facilitate further research and decision making.

VIOLENT EXTREMISM AND CVE PROGRAMMING IN THE USAID CONTEXT

Both violent extremism (VE) and CVE are broad, dense concepts that are applied in diverse country contexts, so their definitions have major programming and analytic implications. For example, who is included in the universe of violent extremists and what is considered an attack? To what extent does CVE overlap with stabilization and conflict programming? What do CVE programs in Indonesia, for example, have in common with those in northern Nigeria? Clearly defining these two concepts as they are used by USAID will ensure that any analysis accurately models what USAID aims to examine.

VIOLENT EXTREMISM

As of 2010, U.S. defense, diplomacy, and development-related policy documents were increasingly highlighting the role of foreign assistance in addressing and mitigating extremism.[1] In 2011, USAID released its first policy on responding to VE, "The Development Response to Violent Extremism," becoming one of the first development agencies to address the VE threat.[2] The 2011 document lays out VE's drivers and defines VE as "advocating, engaging in, preparing, or otherwise supporting ideologically motivated or justified violence to further social, economic, and political objectives."[3] This definition of VE is expected to remain in place in the planned CVE policy update.

Questions have arisen concerning the boundaries around VE and how development programmers can identify phenomena that are clearly VE as opposed to other kinds of organized violence. The USAID definition emphasizes ideologically motivated violence while leaving the ideology of concern open to a wide range of belief systems; accordingly, violent extremist organizations (VEOs) can include Maoist, Marxist-Leninist, neo-Nazi, and religiously oriented groups, among others. In one example, Bangladesh experienced more than 700 violent events in a recent 18-month period, only a few of which appear to be

linked to religiously oriented VE.[4] Other acts of organized violence were perpetrated by communal militias, political party youth wings and ancillary groups, citizen groups (journalists, lawyers, cattle traders), and many others. Many of these incidents aimed to achieve specific objectives, and some may have been ideologically driven. Should we think of all of these as manifestations of VE? If so, CVE programming could be broad and counter the actions of any ideologically motivated group—from the FARC in Colombia to ethnonationalist groups in the Balkans to the Islamic State—that uses violence as one tool to spread its influence.

In practice, donor development assistance CVE programming has to date been concerned primarily with the threat posed by religiously motivated extremist groups. Violent religious extremism, a phenomenon witnessed in most religions, includes two categories:

- Organizations and individuals motivated by interpretations of religion and willing to use violence (and other tactics) to pursue their aims. They are inspired by religious conviction and want to live in a religiously ordered world. They believe that violence is necessary to fundamentally restructure the social and political order.

- Organizations and individuals who deliberately manipulate religious imagery and themes to advance agendas that have little to do with true religiosity. The process of harnessing the emotional and legitimizing influence of religion in contests over power, wealth, and/or identity often unleashes violence that is no less destructive than that truly motivated by religious fervor. That is because the "religionization" of worldly conflicts changes the nature of those struggles by "essentializing" them and making compromise difficult.[5]

This distinction between the two forms of violent religious extremism seems neat, but the dividing line is blurred. It is not always easy to determine where violence driven by true religious fervor ends and violence manufactured by the political manipulation of religion begins. Those who manipulate religion for political and/or economic gain do so because they are aware of the emotions that religion evokes.[6] Violent religious extremism can and often does function in combination with aggrieved ethnic identity groups pursuing communal advantages (such as Sunnis in Iraq in 2014, Tuaregs in Mali in 2012, and the Fulani in West Africa currently) or links to ethnonationalism (as, apparently, among Bamar Burmans in Burma). These combinations can be particularly toxic mixes.

Various permutations are possible, but the defining elements are:

- A desire to reorder society in line with a given ideology and the interests of the group proclaiming the ideology.
- Pursuit of sociopolitical and economic objectives.
- A willingness and capacity to use violence as one tactic among others to pursue these objectives.

Even within these rough definitional boundaries, VE is a complex phenomenon that stems from multifaceted, intertwined causes operating at individual, community, institutional, national, and international levels. The main distinctions in the VE literature include structural factors that drive people toward radicalization and violence ("push factors" or "root causes"); individual incentives, small-group processes, and shorter-term triggers for violent behavior ("pull factors"); and enabling factors that ease the operation of VEOs, such as corruption. VE is also highly localized; factors driving VE in one country

or location may not be the same as those driving it elsewhere, and the relationships between push, pull, and enabling factors may affect communities and individuals differently.

CVE PROGRAMMING

Until 2016, discussions of CVE programming tended to focus on preventing or mitigating VE drivers and/or building community or individual resilience to VE or to specific drivers. CVE programming was not, however, thoroughly and clearly defined—largely because the abundance of potential drivers, their variability even within a given country, and the multiplicity of ways drivers can interact in a locality suggested the need for diverse programming interventions. In 2016, USAID and the State Department built on the 2011 policy and a growing body of program documentation to provide a specific definition of CVE:[7]

> CVE refers to proactive actions to counter efforts by violent extremists to radicalize, recruit, and mobilize followers to violence and to address specific factors that facilitate violent extremist recruitment and radicalization to violence. This includes both disrupting the tactics used by violent extremists to attract new recruits to violence and building specific alternatives, narratives, capabilities, and resiliencies in targeted communities and populations to reduce the risk of radicalization and recruitment to violence.

The USAID definition of countering VE thus focuses on processes and intermediate outcomes (such as reducing support for VE), rather than on a particular end state (such as a reduction in violence or other VEO actions). It also encompasses preventing VE (PVE) as well as countering it.

The distinction between PVE and CVE is unclear and often contextual. USAID has used CVE to mean preventing VE by addressing grievances, poor governance, and other push factors, as well as countering pull factors such as social media communication from VEOs and enabling factors such as state corruption that permit VEOs to operate with ease. Also, donors sometimes use the term PVE because it frames programming in a way that is less likely to cause offense or create a backlash in host populations. Finally, PVE can refer to activities in regions where VE is not yet obviously present but intolerance appears to be rising.

In practice, USAID CVE programs aim for an array of outcomes short of violence reduction along a variety of causal pathways, including reducing (vulnerability to) VEO radicalization and recruitment, addressing various drivers, and improving local CVE capacities (Figure 4). CVE efforts work on multiple levels, differing scales, and theories of change (TOCs), seeking to affect outcomes at the individual, community, provincial, national, and sociopolitical levels. Some activities target the systemic level—working, for example, to expand national government capacity to address VE; others target localized communities, specific population groups (e.g., vulnerable youth), and specific vulnerabilities. Many CVE programs and activities combine objectives.[8]

USAID Units of Analysis

In this paper, "programming" refers to CVE generally or in a single country. "Program" refers to the portfolio of USAID CVE projects, activities, and interventions in a single country. A "project" incorporates multiple activities. An "activity" funds an intervention or set of interventions under a single mechanism. Interventions have inputs and outputs, which are the smallest units referred to in this paper. All discussion of examining the relationship between VE and CVE programs, projects, and so forth refers to within-country research. However, the design of analytical models will depend on whether USAID chooses to examine a whole portfolio of CVE efforts or some smaller unit or set of units.

Potentially overlapping fields of USAID programming include stabilization and conflict mitigation. Stabilization is defined by the 2018 Stabilization Assistance Review as

> …[A] political endeavor involving an integrated civilian-military process to create conditions where locally legitimate authorities…can peaceably manage conflict and prevent a resurgence of violence. Transitional in nature, stabilization may include efforts to establish civil security, provide access to dispute resolution, deliver…basic services, and establish a foundation for the return of displaced people and longer-term development.[9]

USG stabilization programs can include efforts to address VE drivers and thus elements found in CVE programming. They differ from CVE programs, however, in several ways. First, stabilization programs focus on active conflict or post-conflict areas, whereas "violent extremism can exist in quite stable environments."[10] Second, the scale of stabilization programs is generally far larger than that of CVE activities. Third, stabilization programs are, in theory, relatively short.

Increasingly, VE takes place in conflict-affected countries. The Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP) notes that the presence of armed conflict correlates with the level of terrorism.[11] Additionally, "between 1989 and 2014, more than 88 percent of all terrorist attacks occurred in countries experiencing or involved in an ongoing conflict. This figure demonstrates inherent links between conflict and VE. Conversely, less than 0.6 percent of terrorist attacks have occurred in countries that are not experiencing ongoing conflict and violence."[12]

Many drivers of VE and conflict/insurgency are the same; major actors in insurgencies in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Pakistan have been VEOs, and many conflicts have a religious component. USAID supports programming to mitigate ethnosectarian and other forms of conflict in such countries as the Central African Republic, Lebanon, and Yemen through interventions that may resemble those mounted in CVE programming. These include mitigating grievances that would cause individuals to join an armed opposition group, providing youth with positive alternatives to violence, strengthening social cohesion and trust, building peace and tolerance between antagonistic groups/communities, and supporting political and economic reforms to integrate marginalized groups or regions. CVE programs have also been mounted in insurgency-affected regions such as Mindanao and northern Mali.

IMPLICATIONS FOR EXAMINING THE RELATIONSHIP

How individual and community incentives and risk factors, structural conditions, enabling factors, and external triggers interact to produce extremist beliefs, support for VE actors and actions, recruitment

into a VEO, or violence itself is not fully understood. Correspondingly, CVE programming occurs in diverse settings and encompasses a variety of interventions and intermediate outcomes. The amount of USAID's financial investment in CVE in a given country is often small relative to the scale and complexity of the VE problem and its drivers, limiting the change a program can aspire to accomplish and for which it might reasonably be held accountable.[13] Where CVE programs address multiple drivers and/or communities, they necessarily reduce the investment in any given driver, population, or community. In such cases, evaluation is more likely to reveal an association between programs and progress on intervening factors that might eventually mitigate violence than on violence reduction itself.

CVE is also a relatively new field of programming and, if a review of publicly available documents is indicative, suffers from a lack of rigorous evaluation.[14] Academic and applied research that explores correlations among various factors (for example, education level, employment, wealth) are often from single-country cases or include a limited number of country studies, making it difficult to extrapolate. Cross-country findings are limited in their robustness due to a lack of data standardization on relevant measures, such as the time period for which VE is measured and how it is defined in a given country, as well as potential methodological challenges.[15]

As this paper will discuss, challenges to examining the relationship between CVE programs and high-level outcomes, including violence reduction, include the following:

- Attribution of effects to CVE programs or their components is difficult to prove, particularly for the absence of a negative.
- VE and CVE are highly context specific.
- Data validity and availability are often challenging.
- Widely accepted definitions and measures of dependent and independent variables are absent.
- Too few resources are available to dedicate to context and performance monitoring and evaluation (budgets, time, funding, and staff number and expertise).

Finally, it is unlikely that any single TOC or model can adequately integrate the range of drivers, influences, and pathways associated with VE and individual radicalization and recruitment to extremism and violence, both across and within countries.[16] Any effort to examine the relationship between CVE programming and VE-related outcomes must be context specific—tailored to the outcome, interventions, TOC, and setting under study—and should be clear about its limitations, the rationale for analyst decisions, and potential biases.

EXAMINING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CVE PROGRAMMING AND EXTREMIST VIOLENCE

OVERVIEW

Descriptive analysis can show the number of VE events in a location where USAID conducts CVE programming but would reveal nothing more than their co-occurrence. A formal econometric model, however, can estimate how the level of VE would be expected to vary based on other factors or variables, such as the average allocation of USAID funding, and allow the analyst to isolate different variables' effects.

Like any model, a statistical model approximates the world, and this approach is sensitive to researcher assumptions, choices in how to treat the data, and the data themselves. Key considerations for modeling a relationship between USAID CVE programming and extremist violence include correctly hypothesizing the relationships among the variables, including all variables that might affect the outcome, and data validity.

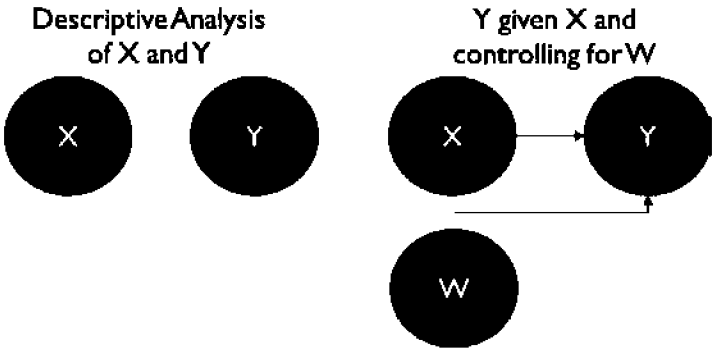
THEORIZING THE RELATIONSHIP

To construct a model, the analyst first needs a TOC for how CVE programming and other factors relate to extremist violence and to each other. This is imperative where it is difficult to isolate a variable, such as in a USAID CVE program, which has broad, general effects within a system in which many variables interact in a complex and unpredictable manner.[17]

The CVE program design should provide a TOC that links inputs to outcomes. But this TOC is likely to fall short of connecting the program to violence reduction, requiring the analyst to hypothesize further linkages to violence reduction. Nor is the CVE program TOC likely to include all relevant factors. Indeed, the relationships among relevant factors may not be well established; for example, the subfield of disengagement/deradicalization presents substantial uncertainty and a dearth of well-grounded, tested TOCs.[18] Factors are also likely to be interrelated, nonlinear, and reinforcing. TOC clarification is also important where CVE activities are limited or applied in a context where violence is rare, such as Indonesia.[19]

Exploratory, descriptive analysis is an important first step in understanding which factors to include in the analysis and how. For example, theory or prior research may suggest that community support for VEOs is a strong predictor of VE events, but descriptive analysis of a small-scale survey may show very low levels of such support in a high-VE area. Descriptive analysis can help prompt questions about how to treat the data in a model. With an inferential approach, however, the analyst can link changes in one variable to a key outcome while controlling for other predictors (Figure 1).

FIGURE 1. DESCRIPTIVE VS. INFERENTIAL APPROACHES



Developing micromodels to explore whether perceived VE proxies, such as engagement with certain social media content, have a relationship to extremist violence or another high-level outcome is likely to be a critical step in modeling. Donor-funded aid programs often assume a certain model or TOC of how input variables result in outputs and outcomes, but they do not often rigorously test these pathways. Developing and testing micromodels to understand these pathways within the TOC can, however, help improve a broader model relating CVE programs to positive VE-related outcomes by highlighting critical pathways or filtering out irrelevant variables. As discussed further in response to Research Question 2,

micromodels also presume that the analyst can determine ways to measure the very complex concepts wrapped up in VE and CVE outcomes.

In Indonesia, for example, a large and diverse country where extremist violence is rare and USAID (as well as other donor) CVE programming is modest, micromodels could help determine how activities connect to VE-related outcomes other than violence reduction to better understand how to reduce VE. Modeling these outcomes (such as change in support for VE actions and beliefs, including violence) may be more useful given what can be measured and the multifaceted TOCs driving many USAID activities. This subject is detailed later in this paper.

DIRECTION OF EFFECT

The relationship between development aid and VE may not be unidirectional. An analysis may seek to assess how aid affects VE events, but VE events may also affect aid allocation (see box below).

A key empirical challenge, therefore, is accounting for the fact that development spending in VE zones is not random. In some cases, the programming occurs in areas that are already experiencing violence and where the population is already vulnerable. Alternatively, to protect their staff, some organizations may conduct their programming in safer or more accessible locations whose populations are better off or where military action has suppressed violence. These facts make it difficult to identify directions of causality between interventions and outcomes. Failure to control for this problem of simultaneity—that variable A may cause variable B, but variable B may also cause A—can give the potentially false result that aid causes violence.

Simultaneity can be formally tested, however. In observational studies, generalized structural equation modeling, two-stage least-squares, and two-stage Bayesian model averaging are methods for addressing this challenge. Even the best methods will not eliminate the problem of simultaneity, but they will minimize it to a level that analysts may find acceptable.

The Importance of Examining Counterintuitive Effects

Although a number of robust studies have shown that aid may help mitigate violence,[20] other studies come to different conclusions. For example, Crost and Johnston[21] observe that development projects can *increase violence* because insurgents understand that such projects aim to undermine their role in a conflict and thus have an incentive to oppose them. Studies have found that across many conflict zones, insurgents appear to target efforts intended to win the hearts and minds of civilians and boost government legitimacy. Put differently, programs to build civil infrastructure create a new set of targets for insurgents during the lifetime of the project.[22] MSI's USAID-funded MISTI monitoring project (2012–2015) found that assistance in contested areas of Afghanistan could increase violence because the Taliban did not want those activities to finish and bring benefits the government might receive credit for.

Sexton[23] also finds that aid projects may not always mitigate violence and may even increase violence in some circumstances. Sexton finds that military control is a crucial prerequisite for development assistance to reduce insurgent violence and that aid, on its own, has little sway over public opinion in contested territories. In other words, aid cannot be a tool to help the government secure terrain, but it can help reduce insurgent violence in areas that are already in the government's hands. Sexton also finds that the type of aid project influences the effect that aid has upon insurgent violence: whereas protective measures (such as military defense infrastructure) will provoke attacks by the insurgents in both contested and secured districts, humanitarian projects do not attract insurgent violence.

RARE EVENTS

Another modeling challenge is that VE events are infrequent in countries not dealing with full-on insurgencies. Examples include the 9/11 attacks in the United States; the 2018 church bombings in Surabaya, Indonesia; the 2008 attacks in Mumbai; and the 2019 Easter attacks in Sri Lanka. King and Zeng define rare events as "dozens to thousands of times fewer ones (events such as wars, coups, presidential vetoes, decisions of citizens to run for political office, or infections by uncommon diseases) than zeros ('nonevents')."[24] This definition points to the serious data and methodological concerns that accompany low-probability events.

First, it is difficult for analysts to know whether events do *not* happen because of government efforts to track and arrest VEOs before they commit violence,[25] donor or host government efforts to address drivers that elevate VE risk, the would-be perpetrator's lack of interest, or some combination of these factors. This is a conceptual as well as a research design challenge—that is, whether there is a counterfactual, or data to capture what would have happened in the absence of CVE and related activities.

Second, even the best data and best model may fail to capture the impact of development interventions on rare events because spatial, temporal, or practical factors may introduce bias into estimates. For example, when such events occur in major urban centers rather than where VEOs are based or might have popular support, the difficulty of model building is compounded.

Third, a lot of data—on aid activity and other possible predictors—are needed to isolate aid activity impact, but as more data are added, the ratio of VE events to non-VE events diminishes, creating serious measurement problems. The problem is not just that the number of VE events is low but that additional data collection may add more non-events to our dataset, creating a greater imbalance between events and non-events without improving predictive value.

Events can be treated as counts and binary (violent event versus no violent event) data; each presents estimation challenges. With count data, standard linear models are based on certain assumptions that fail with a low incidence count outcome. Ignoring these assumptions can produce not only biased but nonsensical results. Econometricians have developed models, such as negative binomial regression, to deal with data where the main outcome is the infrequent count of an event.[26] The benefit of maintaining count data rather than converting to a binary 1/0 event outcome is that one maintains information, such as the overall number of events for a given day, that could be lost if one simply observes whether any event took place on a given day. Count data and associated models can estimate the change in events, as well as the probability of crossing the low/no event threshold.[27] Despite these benefits, the challenges listed above remain, as well as challenges to interpretation, as models that use rare event count data generally make estimates on a log-scale, which is not intuitive and must be converted for communicating results.

In other cases, analysts have used a binary indicator of whether any violence in a given spatial-temporal unit has occurred. This simplification can make interpretation easier and allow for broad grouping of events while avoiding concerns about complexities in event coding. Using a binary violence outcome also allows for easier estimation of, for example, the inverse of the event occurring (i.e., 1-Probability [violence]). However, where violent events are rare, challenges remain due to the relative lack of event observations. In these cases, standard modeling approaches are likely to underestimate the probability of VE events.[28,29]

Various alternative statistical approaches have therefore been developed to address rare events when the dependent variable is binary or has been recoded as binary. Such methods include penalized maximum likelihood estimation, which attempts to remove bias introduced from the low number of events, and, in Bayesian statistics, weakly informative priors, which involves the researcher identifying potential ranges of outcomes based on prior knowledge and the data itself to better frame the potential outcomes.[30] King and Zeng also propose using a sampling approach with weighting or rebalancing to statistically even out the number of events and non-events in the data and improve model performance.

Count and binary outcome variables present tradeoffs that the analyst will have to assess given the specific data used. This overview aims to highlight that there are methods to address rare events, but careful thinking should precede analysis to ensure that the data are treated appropriately.

Modeling Rare Events in Indonesia, 2018

The Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) recorded 15 violent incidents resulting in fatalities in Indonesia in 2018. Five were carried out by the West Papua Liberation Army; four by the VEO Jemaah Ansharut Daulah (JAD) in Surabaya and Sidoarjo in East Java, killing 25; and five by unknown armed groups in five locations across the archipelago, resulting in six deaths. The four JAD-perpetrated events were all influenced by one JAD ideologue who had tried to join ISIS in Syria but had been deported from Turkey. They were unusual in that three were committed by two families including children, and members of a third JAD family were killed or injured when a bomb exploded in their apartment. Densus 88, the counterterrorism police, conducted widespread raids and numerous arrests in the aftermath; they dismantled 31 pipe bombs and killed four alleged terrorists in shoot-outs. This cluster of JAD events and near-events is exceptional. Given the country's cultural and geographic spread and the size of its population, VE events in Indonesia are rare. Even the best methods cannot meaningfully estimate a relationship if there is not a theoretical and programmatic relationship to model. In this example, if USAID had funded activities to address unpopular, secretive, and idiosyncratic VEOs, and if these activities had been by luck working in the right locations, and if data were available on all the key metrics (USAID spending, police activity, past violence, various public perception measures, and so on), perhaps a model would provide some sense of a relationship, but it would still come with caveats and might not find any meaningful relationship given the rarity of such events.

INCLUDING RELEVANT FACTORS

Analysts must control for other variables (W in the model illustration in Figure 1) that may influence the hypothesized relationship between the outcome variable (violence) and the treatment variable (USAID CVE interventions). Failure to control for such variables will result in biased estimates of intervention impact. In fact, once a model accounts for other relevant factors, a given USAID intervention may show no statistical or meaningful relationship to changes in VE events.

A model must account for the many factors that affect extremist violence, including socioeconomic conditions, economic shocks, conflict, government repression, and institutional capacity. For example, Zurcher's review of the causal impact of development aid on violence in countries affected by civil war finds that the conflict context matters for aid's effect: aid in conflict zones will dampen violence only when it is provided in regions that are already relatively stable and where there is strong state capacity.[31] The methodological corollary to this finding is that research on development aid's impact on violence requires a valid and reliable measure for the local security environment and must include it as a control to help identify the conditions under which aid may help.

Modeling must also recognize that USAID CVE programs are only one element in efforts to combat terrorism in a given country or transnationally:

- Other USG agencies, including the Departments of State, Justice, Treasury, and Defense, have their own programs aimed at addressing VE. These may operate differentially, but nonrandomly, in the same areas as USAID CVE programs or otherwise affect CVE program targets.
- Many studies have found that U.S. military presence (in countries that also receive U.S. aid) can correlate with more terrorist violence.[32]
- Other governments, such as the United Kingdom and Australia, and UN agencies have relevant programs in countries where USAID works. They too may differentially, but nonrandomly, operate in the same areas as USAID CVE programs or otherwise affect CVE program targets.
- Host country willingness and ability to tackle VE is a critical variable. Host country governments have their own policies and programs, including security measures, to tackle VE, some of which may also aggravate the grievances of at-risk populations. They may also use ostensibly nonstate actors as tools of domestic or foreign policy to support VE. In other cases, the state passively facilitates violence, either because it lacks capacity at lower levels of governance or because lower levels of governance are part of the conflict.

Moreover, external influencers such as the Gulf states, Iran, and Saudi Arabia operate through official and unofficial channels to influence VE actors and outcomes. All these factors further complicate understanding of USAID's role in CVE. The TOC should help determine which variables to include in the model.

Assuming the factors can be identified, the next challenge is obtaining usable data. Data on some relevant factors—for example, socioeconomic and context data—may be available in usable form. Other data may exist but not be readily available, such as other donor program levels and locations. Given that data on government efforts to prevent violence are often classified, this important factor is especially hard to examine. Factors concerning governance quality present a third challenge: that of operationalization into valid metrics.

Finally, these factors can vary significantly by district or region within a country. Ideally a model will have measurements of the relevant variables on a scale that is meaningful for understanding USAID programming—for example, measures at the village, district, or regional level. In some cases, researchers may simply include a locality code to account for several fixed factors; however, these factors must still be understood.

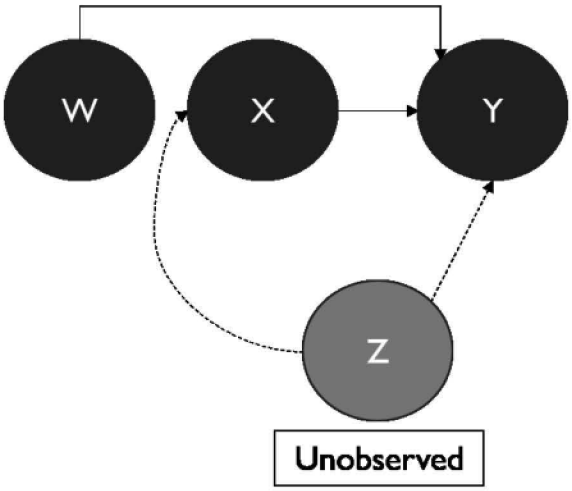
These considerations highlight the importance of assembling appropriate data to account for variability within and across contexts, as well as the limits of creating a model for one country that could provide insights on a different dataset from a different country.

OMITTED VARIABLE PROBLEM

The inclusion of other variables that analysts want to hold fixed is based on theory, data availability, and increasingly, machine learning (a method of data analysis that automates analytical model building using algorithms to identify data patterns). Nevertheless, it is not necessarily known in any given context which variables will be important to include, and they could vary across localities within a given country. Analysis results will be biased if there are unobserved variables that are related to the outcome of interest but not part of the model (Figure 2). The risk of bias is particularly great if an omitted variable causes, or is highly

correlated with, USAID's programming and the outcome of interest. For example, an education study that looked only at the relationship between test scores and school funding but did not account for teacher experience or student poverty would likely over- or underestimate the effect of funding.

FIGURE 2: THE OMITTED VARIABLE



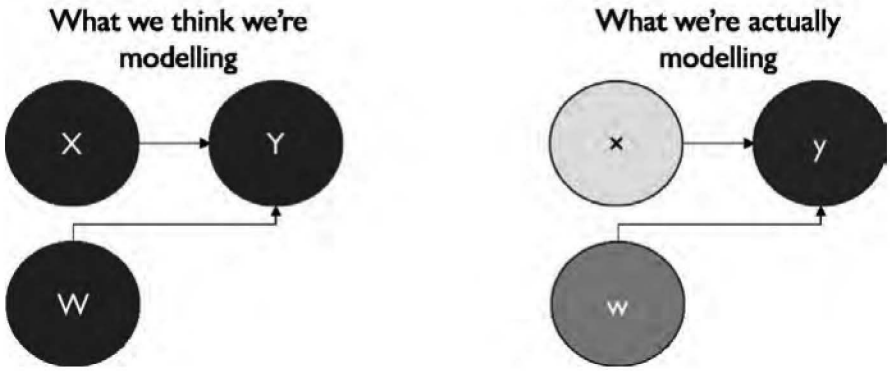
This problem is especially acute in analyzing VE given that VE drivers are highly complex, not fully agreed upon, and variable across locations. Data on appropriate control variables are also often limited or inaccurate. But relying only on variables for which reliable data are available reinforces the problem.

To address the omitted variable problem, a recent analysis of violence in Colombia and Indonesia that tested different modeling approaches used more than 350 control variables to account for potential relationships that could explain violence.[33] Acquiring data for these variables was an enormous task.

OPERATIONALIZING AN EXTREMIST VIOLENCE–CVE PROGRAMMING ANALYTICAL MODEL

Complex statistical methods can help provide insight into the pathways through which CVE activities affect VE and improve understanding of how donor-funded activities affect the likelihood of a positive VE-related outcome. Yet the best methods are only as good as the data available, and many modeling challenges are data-related. The definitions and associated measures of the model's predictors—that is, data validity—are critical, as a fundamental assumption of any model is that there is a certain relationship between variables. If the assumptions about what the model is measuring and how do not hold, results are likely to be misinterpreted (Figure 3).

FIGURE 3: WHEN DATA ARE ERRONEOUS OR CONTAIN UNINTENDED INFORMATION



MEASURING VIOLENCE REDUCTION

Data on the dependent variable must be accurately, consistently, and appropriately measured to ensure that the model's estimate provides meaningful information. If violence is the main outcome of interest, the analyst must be confident in how this variable is measured and what is or is not included within VE. Where extremist violence is poorly measured (for example, through inaccurate location, misattribution, or mischaracterization), even the most sophisticated model will simply estimate a change in poorly measured violence rather than a change in VE itself.

The research team reviewed more than 20 databases to understand the state of the field for modeling the relationship between USAID CVE programming and extremist violence. Violence is measured in multiple ways, including incidents, deaths, injuries, and property damage. Conflict-related violence data are collected and disseminated mostly by UN missions, academic projects, research institutes, and civil society organizations. Only one country's national statistical office—Colombia's—currently acts as a source of data on conflict-related deaths. At a minimum, the available datasets provide structured date-event data at the country level. Some of the available datasets distinguish between injuries and casualties, whereas some, such as the Global Terrorism Database (GTD), provide detailed coding of the types of injuries and attacks, noting the nature of the attack and the organizations or actors involved. Several datasets, such as the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) and Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP), distinguish themselves with detailed geographic information—going from the country down to the region, district, village, and specific geocoded location levels.

These publicly available datasets on violence present significant challenges for use in examining the relationship of USAID programming to the violent acts described within them. Any study of the impact of programming on violence will need to address these issues, which include:

- **Coverage.** Databases vary in the violence, countries, and time periods covered:
    - The databases tend not to collect information on all kinds of relevant violence.[34] The GTD database focuses on terrorism, which is not necessarily coterminous with VE.[35]
    - A database's coding criteria may be difficult to apply and/or inconsistently applied by coders. Thus, coding criteria may conflate insurgent and terrorist events or make it difficult to distinguish between VE and a violent dispute over land or a sectarian dispute, such as between

Sunni and Shi'a. Similarly, databases do not or cannot always identify the perpetrator of an event; for example, ACLED records the perpetrator as unknown in roughly one-third of the violent incidents in the Bangladesh example mentioned above.

- ACLED and UCDP (and associated databases) provide data only on fatalities, whereas other databases include information on both fatalities and injuries.
- Although most working on CVE would define VE as including intimidation and threats of violence, most databases do not code for these features. By exception, the GTD does code for "an intention to coerce, intimidate, or convey some other message to a larger audience." This coding is used liberally—of the 181,691 observations in the GTD, only 1,255 do not carry this code. It seems likely that so many observations carry this code because VE agents generally are trying to "convey some other message" in their attacks. Clearly, however, it is harder to code for intimidation in the absence of a violent event.
- Databases vary in what countries they cover and over what time period. For example, although ACLED is regularly updated, for Afghanistan it goes back only to 2017. The GTD has not been updated since 2017, as its implementer, the START program at the University of Maryland, lost its State Department funding for the database in 2018.
- Generally, there are time lags in reporting and coding; needed corrections in characterization, location, or attribution might be coded later when the information becomes available, but researchers could miss corrections if relying on the original entries.

- **Sources.** VE databases rely on news reports for capturing events, presenting several challenges:
  - These databases tend to rely exclusively on English language newspapers that are archived on the internet. Local English newspapers have an urban bias and thus underreport nonurban events.
  - Coding teams do not examine all urban versions of a given newspaper and thus will code incidents that are biased toward one or another urban area.[36]
  - The international papers that inform many of these coding efforts are also biased toward reporting events by VEOs that are already of interest. For example, very few papers reported attacks by al-Qaida before the 1998 attacks on the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. Indeed, some papers may not have reported al-Qaida events before the 2001 attacks. A literal reading of this coverage would suggest that al-Qaida was not active before those dates, when in fact coders were merely using papers that did not carry such accounts.
  - Vernacular newspapers may be better sources, but they also present challenges. In conducting detailed media monitoring for a stability index of FATA and Malakand Division for USAID/Pakistan (2012–2015), MSI found that vernacular newspapers produced far more accounts of violent incidents in these regions than did the English language press. At the same time, exact locations and numbers of casualties were hard to verify, as media sources varied or all relied on a single official press release. In addition, newspaper information on VE events related to improvised explosive devices and related military responses generally came from the Pakistani army, and the numbers of perpetrators killed and injured in the military reaction often appeared inflated.[37]
  - By definition, newspaper print "news," more minor events are generally not newsworthy.

- Regardless of the source, newspaper accounts often report preliminary information and may inaccurately report event details (such as the actual perpetrator, actual location, final fatalities as the injured succumb to their wounds, and the nature of the attack).
- Newspaper accounts may never print a correction when an event was mischaracterized.

- **Working with the datasets.**
  - Another key consideration is the extent to which data from any given source can be combined with data from other sources. The South Asia Terrorism Portal (SATP) website provides summaries of ongoing and historical VE across Asia, with events mapped and expert commentary to provide context. Yet the data on SATP's website are formatted across multiple online menus rather than in a structured table, which makes merging with other data sources difficult without significant data management and cleaning. This is also true of Action on Armed Violence (AOAV) data, which reports on violent events through PDFs and a dashboard but does not provide access to the raw data. These sources may be well suited to informing Bayesian priors but would take extra effort to work into a data analysis workflow.
  - A broader issue beyond the specific data source is how to treat such data conceptually. Databases indicate where an attack occurred. A violent event's location and severity may simply highlight population centers or key areas of government control. The location of the attack may be far from where the group is based and where it enjoys community support. It is not uncommon for groups to attack in cities because of the publicity such attacks draw. However, the group may have little or no support from the public in those cities. Without knowing where the group is based, it may be difficult to assess whether support for it, for example, has been affected by development interventions.

There is no extant, publicly available database that is not affected by one or more of these problems, although databases such as ACLED have robust collection methodologies and are transparent about the limits of their coverage. For this reason, scholars tend to use these publicly available datasets in cross-country studies in which the authors assume—or hope—that the biases in reporting will be more or less random and will not influence any statistical analyses that use them (i.e., that any bias will be distributed evenly across the dataset and will not have an effect when comparing countries).

Country-specific databases also exist. For example, the U.S. Defense Department's SIGACTS (Significant Activities) database reflects events that involve Coalition forces in Iraq and Afghanistan. Each record provides the following details about each insurgent action: location, date, time, and type of attack. SIGACTS excludes attacks by insurgents on civilians, a critical component of terrorism. Highly localized, geocoded data of this sort exists in these cases because the U.S. and Coalition forces collected them for military planning. Similar data have at times been collected by other entities. Crost and Johnston, for example, obtained similar conflict data from the units of the Armed Forces of the Philippines involved in anti-insurgency efforts between 2001 and 2008.[38] However, such data will not likely exist in countries that are not in a state of conflict in which a military or other government agency is interested in monitoring violence trends. Where they do exist, governments are unlikely to share them for obvious security reasons.

Other country-specific datasets, such as the Bangsamoro Conflict Monitoring System in the Philippines and the Conflict Analysis Resource Center in Colombia, contain VE and conflict-related data. But they are

often for a targeted region within a country, over limited time series, and/or highly context specific in their coding.

For detailed single-country studies, scholars tend to avoid the completeness and accuracy challenges outlined above by developing their own country-specific datasets. These efforts are time consuming and expensive and may not be qualitatively better than those described above and in the table in Annex 1; they likely have their own problems.[39]

The table in Annex 1 demonstrates the diversity of data sources used to capture violent events, the variety of aspects coded, and the variety of formats used for presenting data (some of which inhibit use in models). It summarizes 10 of the most often cited datasets that capture VE events, in descending order of usefulness. Some of the datasets are suitable only for historical research due to their limited time frames. This is not an exhaustive list. Country-specific databases are not included, although they could be considered for future analyses where timely. In addition, databases such as Correlates of War that provide information related to but not of VE events are not included because they focus on interstate conflict and violence rather than within-country violent events. Such international conflict datasets may also be worth reconsideration should broad measures warrant inclusion in analysis—for example, if researchers want to test whether international metrics are related to or affect changes in within-country metrics. The name of each database contains a hyperlinked URL to access the website hosting the data.

USAID DATA

Constructing a model of the relationship of USAID CVE programming to violence in a given country requires usable data on that programming. Ideally, evaluators would have access—for every relevant intervention—to program data that includes, at a minimum:

- Geocoding such that intervention data can be analyzed in conjunction with VE event data.[40]
- Amounts spent on individual interventions.
- Clear labeling of the nature of the interventions.
- Intervention objectives.
- Unit(s) of intended impact (e.g., individuals, agencies, organizations, territorial unit).
- Numbers of beneficiaries, disaggregated by sex and other demographic traits relevant to the CVE program objectives.
- Start and end dates for each intervention.

USAID CVE program data and reporting generally lack many of these attributes. Some programs may have them, but publicly available documents reviewed for this paper did not demonstrate that. Assessing the link between CVE programs and extremist violence reduction could require a concerted effort at Mission and implementer levels to establish systems for collecting and managing such detailed information.

The Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) Anywhere database can serve as an example. For every program, the database includes many categories of data including fields for:

- Unique activity number.
- Activity title.
- Activity type and sector(s).
- Activity justification and objective(s).

- Start and end dates.
- Status.
- Awardee.
- Award amount, amount spent, and counterpart contributions.
- Number of beneficiaries, sex disaggregated.
- Narratives on background and monitoring updates.

OTI's way of implementing activities is different from that of most Mission CVE programs. Nor does OTI Anywhere capture all needed data—for example, it cannot attach a geocode to costs or beneficiaries of activities that have disbursed benefits, such as trainings that bring beneficiaries to a central location or institutional capacity building or technical assistance for government agencies. Evaluating the links between government capacity building and violence reduction would require data not just on interventions but also on intermediate outcomes (e.g., government agency actions that might have affected violence). It is not always possible to disaggregate a given activity in the context of a larger grant by actual cost, specific users/beneficiaries, and date at which impact manifests. Nevertheless, an OTI-like database can allow evaluators to rigorously examine many aspects of a CVE program.

The Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP) (see box below) provides a similar level of detail and has been used in rigorous studies of the relationship of development aid to violence. Although data exist for Iraq and Afghanistan during CERP, such granular data about interventions are hard to come by in other countries. Crost and Johnston[41] secured comparable data on the Philippines' flagship development project (KALAHI-CIDSS, *Kapit-Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan,* Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services), a community-driven development program (not a CVE program).[42]

Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP) in Iraq

CERP in Iraq and Afghanistan has been the subject of at least six studies. In comparison with USAID project data or other bilateral or multilateral donor aid, CERP has provided researchers interested in the relationship between aid and violence with several advantages. First, the U.S. military had assembled a database on CERP expenditures with detailed information about the award's amount, where it was spent and how, and with what partners and timelines. In addition, CERP was allocated in small amounts and distributed without the layers of subcontracting or grant making that can render the "relationship between dollars spent and work done tenuous for most American reconstruction spending."[43] Not least, CERP is one of the only programs analysts have been able to study that explicitly seeks to reduce violence.

In a high-quality study, Berman, Shapiro, and Felter sought to unpack what, if any, relationship exists between development and violence in Iraq. The study demonstrates ways a research team can overcome the kinds of empirical obstacles discussed above and the substantial amount of data required for a robust analysis. The study employed a first-difference design whereby changes in violence were regressed on changes in CERP spending, controlling for previous levels of violence and troop strength.

For the outcome variable of violence, the team used declassified data from SIGACTS to study the intensity of insurgent activity as measured by per capita attacks on Coalition and Iraqi security forces. The database's exclusion of attacks on civilians was not an issue for this study because, as the research team reasoned, the program they were studying was intended to diminish attacks on Coalition forces—not civilians.

For controls, the analysis used data on district-level community characteristics collected by the Iraqi Central Statistical Office, as well as World Food Program surveys and Geographic Information System data on oil reserves and infrastructure. These measures controlled for the various endogeneity issues discussed below as well as for underlying conditions that may influence how the CERP program functioned, such as state capacity.

This study found that "the correlation between reconstruction spending and violence across Iraqi districts [was] generally positive"; in other words, more spending drew more violence.[44] A later study with overlapping authors

found that CERP projects (particularly those under $50,000 in value) reduced violence when linked to higher troop presence and the involvement of development professionals. Larger development projects, by contrast, increased violence.[45] Other studies of CERP have obtained different results because they used different model specifications.

OTHER ISSUES IN EXAMINING THE RELATIONSHIP

CONSTRUCTING A COUNTERFACTUAL

Including a counterfactual group in an evaluation helps answer the question of what would have happened in the intervention's absence. However, policymakers generally want programs to address the most vulnerable or at-risk populations and areas, so it can be hard to construct a counterfactual group for practical and ethical reasons. Creating a counterfactual group will also be more difficult to the extent that the evaluation covers multiple, differing interventions (for example, if USAID seeks to evaluate a Mission CVE portfolio, project, or activity with multiple outcomes, "treatments," and target populations). There are three main features of statistically valid counterfactuals:

- Both treatment and counterfactual groups should be statistically similar—that is, have similar funding levels (e.g., in the case of municipalities), governance regime, attitudes, and demographics (in the case of individuals) across both treatment and counterfactual groups. For example, in the absence of a USAID intervention, both the treatment group (i.e., the group or other unit of analysis that received the CVE activity) and the counterfactual (i.e., the group/unit that did not) should be otherwise statistically similar on average.

- Both the treatment and counterfactual groups should be expected to have the same or similar outcomes in the intervention's presence, all else equal. In other words, if the intervention were rolled out to the full sample, and not just the treatment group, we would expect the counterfactual group to experience similar outcomes.

- Exposure to other interventions and relevant external factors should be the same on average. When exposure to broad stabilization activities or even other microlevel donor-funded programs is likely, both groups should have the same exposure and benefits on average.

As Gertler et al. note, analysts can create a counterfactual group or groups that violate these criteria, but any estimate of activity impacts will be biased and include the effects of other observed and unobserved metrics.[46] The feasibility of constructing a valid counterfactual in the contexts where USAID implements CVE activities will depend on the ability to find or collect data to meet the above criteria or data that allow for additional methods to adjust estimates to make up for violation of the above criteria.

The challenges to implementing experimental and quasi-experimental evaluations are well known, but there are additional feasibility constraints to counterfactual analysis of VE.[47] Assuming the donor chooses to assign aid to some but not all areas or communities experiencing VE or extremist violence, it is often not possible to verify that beneficiary and nonbeneficiary areas are in fact similar, particularly over time. This is particularly true in contexts where national statistical offices have low capacity and in nonpermissive environments that limit the ability to collect primary data. In other cases, it is difficult to limit contamination between beneficiary and nonbeneficiary groups—for example, a governance capacity-building activity may train certain local leaders who then share their knowledge with a nonrandom

selection of peers assigned to the counterfactual group. Further, the VE context is inherently sensitive—a perception of unfairness, or even of random assignment, that may have positive connotations to researchers may exacerbate VE tensions and alter outcomes in ways that an observational study would not. Although well-planned and thoughtful research design can address this issue, and analysts should always strive to have a strong understanding of the local context, the unintended consequences of counterfactual research in VE contexts warrants discussion beyond the standard concerns about external validity or the ethics of randomization.

UNITS OF ANALYSIS

Varying units of analysis also present modeling challenges. VE event data often present single observations for a locality (with geocodes in the best case) or are aggregated at a higher level, such as the district or country. In contrast, program activity data are provided at various levels, from the individual to the country level. Data for other variables that should be included in the model may also fall at differing levels that do not necessarily match either the VE event data or USAID program data.

With standard linear models, such varying levels of analysis across clusters introduce measurement error. To some extent this is intuitive: combining one metric that occurs at an individual level with another metric that occurs at a national level requires some adjustment to fit the two measures together. Hierarchical, or multilevel, modeling—standard in some areas of political science, economics, and data science but slow to catch on in development economics and conflict studies—helps minimizes this measurement error. Rather than trying to fit measures at varying levels together into a single linear combination, this approach basically mimics running multiple models at each level and then collapses them into a single model, reducing error while preserving information on how subgroups vary. This modeling method, among its many other advantages, is therefore ideal in situations involving disparate units of measurement.

GENERALIZABILITY

Because of the variability in VE contexts and programs, most of the relevant models the research team examined in the VE/CVE literature are specific to key subsamples, country contexts, or aid activities. In most cases, the models do not estimate a broader effect across a population but simply show a relationship in available data. Most CVE program evaluations would likely also focus on particular within-country contexts. This should not be viewed as a problem, but the specificity of all these models means that they cannot be generalized to a country population; in other words, finding an impact does not mean that the program would work outside the parameters set for it. Nor could a model be readily adapted to another country and set of programs.

LAG TIME FOR EFFECTS

One challenge, which is not unique to CVE but is perhaps particularly acute in this field, is the time frame within which aid might affect extremist violence. Little is known about how to predict this delay of impact. Analysts often include lagged variables (i.e., the relevant metric for the previous period) to capture the fact that the benefits of aid interventions in one period may be related to outcomes in later periods. Introducing lagged variables is a way to account for the relationship between time periods and impact delays. Lagged effects relate to both research design and effect estimation. On the design side, the analyst tries to account for the pace at which an intervention is implemented and benefits accrue. For example,

it is unlikely that people attend one community engagement event and change their attitudes toward VEOs. On the estimation side, the analyst tries to appropriately capture the observed and unobserved factors that occur at different times. The use of lagged variables requires time series data on the outcome, CVE interventions, and control variables. Often CVE program measurement stops with the program's end, hampering learning about downstream effects.[48]

Despite their general use in econometrics, lagged variables are known to introduce bias into estimates, which analysts must address should they choose to use lags.[49] Inclusion of lagged variables is posited as a way to "exogenize" a variable, in the terms of Bellemare et al.[50] Typically, lagged variables are used to address the fact that an outcome may be related to a set of factors for a given timeframe (i.e., they are endogenous) but would theoretically be independent of those factors in the previous period. For example, to understand the aid-VE relationship, the analyst could first estimate the relationship of aid in period 1 to VE in period 1 but may also know that aid was distributed for that period to directly address VE. The analyst might then argue that aid inputs from two periods prior are independent of violence in the current period, which in theory could help filter out some of the bias from how aid was targeted and unobserved sources. Yet what Bellemare et al. show is that this method often simply moves the bias, or endogeneity, from one period to another rather than removing it.

Although including lagged variables may be an important step in exploratory modeling, particularly where theory posits a less than immediate effect, the simple inclusion of lags will not solve the challenge of benefits accrual and endogeneity or improve estimates.[51] Interventions with well-grounded and realistic TOCs—and thoughtful research design with repeated rounds of data collection—are the best ways to address the challenges of delayed accrual of activity benefits and biased estimation.

RESOURCES NEEDED

The largest resource constraint is that of detailed activity data that relate to a clear TOC. Although broad activity indicators may be a helpful first step, they often vary in quality or simply measure activity inputs, outputs, or lower-level outcomes without details on spending, location, or important beneficiary metrics. Ideally, analysts would have a clear program model that relates the first activity inputs to the highest-level outcome, along with data for each output and outcome along the model pathway in between. As noted previously, many scholars use available VE databases only for cross-country analysis and build their own databases to explore single-country phenomena. Although this is methodologically the best option, it is costly. For example, the Afghanistan CERP study referenced in the text box above took more than two years to develop a robust dataset, including breaking CERP activities into "district weeks" to try to tie aid to violence reduction. Similarly, Berman et al.[52] coded 22,300 reports on violent incidents and troop movements/military actions in the Philippines to study the effect of employment/unemployment on violence. Even cleaning, coding, and merging data from existing databases with other data used by an evaluation requires extensive effort. On the omitted variable problem, the paper has noted the level of effort illustrated by the Bazzi et al. study using 350 control variables.

Although data storage and processing are increasingly inexpensive, the computing power required to run a complex model with hundreds of covariates requires careful planning. Bazzi et al.[53] note that just getting baseline model estimates for their Indonesia dataset took two hours, and other, more complex models took "days of computing power."[54] Parallel computing, which involves dividing computation into small units that are then processed over multiple machines, is accessible to most analysts through cloud-based

services. The data management resources for modeling the CVE-VE relationship should also not be taken lightly given the actual cleaning and merging effort likely needed, as well as storage needs.

As with any endeavor, the skills of the team involved are critical to success. A team with econometric, data science, subject matter, and broader evaluation experience is needed to properly design and work through a meaningful model.[55] As noted, the team will require significant time and other resources to do so. For relatively short or small-scale CVE programs, this investment may not be cost effective.

SUMMING UP

In theory, USAID can isolate the impact of its CVE programming on extremist violence. However, CVE development aid is still at an early stage of understanding and much work remains to test TOCs that are within a donor's manageable interest and have an impact on VE. Just as research has demonstrated that there is no single pathway into VE nor any common personality profile for those attracted to VEOs, one cannot establish a general TOC that fits all VE and all contexts in which it occurs. TOCs are likely to remain highly context dependent, with significant variations possible even within a given country. They will respond to:

- VE drivers.
- VEO capabilities and objectives.
- Government capabilities and preferences.
- Societal resilience.
- Donor agency funding and mandates.

Some TOC objectives could produce greater effects on VEO capabilities, influence, and actions than others. It is not known in all cases which those might be. Working intensively in small vulnerable communities could buffer those communities from VE influences for a time, and perhaps such investments could be tied in the short to medium term to a lack of support for VE actors or even a lack of violence, but these communities may at some point after the project then become subject to the same societal strains and structural forces that produce vulnerability in nontarget communities. Working to build local partner capacity has become a greater priority in USAID programming and is surely the way to build durable CVE self-reliance, where committed partners can be found, but such capacity building takes time and may in some arenas confront interests that block full progress. In these cases, the causal chain between program interventions and violence is likely to be longer than for programs that seek to shelter specific at-risk communities.

In addition to the program TOC, it may be difficult to parse the W elements that might matter most in a "systems" map that would yield a broader TOC. There may also be substantial variation within a country, not just between countries, as well as variation over short time periods, as VE can morph quickly. As discussed in the following section, program designers continue to wrestle with establishing program outcomes and how best to reach them.

Data validity emerges from this review as another critical aspect in evaluating the relationship between CVE programs and violence. Robust within-country evaluations of development aid's influence on violence have entailed demanding empirical requirements and extensive resources to gather requisite data for the outcome (violence), the intervention program, and relevant control variables (presence/actions of military, proxies for government control of the area, terrain data, etc.). In the worst case, data validity problems

amount to the "garbage in, garbage out" problem: no amount of model sophistication can mitigate the problems of poor measurement. Evaluations that overcome the data issue will require, in particular, substantial and sustained USAID investment in data collection and management related to its own activities.

Nonetheless, many of the data-related and conceptual definitional challenges related to VE and CVE are not unique to these fields; democracy, human rights, and governance analysts—among others examining complex sociopolitical phenomena—have grappled with them for decades and they should not be seen as reasons not to program. Statistical techniques are improving as well, so challenges to modeling the relationships—assuming analysts have decent data—may be manageable. Ultimately, USAID needs to be prepared to consider what a "good enough" evaluation would look like in this field.

One possible way to proceed would be to set up a small number of pilots. The optimal conditions for setting up such pilots would include:

- A CVE program that is sizable, recent but with an established baseline, and based on a realistic and testable TOC with clearly stated assumptions, and that tackles clearly at-risk populations and addresses a limited array of well-evidenced drivers with adequate investment in each.
- A cooperative government with an interest in CVE, not just a counterterrorism approach to VE.
- Substantial extremist violence (the event is not too rare) but not a full-on insurgency (with the potential for many W and Z variables and greater difficulty obtaining reliable data).
- Violence data that country experts believe is reasonably accurate.
- An ability to obtain or create at least some of the data needed for control factors.
- A reasonable period of time over which to track change, including after the program has ended.

It may be difficult to meet these conditions in any given country and to generalize from a few test cases.

Finally, in place of or alongside examining the relationship to violence, more resources might be devoted to strengthening evaluation of high-level outcomes other than violence reduction. Violence is only one tactic of VEOs, and in some environments it is not the most important one. Given VEOs' desire to replace governments with a Caliphate (global or regional) and harsh rules of governance dictated by interpretations drawn from early Muslim community practices, there might in any given environment be a range of CVE objectives that could interfere with or help ensure the rejection of VEO ideas and actions. The next section discusses some of these other objectives or outcomes.

EXAMINING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CVE PROGRAMMING AND OUTCOMES OTHER THAN VIOLENCE REDUCTION

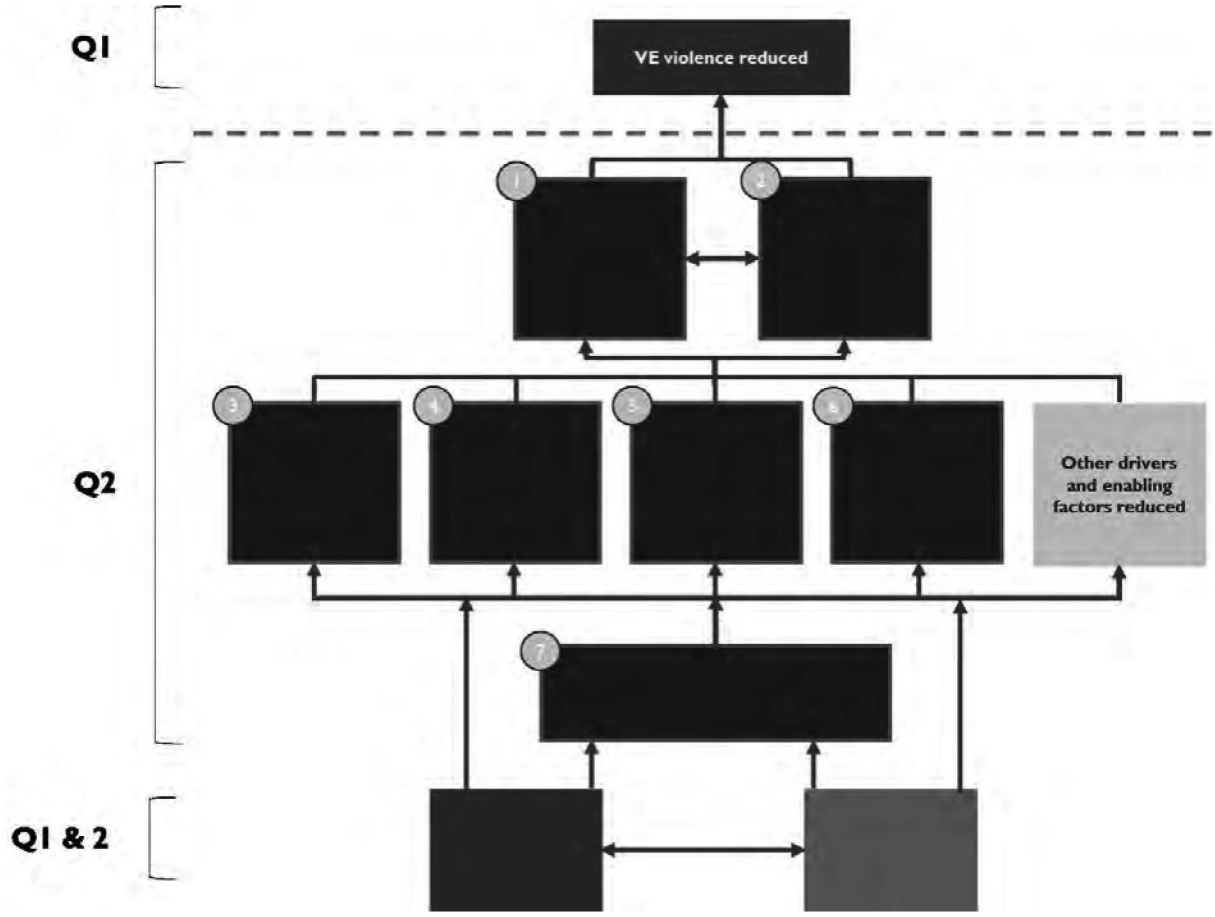
OVERVIEW

SELECTED OUTCOMES

This section of the paper discusses selected higher-level outcomes short of extremist violence reduction that development aid could affect and evaluate in ways that are lower risk and less costly than attempting to link the CVE program and violence (Figure 4). The outcomes presented here are among those whose links to VE phenomena generally and to violence reduction in particular are better supported by the

literature, as well as within USAID practice.[56] The outcomes are divided into three categories: outcomes linked closely to VE phenomena, outcomes linked to important VE drivers, and outcomes linked to improved local capacity to address VE. This categorization aligns with a CVE performance goal of the USAID-State Department FY 2018–2022 Joint Strategic Plan: "reduce the drivers of violent extremism in vulnerable countries, regions, and locales, while also strengthening the capacity of partner governments and civil societies to prevent, counter, and respond to terrorism." USAID is working on several of these outcomes—in effect, testing some of the intervening links between aid and violence reduction; these are the W variables in the graphics or the micromodels discussed under Research Question 1 (see Figures 1–3).

FIGURE 4: OUTCOMES AT DIFFERENT LEVELS



As noted earlier, given that CVE programs are often small relative to the scale and complexity of the VE problem and its drivers in a country, evaluating links between programming and progress on intervening factors that mitigate extremist behaviors and violence, rather than on violence reduction itself, is more likely to reveal an association. And rigorous evaluation of such outcomes can provide information important to maximizing resources and preventing harm.

Finally, a reasonable argument can be made that violence should not be the sole concern under evaluation. Although extremist thought is protected by the constitutions of many countries, extremist actions short of violence (hate speech, propagation of misinformation, insults, discrimination, threats) should be of concern. Many extremist organizations push policies and practices that are exclusionary and intolerant

and would exclude wide swathes of the population from the benefits of citizenship. They may seek to impose a moral order that many would find repugnant. To the extent that these views spread in society—as they have in Burma, Indonesia, and elsewhere—the rights of women, minorities, and those who practice the same religion but in a different manner from that of the extremists may be adversely affected. Politicians may opt to play on extremist ideas to further their political fortunes, thereby exacerbating the problem. Eventually discrimination can become more widespread and threaten the provision of services and employment opportunities for "out" groups and informal or formal rules may enforce elements of an extremist moral code in some communities. These developments, where they occur, erode democratic governance, as well as traditional norms of diversity and pluralism. Such discrimination and exclusion might well be considered forms of "structural" violence, and it is therefore appropriate for CVE programs to attempt to protect tolerance, pluralism, and diversity.

The outcomes presented here are important for making progress against VE, but they do not represent all drivers that country analysis or other evidence suggest should be addressed. Nor are these outcomes intended to serve as development objectives in and of themselves, although they could. USAID programs vary in how they frame, combine, and implement such outcomes, and many CVE programs work on multiple drivers, so results frameworks across CVE programs can vary substantially.

For each outcome, the section provides evidence for the relationship to extremist violence and potentially useful tools for measurement.

CROSSCUTTING MEASUREMENT CHALLENGES

Examining the relationship of CVE programs or their components to outcomes other than violence reduction faces a number of challenges, including:

- Arriving at clear definitions of the phenomena to be investigated—such as radicalization, marginalization, or social cohesion. Definitions are necessary for building models that can accurately measure change[57] and USAID contributions to that change and for developing valid, reliable metrics to include in the model given the dearth of proven tools in the CVE field.[58]
- The relative rarity of VE recruitment and, more generally, the effective impossibility of measuring a negative—that is, proving that radicalization, for example, did not occur because of USAID-funded interventions or that recruitment has diminished when such activity is generally well hidden.
- The presence of numerous interconnected factors, operating at multiple levels, that must be accounted for to explain an outcome and to isolate USAID's contribution.
- Data availability and validity.
- The lag time for effects, given that many CVE programs aim to change beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors and that sustainable changes to individuals, communities, and institutions may not fully manifest until after the program is completed. By the same token, changes that do occur could degrade after a program has ended in the absence of sustained local follow-up.
- Potential risks to all those involved in such research efforts.

Analysts examining the relationship between a CVE program or its components and the outcomes described below will therefore need to consider how best to embed data collection and analysis methods in a larger evaluation design linked to a TOC that connects interventions to outcomes. Assembling a plausible CVE TOC can be challenging as projects and activities do not always have sufficiently elaborate

TOCs to queue up a rigorous analysis of the relationships of interest. This is especially true where the project or activity includes multiple objectives, interventions, and funding sources; is of limited dollar value; and addresses a complex VE problem set with numerous relevant factors. The design should also be embedded in a larger monitoring, evaluation, and learning plan (many of the tools described below can be used for monitoring as well as evaluation).

With a detailed TOC in hand, the analyst can specify and operationalize the concepts of interest; identify the targeted populations or institutions, locations, and changes anticipated to be affected by programming; and determine and tailor the most appropriate and practicable mix of data collection and analysis methods. Triangulation of findings is especially critical in the CVE context, where data availability and validity are so often at issue. Where the construction of counterfactual populations is not possible, comparisons across populations, subpopulations, locations, other fixed factors, and time will be essential for analytical leverage. Finally, examining the outcomes of CVE programming calls for an especially high level of attention to Do No Harm principles.

MEASUREMENT APPROACHES BY OUTCOME

OUTCOMES LINKED CLOSELY TO VE PHENOMENA

OUTCOME 1. REDUCED (VULNERABILITY TO) VEO RADICALIZATION AND RECRUITMENT

Links to VE

Radicalization and recruitment by VEOs are clearly linked to their success. Many host country or donor efforts to tackle radicalization and recruitment seek to stop both before they fully materialize (i.e., an individual is radicalized and/or recruited by/to the group) and thus try to identify particular population groups that are both targeted by VEOs and seem vulnerable to them.

Individual factors or traits identified in the literature as associated with vulnerability to VEO radicalization and recruitment, based on interviews with VE actors, include the search for belonging and connectedness, agency and empowerment, material gain, respect, meaning, self-esteem, and desire for adventure.[59] Psychologists are also beginning to explore how cognitive factors, such as black-and-white thinking, and family life interact in ways that may make some individuals more vulnerable to VE ideology and violence than others are.[60]

Social networks are known to be a primary driver of joining, particularly for youth. Profiling terrorists from multiple settings and VEOs has yielded good evidence that recruits tend to join VEOs in small groups with friends, peers, and family. For example, many pairs of brothers have been involved in terrorist attacks, including the September 11, Boston Marathon, and Marawi attacks.[61]

The hypothesis that greater opportunities affect perceptions of the use of violence is partially supported by the literature. An econometric analysis of 31,000 individuals from 27 developing countries around the world found that respondents' employment status significantly affected the extent to which they justify violence. Both part- and full-time employed respondents were less likely to support violence than those who were unemployed or out of the workforce.[62] A rigorous study on the relationship between unemployment and insurgent violence in Afghanistan, Iraq, and the Philippines, however, found no link between unemployment and attacks on government or allied forces or civilians.[63] Generally, the literature

is mixed on the relationship between unemployment and poverty and the occurrence of violence (note that this is different from support for violence). Poverty has been linked to conflict and civil war, but a link to VE has not been shown; nor has a link between unemployment and CVE been clearly demonstrated. One rigorous study in Pakistan demonstrated that poorer respondents were less likely to support VE than better-off ones.[64] Economic shocks and income inequality (see Outcome 4 on inequality) have been positively correlated with terrorism.

Programs to reduce vulnerability typically aim at developing cognitive resources, fostering positive character traits, and altering values and perceptions. Others provide alternative opportunities to the vulnerable to displace the lure of VEOs and address grievances, thereby hindering recruitment. Interventions aimed at ensuring constructive engagement in society may address individual and small-group factors and mindsets as well.

USAID Programs on Outcome 1

Many USAID CVE programs work to reduce the risk of radicalization and recruitment among vulnerable youth or other specific populations. Niwajibu Wetu (NIWETU) in Kenya works to reduce recruitment risk in vulnerable individuals and communities. In the Maldives, USAID is initiating a program that seeks to reduce the vulnerability to radicalization and recruitment among youth, prisoners, and gang members. Harmoni in Indonesia works on the reintegration and resettlement of former terrorist prisoners and their families and returnees from Syria by building government and civil society organization (CSO) capacity.

A 2018 impact evaluation of Mercy Corps programs found that Somali youth who had greater access to secondary education and participated in civic education activities were less likely to support violent groups. A 2016 impact evaluation of a similar Mercy Corps program found that providing secondary education reduced the likelihood of youth participating in violence by 16 percent, although it increased support for political violence by 11 percent. However, the combination of secondary formal education and civic engagement reduced the likelihood of youth both participating in and supporting political violence, by 13 percent and 20 percent, respectively. These two evaluations suggest that civic education was a vital part of the program.[65] A 2015 impact evaluation of Mercy Corps' Afghanistan youth employment program found that although the program had positive economic outcomes and several positive social and political outcomes, it had little impact on the willingness to engage in violence or support for violence.[66] Methodological limitations that accompany these three quasi-experimental, ex-post studies, along with gaps in documentation of the methods used, make it difficult to assess the strength of these findings, however.[67]

Viable employment, although important in itself, may do little to avert recruitment risk, and at a minimum it would need to be joined by other CVE program elements that support social identity and meaning. It is also difficult to conceive of CVE workforce programs operating at a large enough scale to dampen youth vulnerability sufficiently.

The way this outcome is specified will have implications for measurement as well as programming:

- ***Reducing radicalization***. In the industrialized world, governments fund programs that seek to identify individuals on a path to radicalization and perhaps recruitment and then to interrupt that trajectory. Such programming is less common in developing country settings because of its high cost, required level of expertise, and lack of agreed-upon criteria for beliefs and behaviors pointing

to radicalization. There has been some experimentation with family early warning systems, but generally the response side has been weak due to a lack of citizen trust and the requisite expertise in government institutions. Donors are now supporting deradicalization, and measures for radicalization and deradicalization have been developed (see the discussion below on VERA-2, for example). From a program standpoint, deradicalization is primarily a remedial approach, not a preventive one. From a measurement standpoint, a focus on radicalization is problematic because experts know that some who are recruited are not radicalized prior to joining a VEO but are seeking other benefits.

- ***Reducing recruitment.*** Although CVE programs sometimes seek to disrupt VEO recruitment efforts—for example, through counter-messaging—it is impossible to count recruits or a reduction in them. Success in affecting recruitment therefore must be captured through proxy measures such as attitudes and perceptions.

- ***Reducing vulnerability*** to radicalization and recruitment. Most CVE programs working on radicalization and recruitment are in fact working on vulnerability to these experiences and, more precisely, presumed factors in vulnerability, as a preventive strategy. Although experts may be moving closer to understanding the conversion process, the pathways, timelines, trigger points for engaging in violence, and characteristics of susceptibility show no definitive patterns (unlike with gangs in Latin America). There is also a substantial disconnect in VE between attitudes and behaviors—individuals who support violence are undoubtedly more likely to become directly involved in its creation, but it is also possible to support or work for a VEO without ever engaging in violence. Because there is no single pathway to radicalization and recruitment, measurement also tends to examine presumed risk factors, with surveys the most common approach, as discussed below.

VEOs are often selective and look for quality in their recruits, regardless of applicant interest, so recruits' motivations and qualifications could differ from those of applicants who fail to join. VEOs in asymmetrical conflicts, such as those in Nigeria, Pakistan, and the Philippines, do not need large numbers of fighters/members, and those operating in non-conflict settings need even fewer. Members may serve in a part-time capacity or intermittently.[68] Determining who is at risk is thus a "needle in a haystack" problem, since so few join and some who try to join will likely fail.

Measurement Tools

Measures for this outcome, broadly speaking, focus on individual beneficiaries' dispositions and self-reported behaviors or on observed changes in behavior or in the level of opportunities available. The Radicalization Awareness Network (RAN), in particular, has argued that measures should be developed for middle-range outcomes that programs can directly affect, such as improved self-esteem and values respecting diversity. RAN also recommends measuring behavior changes, such as more contact with despised "out" groups.[69] The effects of providing new opportunities can be measured by changes in how individuals spend their time (i.e., whether engaged productively) as a proxy for not engaging with VEOs.

To understand the effect of USAID activities on individuals, it is critical to try to link changes in their knowledge, perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors to the interventions and types of change expected. Outcomes are best measured before and after an intervention, using treatment and control groups where possible. If a counterfactual is not possible (as is the case where individuals self-select into treatment

opportunities), measurement should occur before and after treatment, and final measurement should occur sometime after the treatment has ended. The research design should allow for comparison, as appropriate and relevant, between activities (differing treatments) and by sex, age, socioeconomic variables, location, and so on.

All tools that purport to measure either radicalization itself or vulnerability to radicalization and/or recruitment (an even fuzzier concept) make assumptions about the factors involved, be they psychological, cognitive, material, or grievance related. A granular assessment of the at-risk context (as judged by VEO presence and activity and levels of acceptance) should provide some understanding of the most relevant factors and assist both selection and adaptation of measurement tools. As noted, recruitment cannot be measured directly, at least not with sufficient precision without access to law enforcement agency records.

Interview-Based Methods

The primary approaches for ascertaining individual support for VEO ideology, VEOs, and violence and for gauging the presence or absence of protective factors that may be associated with these attitudes are surveys (the collection of information from sampled respondents through structured interviews) and in-depth interviews (typically used in deradicalization research). These methods can also be used to assess self-reported changes in behavior, such as engagement in violence and with VEOs (although see the discussion of response bias below) or in constructive alternative activities.

Surveys seeking to assess the degree to which individuals support extremist ideologies and organizations and violence, along with the presence of protective factors, are used relatively widely by donors and academic institutions, although their design and quality vary greatly. Questions may address the degree of support for ideas VE/intolerant actors propagate in a given setting; support for particular VEOs or intolerant groups known to respondents; support for specific VEO activities, including violent incidents; and willingness to volunteer for or contribute funds to such groups.

The use of psychometric scales and assessments—drawn from the fields of psychology and public health—may be gaining traction, although evidence to support their use in assessing VE is so far limited.[70] Using in-depth interview techniques, psychometric tools assess attitudes and beliefs around violence and the psychological and cognitive protective and risk factors associated with youth violence. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has identified various tools to assess violence among youth.[71] VERA-2 focuses on assessing the risk of violent political extremism using 25 risk factors and six protective factors, grouped in four areas: beliefs and attitudes, context and intent, history and capability, and commitment and motivation.[72] It is intended for use after an individual has been convicted of a terrorism-related offense but may have some applicability for assessing changes associated with interventions aimed at vulnerable and at-risk populations; it has yet to be tested in this context, however.[73] One evaluation of a Dutch deradicalization program noted that staff ended up not using VERA-2 because it was too labor intensive.[74]

Another approach for examining individual risk and protective factors uses the indices presented in an evaluation of WORDE, a U.S. community-based CVE program. The evaluation uses 12 scales measuring factors such as adaptive grievance, activism, and radicalism.[75]

Integrative complexity (IC) is a promising approach drawn from psychology. IC is used to measure individual reasoning abilities and decision making. It assesses cognitive complexity and the ability to allow for varying points of view and perspectives. Low scores indicate narrow perspectives and black-and-white

thinking and predict intolerance, conflict, and violence. A 2019 policy brief discusses the tool and its application in more than 80 interventions, including in Kenya, Kosovo, and Pakistan.[76] Pre- and post-test studies found that IC interventions yielded positive gains.

LIMITATIONS. The literature stresses that attitudes supporting violence are not the same as an intent to commit or actually committing violence. Another key limitation to these approaches is response bias, whereby individuals interviewed may not give truthful answers due to the sensitive nature of the subject. Asking the question in an abstract, context-free manner to avoid sensitivities is not a solution; asking respondents about attitudes toward the acceptability of violence or political violence in solving problems without some context (in pursuit of what, or against whom) may yield invalid responses. Random response, list experiments, and endorsement experiments are gaining traction as means to elicit more accurate responses.[77] Use of these sophisticated techniques usually requires large samples, highly trained enumerators, and experienced statisticians. Such surveys may nevertheless not be possible in all relevant countries.

It may also be challenging to expect or find change where societies have strong norms related to the use of violence (to protect honor, as in Afghanistan and Pakistan) or where those who appear vulnerable to radicalization have not yet formed strong opinions about ideology, groups, or violence. In these cases, differences in opinions about violence pre- and post-intervention may be small.

Finally, tools used to assess individual risk and protective factors are a new concept in CVE measurement. They are usually administered by skilled assessors and must be tailored to the interventions, culture, and context, making them likely to be costly to adapt and implement. For example, one study that used a newly developed psychometric tool to understand the radicalization process in Canada, Spain, and the United States changed from a 5-point scale on violence to a 2-point one when using the tool in Pakistan; the items used were not disclosed, but the reductionist approach raises issues of validity.[78]

Observational Methods

Structured observation and administrative data can be used to assess the existence and usage of alternative forms of engagement, such as participation in youth centers or clubs, for treatment and control groups. At a lower level of outcome, participant uptake of and satisfaction with the opportunities will tell programmers whether their alternatives are attractive and useful and might therefore divert target beneficiaries from VE.

LIMITATIONS. Observation is labor intensive and requires effort not only to design instruments, protocols, and coding schemes but to train data collectors. Observation can be subjective, and unless the evaluator takes care to reduce bias, increase reliability, and ensure standardization, the measure will be meaningless, since it will vary across data points. Observers are also at high risk in terms of safety and security. For any data collection effort, care must be taken to ensure that authorities and community leaders are aware of the data collection effort and that security protocols protect staff. Administrative data can be useful at scale but often require reliable monitoring systems, data management systems, and standardized meta-data fields. Even in cases where administrative data are available, it is critical for analysts to understand how data were collected, who collected the data, and the key meta-data details.

OUTCOME 2. REDUCED COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR VE

Links to VE

VEO success and longevity depends on a base of support in the general population. VEOs need recruits, volunteers, money, supplies, shelter, and cover. Reduced community support for VEOs, their actions (violence or otherwise), and their ideology will hinder VEOs from gaining a foothold or spreading to additional communities. Usually a community is deemed at risk because there is evidence that VEOs are present and have claimed institutions such as mosques from which they can operate. Some communities or neighborhoods develop into VE "ecosystems." One compelling example is Molenbeek in Brussels, a neighborhood that played a key role in the 2015 Paris and 2016 Brussels attacks.[79] In cases where the community is not in the first instance geographic (such as students), VEOs may have penetrated the institutions used by the community (for example, universities or prisons), or risk factors are present that make them more susceptible than other communities.

USAID Programs on Outcome 2

Many CVE projects focus on at-risk communities. Examples include Strengthening Community Resilience Against Extremism (SCORE) on the coast of Kenya; Obirodh in Bangladesh; and OTI programs in Burkina Faso, northern Cameroon, Chad, Libya, Niger, Nigeria, and Pakistan (the Community Resilience Activity South).

Reducing sympathies and support for VEOs and violent tactics can entail altering attitudes and beliefs about VEO ideology, objectives, and activities; addressing underlying grievances that may drive people to provide support and countering VEO messaging that plays on such grievances; or offering alternatives to VEO-provided benefits (such as services, well-paid employment, and intangible benefits such as brotherhood and adventure). Where VEO intimidation is an element in community support, reducing that intimidation is critical to success but generally outside the mandate of development assistance. Assistance to communities is likely to include indivisible aid, such as infrastructure or institutional changes that affect many or all in the community, although it may also target individuals for training, for example.

Measurement Tools

Communities can be considered aggregates of individuals bound by geography, history, institution or like interests, or they can be examined as units in themselves, with qualities and dynamics analytically distinct from the averages of individuals' attributes. Data collection and analysis depend on how communities are conceptualized. Communities will also have direct and indirect beneficiaries, and survey approaches should think through the effects on both groups.

Surveys

As with Outcome 1 on reduced individual vulnerability, measurement can use data on individual perceptions, attitudes, and self-reported behaviors. The most common way to measure these is through surveys. Analysis then aggregates or averages individual data points to measure the extent to which communities support VE. It is important to aim for a representative sample of the treated community, however it has been defined, so that survey results reflect the community writ large (rather than sampling only direct beneficiaries). Survey questions might usefully ask about community dynamics and include measures of social cohesion, as well as about individual dispositions. Ideally, communities should be evaluated before and after an intervention and compared with control groups using quasi-experimental or experimental impact evaluation approaches whenever feasible. When comparing communities,

respondents should be coded for relevant community traits. Traits associated with location include governance structure, infrastructure, terrain, and the like. As part of this, analysts often account for intracommunity characteristics to understand how similar, or clustered, community traits are within a given community. Understanding such dynamics can inform the appropriate number of respondents to survey. See a discussion of the *limitations* of surveys here.

Focus Group Discussions

Focus group discussions (FGDs), although harder to apply in measuring perceived change among groups, can serve as a stand-alone approach or can support quantitative research. They are especially helpful in looking at communities because, when well done, they may elicit information on community dynamics better than individual interviews can. FGD participants can be the same sets of people, interviewed at multiple points in time, or randomly chosen based on predetermined characteristics at each data collection point.

LIMITATIONS. Biases in FGDs may be more pronounced because they are not anonymous. FGDs are labor intensive to implement, translate, transcribe, code, and interpret. Aggregating such qualitative data to detect nuanced change over time is challenging.

Community Assessment

Examining a community as a unit itself is likely to require a mix of data collection methods, including document review, analysis of third-party data (such as violence data), key informant interviews, and observation. Assessment measures might cover both vulnerabilities (e.g., the presence of VEO-supported institutions such as radicalized mosques and a dearth of state services) and resources (e.g., the presence and quality of early warning systems and of opportunities for constructive engagement). Assessment tools can provide a way to collect metrics from various sources into a standardized format or even a single assessment score or rating. Two forms of analysis are an index, summarizing such vulnerabilities and resources, and case studies with more detail. Analysis must, in either case, include an attempt to link aid interventions to outcomes and to gain analytical leverage by comparing across communities (ideally treated and control groups) and over time.

OUTCOMES LINKED TO IMPORTANT VE DRIVERS

The following outcomes are linked to better-evidenced VE drivers, although for some of these drivers, the evidence base is mixed, with studies producing different findings based on the measures and data used. Progress in achieving these outcomes would presumably have an impact on VE, but some distance remains between the driver and VE phenomena. Data collection and analysis are necessary to explore and validate those connections.

OUTCOME 3. IMPROVED SERVICE PROVISION AND INCREASED GOVERNMENT LEGITIMACY IN VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES

Links to VE

Poor-quality, corrupt, and missing services, resulting in a failure to meet basic community needs, can contribute to population grievances and a lack of trust in government, opening pathways for VEO support and recruitment.[80] VEO-led insurgencies therefore often seek to impair government service provision to reduce trust between citizens and government,[81] and VEOs may try to legitimize their own governance

by providing services or drawing recruits and supporters from radical charitable organizations that do. By addressing community needs, improvements in local service provision through development aid can therefore boost community support for government over VEO control. Improved service provision can also counter VEO rhetoric that targets corrupt governments and encourage citizens to cooperate with government actors in sharing information about VEOs.

USAID Programs on Outcome 3

Small-scale community development projects that enhance services are common in OTI CVE projects and were common in the USAID/Afghanistan stabilization portfolio. USAID/Morocco's Favorable Opportunities to Reinforce Self-Advancement for Today's Youth (FORSATY) program aims to improve services in vulnerable neighborhoods. USAID/Lebanon's CVE-relevant Community Support Program aims to improve services and small-scale infrastructure.

Research suggests a focus on community services that are provided by VEOs or their charitable cousins. Research on asymmetric insurgent environments (e.g., Afghanistan) suggests that services should be small-scale, have visible benefits, be contingent on citizen cooperation with government, and operate in relatively secure environments.[82] Community consultation appears important because it reinforces that government cares about citizens' views and ensures the services provided are priorities.

In non-insurgent VE-affected environments, services may help undermine VEO appeals for overturning the government in favor of a VEO-advocated caliphate or Shari'a state. Evidence for this, however, remains thin. There is also a lack of data on the optimal scale of aid efforts in contexts less afflicted by VE-related conflict, although it seems clear that larger aid projects can attract corruption and thus help delegitimize, rather than legitimize, the government.

Measurement Tools

The nature of the VE problem should guide the choice of measurement approach. If the problem is primarily an absence of services, measuring changes in the quantity and quality of services is essential. For interventions aimed at reducing local dependence on VEO-provided services, it is also important to look at how new or improved services affect similar VEO-provided services. Usage statistics from interventions and observation may be sufficient, but one should also determine whether the service quality provides significantly more impact than basic adequacy. Perceptions of government institution legitimacy are of primary importance. Trust and confidence in government, often products of the way services are designed and implemented as much as their presence, are critical to measure. In conflict settings, expectations of the future quality of governance may also be important.

Establishing community size and boundaries is important to assessing outcomes. In large communities, with multiple service points such as health clinics, schools, and wells, interventions may not make a difference except to those who can access them. Inclusionary processes may affect only those who participate. In other words, the degree of effect will be relative to the context.

Effects should be measured before and after an intervention and compared with assessments of untreated communities where possible. Constructing comparison groups, particularly to measure government legitimacy, is challenging since many variables likely will need to be aligned. These include not only population, ethnic make-up, income levels, and the like but also the array and quality of services provided

(education, health, infrastructure, employment) and histories of community-government relations. This complexity makes it difficult to isolate attitudinal changes related to interventions.

Administrative Data

Administrative or user data can be obtained from government or nongovernmental entities responsible for services or a review of records from the service provider. Administrative data can provide numbers of service points and of how many people use a particular service. In service delivery contexts, administrative data's measurement of regular provision activities can validate or inform analysis of functionality. Analysts can use such datasets to track when and where breakdowns in delivery may have occurred, as well as the most likely reasons. Also important is understanding service provision relative to population (for example, the number of health clinics per 10,000 people) and whether it is above or below the norm for the area or country.

Community Mapping

Community mapping is another way to assess service delivery. It visually provides the location of services relative to the population and can be used for needs assessments, baselines, and measuring change over time. Observers can be deployed to map services such as schools and health clinics, as well as the location of businesses and other types of economic activity important to aggrieved populations. Youth community mapping as part of USAID's Ma3an project in Tunisia, for example, served to not only identify community services but also as a tool for youth empowerment and engagement with the government. Community mapping is labor intensive; requires upfront planning to create base maps if they are not available; and can bring risk to assessors, particularly in areas where a VE threat exists.

Surveys

Surveys elicit perceptions of the quality and usage of community services, as well as attitudes toward government institutions responsible for service delivery or more general levels of trust and confidence in the state. Questionnaires aimed at service users will be most relevant to assessing the impact of a service on community members who use it; point-of-service or "customer satisfaction" tools may also be relatively easy to implement. Representative sample surveys of the community will capture broader (but potentially weaker) effects.

Focus Group Discussions

FGDs are useful not only for eliciting opinions about government service delivery but also for exploring dynamics around service use and trust in government. See pages 29 and 30 for limitations of surveys and FGDs, respectively.

OUTCOME 4. REDUCED MARGINALIZATION AND INEQUALITY

Links to VE

Marginalization and inequality, particularly when aligned with ethnic or religious identities, are salient VE drivers. Marginalization can encompass political, social, and economic exclusion, as well as disparities among groups.[83] Multiple studies have found that political marginalization of ethnic minority groups and income inequality—particularly, but not only, when linked to ethnosectarian divisions—are distinct predictors of domestic terrorism.[84] One study of 172 countries found that countries were at higher risk

for terrorism when minority group discrimination was more prevalent.[85] Another concluded "there is sufficient evidence that economic inequality between groups, as well as political and social injustices combined with a weak state, facilitate an environment of violence."[86]

USAID Programs on Outcome 4

Examples include CVE programs that address aspects of marginalization in Muslim minority countries, including Kenya (the KTI project), Nigeria, the Philippines, and Mozambique (a pending OTI program). Programs may also address marginalization among aggrieved populations in Muslim majority countries, such as those who inhabit the regions of Kasserine and Quneitra in Tunisia.

Marginalization and discrimination can fuel grievances, heighten a sense of injustice, and feed into narratives espoused by VEOs. Marginalized groups can often mobilize because of their sociocultural ties. When marginalized groups constitute a larger portion of the population, are regionally concentrated, and have greater capacity, they may opt for insurgency over terrorism. Separately, women and youth are also commonly subject to marginalization and feelings of reduced agency; these issues can propel them to seek purpose and a role in a VEO.

Programs seeking to create inclusive, fair, and plural societies can operate at the national level or in regions where marginalization and inequality are fueling VE.

Measurement Tools

Community marginalization has two aspects—actual and perceived—as well as multiple dimensions, such as income, consumption, assets, education, health and nutrition, security, power, and social inclusion. Assessing change in marginalization depends on the aspect(s) and the dimension(s) of marginalization being examined. Marginalization is related to the concept of relative deprivation, which refers to comparisons across both people and time. People compare themselves not only with others in society but also with their own past status and future expectations. In other words, progress as well as status matters: If group A is experiencing growth in incomes and group B is not, group A is more likely to be happy than group B, even if group A's absolute income is lower.[87] Assessment of change in one group's marginalization therefore requires longitudinal data on the rest of the population or the population average, as well as on the target group.

Actual marginalization refers to where a group stands in relation to other groups (including often a dominant group) in objective terms. Examining actual marginalization can rely heavily on administrative data in such areas as voter registration and election participation, government jobs, income or employment rates, and access to services (including systems of redress). Perceived marginalization is perhaps best measured through interview-based methods. Deploying multiple forms of data collection to triangulate actual and perceived marginalization can yield a more nuanced understanding of the problem and program outcomes.

Administrative Data

Many types of data from local or national governments (and often donors) can be used as measures for marginalization, including income; government transfers to, revenue from, and gross domestic product in regions populated by the target group (if there is residential clustering); elected officials in local

government; jobs or employment: business permits or registered businesses; schools and enrollment; health care facilities; land tenure; and welfare payments.

Many national statistical agencies conduct surveys that measure citizen status. These can be used to study variations in such dimensions as employment, social welfare, voting, and political party participation, depending on the data collected.

LIMITATIONS. Administrative sources may provide data at a subnational level but not necessarily at the city or community level, limiting analysis in conjunction with intervention data. Administrative data systems may encounter challenges in collecting data from people who are, by definition, socially marginalized, which can lead to undercounting. For example, residents of informal settlements may not show up in metrics of urban density that rely on administrative deed data; similarly, marginalized groups might face barriers to civic engagement and may not show up in voter rolls or other data systems that rely on obtaining or maintaining formal documentation. Finally, where a marginalized group is scattered or administrative systems do not collect data on group identity, it will be difficult or impossible to capture or use relevant information.

Surveys

Particularly in cases where there are no administrative data, primary data collection through surveys is needed to determine the status of groups within communities, engagement with local government, political participation, socioeconomic status, and other dimensions of marginalization and inequality. Surveys can also elicit perceptions about and experiences of marginalization, such as access to private or public sector employment, security, justice, and basic services. They can be used to understand the extent to which groups feel disenfranchised or excluded, the nature and depth of their grievances, and whether grievances are aimed at government, other groups, or society as a whole. See a discussion of the *limitations* of surveys here.

Indices

Given this outcome's multiple aspects and dimensions, indices may be a useful way to systematize information. The Varieties of Democracy Project (V-DEM)[88] is an international effort to create indicators for democracy. V-DEM staff use current and historical data as part of their efforts and in a number of cases have created mixed-method composite measures that have the potential to be replicated to measure marginalization within countries. Analysts may or may not want to use V-DEM data but could consider developing something akin to its indices, tailored to the local context and conditions. V-DEM has three indices for exclusion:

- Exclusion by socioeconomic group: 1) power distributed by socioeconomic position; 2) social class equality in respect for civil liberties; 3) access to public services distribution by socioeconomic position; 4) access to state business opportunities by socioeconomic position; and 5) access to private sector opportunities.
- Exclusion by political group: 1) political group equality in respect for civil liberties; 2) access to public services distributed by political group; 3) access to state jobs by political group; and 4) access to state business opportunities by political group.

- Exclusion by social group: 1) power distributed by social group; 2) social group equality in respect for civil liberties; 3) access to public services distributed by social group; 4) access to state jobs by social group; and 5) access to state business opportunities by social group.

LIMITATIONS. The difficulty in creating indices is ensuring that data are of high quality and low variability when relying on qualitative assessments. It takes effort to select the parameters or items within each index and, if the items are not equally weighted, factor analysis is required.

OUTCOME 5. IMPROVED RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, POLITICAL RIGHTS, AND CIVIL LIBERTIES

Links to VE

In cross-country analyses, rights variables have more explanatory power for terrorism than do economic ones. Generally, abuses of civil and political rights are more directly linked to internal conflict than are abuses of economic and social rights.[89] More specifically, there is evidence of a robust association between VE and terrorism on the one hand and government repression and restrictions of rights on the other.[90] The most recent analysis reviewed found that terrorism grew as political rights declined, with the most terrorism occurring at a score of 5 on the Freedom House political rights index (where a score of 1 is full political rights and a score of 7 is no political rights).[91] The transition to democracy from autocracy appears to be a particularly vulnerable time with respect to terrorism. Another analysis concludes that violations of human rights are the most reliable predictors of terrorism identified so far.[92] Research by IEP using the GTD found that 92 percent of all terrorist attacks between 1989 and 2014 occurred in countries where state-sponsored political violence (as measured by the Political Terror Scale) was widespread.[93] A challenge in addressing this outcome is that terrorism inevitably erodes rights and liberties, and governments' attempts to address VE often worsen repression—sometimes for specific populations, sometimes more generally—feeding grievances against the state and creating a vicious cycle. This in turn presents a measurement challenge.

USAID Programs on Outcome 5

Most CVE projects are not framed according to this outcome, though they may seek to give aggrieved minorities or marginalized youth greater agency and political voice, as well as more space to express and obtain redress for their grievances. Examples include USAID's planned CVE program for the Maldives and OTI's Community Resilience Activities North and South in Pakistan. CVE programs may also work with community leaders and government entities at the local and national levels to restrain hyper-securitized approaches to VE.

DRG projects, particularly in weak, partial democracies and authoritarian-drifting countries, often address this outcome. Although they do not frame their efforts in terms of CVE, they could well contribute to VE resilience. Since 2008, for example, USAID/Sri Lanka has supported a series of projects to protect human, civil, and political rights, particularly but not exclusively for marginalized minority populations and those targeted by state or societal repression.

In countries with ethnosectarian minorities engaged in VE, such as Muslims in Kenya and Muslim Malays in southern Thailand, this outcome is clearly connected to the outcome of reduced marginalization discussed above.

Measurement Tools

Evaluating whether and how the rights situation has changed over time for the target group (i.e., those most vulnerable) will depend in the first instance on an analysis of the target group's rights problems, how those

might be linked to VE, and how change might decrease the likelihood of members of the target group supporting or joining a VEO. At a minimum, one must determine if rights violations are aimed at the vulnerable group or the population as a whole and whether there is evidence that members of the vulnerable group are joining VEOs in noteworthy numbers. Also, as suggested, evaluation must consider the reciprocal effects of counterterrorism measures on rights and repression.

Measurement approaches are similar to those discussed under Outcome 4, Reduced Marginalization—particularly for political participation and civil liberties—although rights data is likely to be both less available and less reliable than data on the socioeconomic aspects of marginalization. Measurement should take account of both actual rights conditions and people's perceptions of conditions and trends.

Surveys

Surveys are a critical means for obtaining community perceptions and experiences of human, political, and civil rights abuses. It is useful to include questions about attitudes and behavior related to VE ideology and support for violence and VEOs to enable examination of the links to rights violations. See a discussion of the *limitations* of surveys here. In addition, it may be impossible to ask rights-related questions in countries where government perpetrates abuses and requires that state officials review surveys.

Administrative Data and Other Secondary Sources

Perception data should be triangulated with other data systems, such as administrative records of arrests, detentions without charge, and human rights violations, along with policy and legal changes, and information on changes in security forces behavior. Human rights CSOs often collect such data and, in some countries, human rights commissions do so.

Constructing a rights index based on this evidence similar to the V-DEM Political Civil Liberties Index—which combines indicators of media censorship and harassment of journalists, freedom of discussion, political parties, and civil society—could be considered this outcome. However, such qualitative reports are difficult to disaggregate—for example, by group or place—and use for analysis relative to USAID programming; also, collecting any additional needed data will be time consuming.

Currently there are no usable human rights databases; the University of Maryland's Minorities at Risk effort ended in 2006 and the Cingranelli-Richards index in 2011. There may, however, be reasonably good current data on some countries of interest.

Expert/Stakeholder Panel

Given the especially high data challenges for this outcome, tapping a range of experts periodically to conduct a structured analysis of change is a practical approach. The panel of experts and stakeholders familiar with community dynamics would assess the current situation based on raw data, secondary sources, and their own expertise according to a framework developed to address key elements of changes in rights. Panel members rate the various dimensions on a scale to produce a summary of changes, and documentation of the discussion provides detail on the history, context, and dimensions of rights. Care must be taken in setting up expert/stakeholder panels, particularly in selecting experts or stakeholders to ensure that they have in-depth and complementary knowledge and can be objective. Panels need to be balanced to account for different viewpoints and well facilitated to ensure productive dialogue. Construction of a high-quality framework, including dimensions, questions, and rating scales, along with

briefing materials, is critical to reducing bias and obtaining reliable results. It is also time consuming to do well.

OUTCOME 6. REDUCED SOCIAL OR GROUP CONFLICT

Links to VE

Social or group conflict, particularly when driven by regional or ethnosectarian differences, is a VE driver. Conflicts can occur between the state and an identity group, between identity groups, or both. Local conflicts can create chaos and insecurity, incapacitate government institutions, and result in a power vacuum that VEOs can exploit. Conflicts can also generate or augment grievances that provide an opening for VEOs to develop support. Insurgencies generated by disgruntled minorities (e.g., Malay Muslims in southern Thailand, Muslims in Mindanao) and contests between social groups over resources (e.g., Fulani pastoralists and non-Fulani farmers in West Africa) have created space for VEOs to embed themselves. VEOs have filled political vacuums, such as those created by the fall of dictators in Libya and Yemen. Populations in conflict settings may turn to armed groups to provide stability.[94] A study of violence in West Africa found that communities perceiving violence as high were more likely to express support for religious extremism.[95]

USAID Programs on Outcome 6

Projects may be framed as increasing social cohesion or peacebuilding. Examples might include efforts under OTI's Lebanon Community Resilience Initiative to mitigate Sunni-Shi'a and host community–refugee tensions in Lebanon, USAID/Kenya's NIWETU and SCORE, USIP's USAID-funded program to promote peace in Pakistan, USAID's conflict mitigation program in Mindanao, and USAID/Mali's Peacebuilding, Stabilization, and Reconciliation Program.

The presence of armed conflict correlates with the level of terrorism.[96] Between 1989 and 2014, more than 88 percent of all terrorist attacks occurred in countries experiencing or involved in ongoing conflicts.[97] Transnational VEOs may align with one side in a conflict; provide resources, manpower, training, and weapons; and try to embed their transnational agenda in a conflict dynamic that is almost entirely driven by local factors. The 26 subnational conflicts that took place in South and Southeast Asia between 1992 and 2012 also served as "home to armed groups including extremist and terrorist groups."[98] Currently, 77 percent of conflicts in the Middle East, the Sahel, and the Horn of Africa contain a VE element, compared with 22 percent of conflicts in those regions in 2001.[99]

This outcome overlaps with Outcomes 4 and 5. Although resolving such conflicts may not be required (or possible), mitigating them to narrow the space provided to VEOs can be a useful CVE strategy.

Measurement Tools

Measuring changes in the presence or intensity of conflict faces many of the same challenges as measuring VE, including measuring a "negative," lack of accurate localized data, and categorizing violence associated with the conflict. Because there are different facets of conflict, ranging from the magnitude of the conflict to perceptions about security and grievances, approaches to measurement will depend on the TOC and how reducing conflict is anticipated to affect VE in a given community. For example, if initial studies show that active conflict is creating space for VEOs to thrive, the focus could be on the number of conflict-related incidents in a geographic area. On the other hand, if the intervention is aimed at addressing grievances, measurement may lie in the realm of capturing perceptions and attitudes or changes in the

conditions that feed grievances. These outcomes are not mutually exclusive, but this is an illustration of the logic USAID might use when selecting approaches.

Data sources for conflict include existing country databases on violence, media reports, government or military reporting, and early warning systems. Data on perceptions related to local conflicts are useful for understanding links to both assistance programming and VE dynamics.

Outcome assessment is likely to gain more traction at local levels. Local-level conflict can be examined over time in a single community or compared with conflict in communities with similar attributes and conflict dynamics. However, conflicts often occur in or help create ungoverned spaces, and in these environments, data are usually limited—administrative and secondary data are typically not available, and primary data collection is extremely difficult because of security concerns, shifting populations, and lack of information to create sampling units.

There is voluminous literature on evaluation related to peacebuilding and conflict management that provides far more ideas for approaches than this paper can discuss. For example, the Design, Monitoring, and Evaluation for Peace website offers abundant resources for monitoring and evaluation in the conflict and peacebuilding domain (see https://www.dmeforpeace.org).

Media Monitoring

A typical measure for conflict is the number and type of conflict-related violent incidents. If data are not available through the public datasets discussed in the first part of this paper and Annex 1, or through peacekeeping mission or police reports, media monitoring may be necessary. Media reports can also provide the basis for discourse analysis of the rhetoric that fuels and sustains conflict.

The level of granularity usually needed to measure local conflicts typically requires tailored databases for media monitoring. The effort can be labor intensive and requires upfront time to identify and standardize collection efforts. To the extent that media monitoring must rely on national print newspapers, these may not adequately capture incidents in local communities far from the capital.

Population Movement

Refugee and internally displaced persons (IDPs) movement are also indicators of conflict. Greater numbers indicate more conflict and returns imply that the situation is safe for populations to go back home. The U.N. Refugee Agency and International Organization for Migration usually provide monthly reports on IDPs and refugee movement in areas where they operate. These data do not provide sufficient information on conflict and its relationship to VE to be used alone, but they can usefully supplement other sources described here. The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre aggregates displacement data from multiple sources, including the UN, to track displacement over time. It shares many of the flaws of the UN's data collection, but provides a more detailed and robust perspective on IDPs around the world.

Surveys

Perception and experience data can be gathered through surveys to understand tensions between or acceptance of groups. Perceptions about security, freedom of movement, and government contributions to peace may also be useful in conjunction with data on the intensity of conflict. FGDs can accompany

surveys to provide deeper understanding of group dynamics, grievances, and views on government stakeholders. See here for a discussion of the *limitations* of surveys.

OUTCOMES LINKED TO IMPROVED LOCAL CAPACITY TO ADDRESS VE

OUTCOME 7. INCREASED CAPACITY AND WILLINGNESS OF GOVERNMENT AND CIVIL SOCIETY TO ADDRESS VE

Links to VE

Supporting local institutions to address VE is an increasingly important CVE objective, particularly as more governments show an interest in partnering with international development donors. Helping partners become self-reliant and capable CVE actors is a core USAID objective and aligns with the Journey to Self-Reliance (J2SR) policy. Expanding government and civil society capacity and willingness to address VE is critical for achieving and sustaining the other high-level CVE outcomes discussed in this paper.

Assistance to governments can encompass policy development and implementation, national and local government units, and broad and specific CVE objectives. Examples include support for CVE action plans and their rollout and staff capacity building through training and toolkit development in areas such as VE research or dealing with families of returned terrorists.

The United States Institute of Peace has identified several roles for civil society, including developing alternative channels for nonviolent conflict transformation, providing positive psychosocial benefits, and building societal resilience.[100] Civil society can also advocate around government efforts to develop and implement national and subnational action plans and improve security, policing, and human rights policies. But CVE is a relatively new sphere for civil society, and organizations generally do not have the specialized technical skills for understanding VE and developing and implementing CVE-specific programs and activities in the form of research, advocacy, and service delivery.

This outcome potentially provides a long-term solution to VE and certainly ensures ongoing CVE efforts. At the same time, from the perspective of measurement, it attenuates the potential links between USAID CVE assistance and VE reduction. Measurement needs to work carefully from evidence of improved capacity (policies, plans, actions, programs) to impacts on drivers and back down the causal chain to isolate USAID's contributions.

Measurement Tools

Outcomes under this heading will tend to involve target institution staff knowledge and understanding, organizational change, legal and policy changes and implementation, advocacy for policies and programs, monitoring to ensure implementation and expected effects, and establishment of networks and relationships for improved implementation and learning. Outcome evaluation is likely to depend heavily (though not necessarily exclusively) on qualities and processes. It is important to understand the intervention's TOC before identifying and implementing approaches to measurement.

Institutional Effectiveness

Institutional capacity assessment looks at how an organization is operating differently as a result of an intervention. For example, where tools, guidelines, policy manuals, frameworks, and the like have been

developed with local partners, development programmers should examine—in sequence—the quality of tools, their adoption by the institution, their rollout, their use, their impact on the problem being addressed, monitoring of impact, and tool redesign where needed. For example, development aid could support policy guidelines and training for government agencies, local government, and CSOs on ensuring the disengagement and reintegration of families returning from joining a VEO in Syria. Measurement would seek to understand who among those meant to be using the guidelines is doing so, to what extent, and how effective that work is on the target returnees. To the extent that staff are using the tools appropriately and the subjects of tool use respond as desired, the host institution is more effective.

USAID Programs on Outcome 7

West Africa's Partnerships for Peace program (P4P) seeks to build the capacity of regional institutions to address VE. P4P supports the Economic Community of West African States and the G5 Sahel Permanent Secretariat to help member states develop national CVE strategies and effective and sustainable programs to serve at-risk communities.

Harmoni in Indonesia works to strengthen the CVE capabilities of government and civil society institutions to promote tolerance, implement policies that minimize the risk of radicalization in secondary schools and universities, and help those returned from Syria disengage and reintegrate into their communities.

In Bangladesh, USAID is addressing the knowledge gap under Obirodh, working with civil society to identify local drivers and pilot-test interventions.

In Kenya, NIWETU helps local government develop CVE county action plans, strengthen national and intergovernmental CVE platforms, and develop government CVE research capability. SCORE is also working with CVE action plans and to support CSOs to advocate for issues in CVE policies, as well as strengthen local and county-level structures for CVE and conflict mitigation.

Capacity indices, like USAID's Organizational Capacity Assessment tool, used commonly in the DRG sector, can be updated and modified to encompass the change an organization is expected to make as a result of training or technical assistance. For example, the advocacy index could focus more on coalition building or research related to CVE. These rated scales are typically self-administered or facilitated pre- and post-intervention. At a lower level of outcome, one might assess training effectiveness through pre- and post-test approaches linking training to changes in participants' own work and any tertiary impacts the training may have had on their institutions.

Policy Implementation

Another way to measure the extent to which governments are addressing VE is to look at the status of policies, regulations, and procedures, such as the implementation of national or subnational VE action plans. This can be measured in terms of where a policy is in the process from development to implementation (i.e., a scale) or the quality of certain steps along this continuum (i.e., an index). It can be done broadly by examining the policy or in a more targeted manner by examining specific regulations, for example, within a given office. These types of scales and indices can be implemented either independently or with stakeholders. Although such tools are not difficult to implement, tool development takes time. Indices and scales are considered qualitative methods since they involve judgement, and it is important to make sure the measure, whether narrative or number, is reliable. When looking at more complex issues, such as plan implementation, independent experts from diverse backgrounds may be needed to assess the extent to which actions have been implemented.

Networks

If one of a program's objectives is to expand networks and the quality of relationships in pursuit of policy change, one means of measurement is social network analysis, which involves short surveys and analysis software. This method can gauge the depth and strength of these ties, as well as uncover the presence of cliques and socially isolated people.

SUMMING UP

Although much remains unknown about VE drivers and those most susceptible to recruitment, a growing body of evidence allows us to identify key factors that may be amenable to CVE programming, including reducing radicalization and recruitment risk, community support for VE, marginalization, human rights abuses, and conflict, as well as improving government services. In addition, the J2SR policy suggests that CVE programming prioritize cooperating country partner capacity to develop and conduct CVE policies and action plans themselves. The outcomes of reducing conflict and improving respect for rights are especially ambitious and hard to evaluate, however.

Useful measurement tools include surveys, psychometric and cognitive tests, community mapping and assessment, primary or secondary administrative data, indices of exclusion, expert panels, policy benchmarking, and capacity indices. The selection and combination of tools will be context specific; they depend on the unit of analysis of the outcome of interest and other aspects of the program/project/activity TOC and the data collection setting.

Surveys emerge as the tool most likely to collect the widest range, or greatest proportion, of relevant information across the outcomes discussed here. VE-related survey design is improving, but limitations remain. Attitudes and self-reported behaviors are not equivalent to actual behaviors, and surveys are poor tools for identifying the "needle in the haystack" VE recruit. Unless sophisticated designs are used, they may also underestimate the presence of radicalized individuals and support for VE due to response bias. Finally, the most useful surveys will be tailored to their contexts, making extrapolation of findings to other settings difficult.

Examining the relationship between CVE programs and high-level outcomes short of violence reduction, though generally more feasible than testing a link to violence reduction, nevertheless calls for significant investments in data, time, and expertise to do well. As discussed under Research Question 1, USAID needs to collect granular, comparable, and consistent data on USAID interventions, as well as on contextual and control factors. Allocating greater resources within CVE programs to monitoring, evaluation, and learning functions to ensure USAID and implementing partner staff capacity in this area and that both context and program data can be collected and analyzed is critical moving forward.

Given the nascent state of CVE evaluation, USAID Missions and USAID more generally might consider embedding CVE program monitoring and evaluation in a larger learning agenda, not to expand the challenges, but to zero in on key questions about what works and does not work as well—or to test key "micromodels" of links between programming and violence—and to focus resources on these.

ENDNOTES

[1] Guilain Denoeux and Lynn Carter, *Guide to the Drivers of Violent Extremism* (USAID, 2009); Guilain Denoeux and Lynn Carter, *Countering Violent Extremism: A Guide to Development Assistance Programming* (USAID, 2009); U.S. Department of State, 2010; White House, May 2010.
[2] USAID, *The Development Response to Violent Extremism and Insurgency—Putting Principles into Practice* (USAID, 2011).
[3] Ibid, 2. The document also distinguishes VE from insurgency: "Insurgency is the organized use of subversion and violence to seize, nullify, or challenge political control of a region. It is primarily a political and territorial struggle, in which both sides use armed force to create space for their political, economic, and influence activities to be effective. Insurgency is not always conducted by a single group with a centralized, military-style command structure, but may involve different actors with various aims, loosely connected in networks." The document goes on to note that VE often manifests in informal, individual, and diffuse ways in both stable and unstable contexts, whereas insurgency tends to be geographically bound and thrives in nonpermissive environments.
[4] ACLED database; period covered is January 1, 2018, to July 1, 2019. The perpetrator for 28 percent of the events is unknown.
[5] Mark Juergensmeyer, *Rebellion: Religious Challenges to the Secular State* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 254–6.
[6] The above elaboration on violent religious extremism is from Lynn Carter and Guilain Denoeux, "Countering Violent Religious Extremism: An Analysis to Action Guide" (unpublished programming guide, 2016).
[7] U.S. Department of State and USAID, *Department of State and USAID Joint Strategy on Countering Violent Extremism* (U.S. Department of State and USAID, May 2016).
[8] Some are not labeled CVE due to local sensitivities and a desire to frame objectives in a positive manner. The paper assumes that USAID and program evaluators would be dealing with programs identified for evaluation purposes as CVE, regardless of their labeling.
[9] U.S. Department of State, USAID, and the Department of Defense, *A Framework for Maximizing the U.S. Government Assistance to Stabilize Conflict-Affected Areas*, 2018, 1.
[10] USAID, *The Development Response to Violent Extremism and Insurgency*, 2.
[11] Institute for Economics and Peace [IEP], *Global Terrorism Index 2018* (IEP, 2018). IEP in this statement does not distinguish between VE and terrorism.
[12] IEP, *Global Terrorism Index 2015* (IEP, 2015), 71.
[13] Examples include USAID/Bangladesh's Obirodh at $19.2 million, Indonesia's Harmoni at $22.3 million, Morocco's FORSATY at $12.8 million, and Kenya's NIWETU at $20 million for hot spots along the coast, in northeastern Kenya, and Nairobi.
[14] Although there is a large body of literature on CVE, few publications provide well-grounded data from research and evaluations on outcomes. See concerns expressed by Romaniuk (Peter Romaniuk, *Does CVE Work? Lessons Learned from the Global Effort to Counter Violent Extremism* [Global Center on Cooperative Security, 2015]) and Ambroziak (Caitlin Ambroziak, "Evaluating Countering Violent Extremism Programs: Current Practices, Challenges, and a Means Forward," Policy Brief no. 8 [Washington, DC: Center for Global Policy, 2018]) (among others) and research conducted by van Hemert et al. (Dianne van Hemert et al., *Synthesis Report on the State of the Art in Evaluating the Effectiveness of Countering Violent Extremism Interventions* [Impact Europe, 2014]), Feddes and Gallucci (Allard R. Feddes and Marcello Gallucci, "A Literature Review on Methodology Used in Evaluating Effects of Preventive and De-Radicalization Interventions," *Journal for Deradicalization* Winter 15/16, no. 5 [2015]: 1–27), and Mastroe and Szmania (Caitlin Mastroe and Susan Szmania, "Surveying CVE Metrics in Prevention, Disengagement, and Deradicalization Programs," Report to the Office of University Programs, Science and Technology Directorate, U.S. Department of Homeland Security [National

Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, 2016]). Van Hemert et al. examined 52 manuscripts (including multiple datasets) published between 1997 and 2014 focusing on the impact of counterradicalization interventions with the goal of assessing evaluation quality. Of the 126 samples in the document, the majority (64 percent) were rated as low quality (i.e., no empirical investigation was conducted) and the remaining 34 percent were judged to be of medium quality (i.e., empirical data were collected to answer the hypothesis, but circumstances would not allow for more advanced data collection). Moreover, in most assessments no empirical instruments were specified (van Hemert et al., *Synthesis Report*, 63–65). As part of IMPACT, Feddes and Galucci conducted a meta-review of 55 manuscripts published between 1990 and 2014 that evaluated programs aimed at preventing (further) radicalization or deradicalization. Of the 135 participant samples in these manuscripts, only 12 percent contained empirical data (qualitative or quantitative data) about the intervention's effectiveness. In 37 percent of the samples, the evaluation method was not specified (Feddes and Gallucci, "A Literature Review on Methodology," 11–14). Mastroe and Szmania reviewed 43 published studies providing empirical assessments of CVE programs for START. They found that the majority reported descriptive statistics and only 24 studies could be "broadly categorized as correlational findings of program effectiveness." Of these, only five provided empirical data on outcomes. Only one used a control group.

[15] The challenges of cross-country regression, particularly for the analysis of economic growth, are well documented—for example, conceptually as in Ross Levine and Sara J. Zervos, *The American Economic Review* 83, no. 2, Papers and Proceedings of the Hundred and Fifth Annual Meeting of the American Economic Association (May 1993): 426–430. G. S. Maddala and S. Wu, "Cross-Country Growth Regressions: Problems of Heterogeneity, Stability, and Interpretation," *Applied Economics* 32, no. 5 (2000): 635–642 highlights some of the methodological issues with this approach.

[16] Clark McCauley and Sophia Moskalenko, "Mechanisms of Political Radicalization: Pathways Toward Terrorism," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 20, no. 3 (2008), as quoted by Ben Baruch, Tom Ling, and Richard Warnes, "Evaluation in an Emerging Field: Developing a Measurement Framework for the Field of Countering-Violent-Extremism," *Evaluation* 24, no. 4 (2018): 475–95. DOI: 10.1177/1356389018803218.

[17] Raphael Perl, *Combating Terrorism: The Challenge of Measuring Effectiveness,* Congressional Research Service Report for Congress (Members and Committees of Congress, 2007).

[18] D. Koehler, *Understanding Deradicalization* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016).

[19] Sometimes funding for CVE activities is drawn from a variety of sources that carry restrictions on how those funds are used, adding more diversity to the program. For example, funds might come from the Women, Peace, and Security fund or basic education funds and then must be used to address related priorities within the CVE context.

[20] Eli Berman, Jacob N. Shapiro, and Joseph H. Felter, "Can Hearts and Minds Be Bought? The Economics of Counterinsurgency in Iraq," *Journal of Political Economy* 119, no. 4 (2011): 766–819; Edward Miguel, Shanker Satyanath, and Ernest Sergenti, "Economic Shocks and Civil Conflict: An Instrumental Variables Approach," *Journal of Political Economy* 112, no. 4 (2004): 725–753; Oeindrila Dube and Juan F. Vargas, "Commodity and Civil Conflict: Evidence from Colombia," *The Review of Economic Studies* 80, no. 4 (2013): 1384–1421.

[22] David C. Gompert, Terrence Kelly, Brooke S. Lawson, Michelle Parker, and Kimberly Colloton, *Reconstruction Under Fire: Unifying Civil and Military Counterinsurgency* (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2009).
[23] Renard Sexton, "Aid as a Tool Against Insurgency: Evidence from Contested and Controlled Territory in Afghanistan," *American Political Science Review* 110, no. 4 (2016): 731–749.
[24] Gary King and Langche Zeng, "Logistic Regression in Rare Events Data," *Political Analysis* 9, no. 2 (2001): 138.
[25] For example, Densus 88, the remarkably effective counterterrorism police in Indonesia, stopped a number of planned VE attacks in the run-up to the recent presidential and legislative elections.
[26] Analysts often employ linear regression to understand how one variable, on average, relates to another variable while accounting for other metrics. This approach requires several standard assumptions about the underlying relationships that we hope to model. Given the nature of VE violence and how it is measured, the standard assumptions for linear models are unlikely to hold. For example, a key assumption of linear regression is constant variance (more formally, Homoscedasticity $Var(u|x_1, \ldots, x_k) = \partial^2$), but this is typically violated when estimating the relationship between an input and a count of something (e.g., number of violent events) wherein the variance in our control variables may not be constant. In addition, standard linear models have nonbounded outcomes—for example, they can predict values above or below zero, but a negative prediction for the number of events has no practical meaning.
[27] Often once a certain number of events occur, many more events take place, but crossing this threshold is rare given that there are very few events overall. Zero inflated Poisson model is a typical approach for this type of estimation.
[28] Gary King and Langche Zeng, "Logistic Regression in Rare Events Data," 138.
[29] In addition to potentially biased estimates, there is a risk that with very few event observations, the outcome of interest, a VE event, might be inadvertently but perfectly predicted by one of the independent variables of interest, including CVE funding. For example, say there are eight observations in a dataset that contains VE events and CVE activity funding. In this example, all the observations with no VE events (VE=0) have CVE funding values below $2 million, whereas all VE events are associated with CVE funding values above $2 million. The VE events variable perfectly separates the data by the CVE funding observations. It is likely that there is VE in areas that received less than $2 million in CVE funding and vice versa, but the model does not know this and simply observes a separation within the dataset between observations of VE that are above or below $2 million in CVE activities.

Location	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
VE event (0=no event, 1= event)	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
CVE activity funding (in USD millions)	0.15	0.20	0.20	0.25	0.50	0.62	2.05

In this case, the small event number in the data indicates that the probability of the outcome (i.e., a VE event), given the variable of interest, CVE funding, will be exactly equal to 1 or 0, and thus the model fails to have any actual predictive power.[29] Even with a large number of overall observations, if there are only a small number of events, the model will likely fail to provide a meaningful estimate of VE.
[30] This is considered an improvement from a uniform prior; it is akin to swapping out a single prior guess of the likelihood of VE (e.g., 20 percent) for a range of potential outcomes (between 5 percent and 25 percent). For a more detailed explanation, see Andrew Gelman et al, "A Weakly Informative Default Prior Distribution for Logistic and Other Regression Models," *Annals of Applied Statistics* 2, no. 4 (2008): 1360–1383.
[31] Christopher Zürcher, "What Do We (Not) Know About Development Aid and Violence? A Systematic Review," *World Development* 98 (2017): 506–522. DOI: 10.1016/j.worlddev.2017.05.013.

[32] Eric Goepner, "Learning from Today's Wars - Measuring the Effectiveness of America's War on Terror," *Parameters* 46, no. 1 (2016): 107–120; Robert Pape and James Feldman, *Cutting the Fuse: The Explosion of Global Suicide Terrorism and How to Stop It* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010); Seth Jones and Martin Libicki, *How Terrorist Groups End: Lessons for Countering al Qa'ida* (RAND Corporation, 2008).
[33] S. Bazzi, R. A. Blair, C. Blattman, O. Dube, M. Gudgeon, and R. Peck, "The Promise and Pitfalls of Conflict Prediction: Evidence from Colombia and Indonesia" (2019). DOI: https://doi.org/10.31235/osf.io/bkrn8.
[34] See discussion in Ethan Bueno de Mesquita, C. Christine Fair, Jenna Jordan, Rasul Bakhsh Rais, and Jacob N. Shapiro, "Measuring Political Violence in Pakistan: Insights from the BFRS Dataset," *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 32, no. 5 (2015): 536–558.
[35] Different agencies use different definitions of terrorism—for example, USAID: "The unlawful use or threatened use of force or violence against individuals or property to coerce or intimidate governments or societies, often to achieve political, religious, or ideological objectives"; U.S. Department of State: "Premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents"; U.S. Department of Defense: "The unlawful use of violence or threat of violence, often motivated by religious, political, or other ideological beliefs, to instill fear and coerce governments or societies in pursuit of goals that are usually political."
[36] For example, *The Times of India* has editions for most of India's major metropolitan areas. Coding efforts do not consistently endeavor to sample each version of this paper, however, and any given version may be more accurate for the urban area or state to which it gives favored coverage.
[37] Discussion with Jill Tirnauer (July 2019).
[38] Benjamin Crost and Patrick Johnston, "Aid Under Fire: Development Projects and Civil Conflict," Harvard Kennedy School Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Discussion Paper #2010-18 (2010).
[39] See discussion in Ethan Bueno de Mesquita, C. Christine Fair, Jenna Jordan, Rasul Bakhsh Rais, and Jacob N. Shapiro, "Measuring Political Violence in Pakistan: Insights from the BFRS Dataset," *Conflict Management and Peace Science* 32, no. 5 (2015): 536–558.
[40] Not all data can be geocoded—for example, social media, where the content's origin could be coded but not the reach.
[41] Benjamin Crost and Patrick Johnston, "Aid Under Fire: Development Projects and Civil Conflict," Harvard Kennedy School Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Discussion Paper #2010-18 (2010).
[42] Ibid.
[43] Eli Berman, Jacob N. Shapiro, and Joseph H. Felter. "Can Hearts and Minds Be Bought? The Economics of Counterinsurgency in Iraq," *Journal of Political Economy* 119, no. 4 (2011), 766–819.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Eli Berman, Joseph H. Felter, Jacob N. Shapiro, and Erin Troland, "Modest, Secure, and Informed Successful Development in Conflict Zones," *American Economic Review: Papers and Proceedings* 103, no. 3 (20133): 512–517.
[46] P. J. Gertler, S. Martinez, P. Premand, L. B. Rawlings, and C. M. Vermeersch, *Impact Evaluation in Practice* (Washington, DC: The World Bank, 2016).
[47] For example, see Rachel Glennerster and Kudzai Takavarasha, *Running Randomized Evaluations: A Practical Guide* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013).
[48] For example, CVE youth programming; given the fluid time of life, an argument could be made for following youth for considerably longer than the treatment period.
[49] M. F. Bellemare, T. Masaki, and T. B. Pepinsky, "Lagged Explanatory Variables and the Estimation of Causal Effect," *The Journal of Politics* 79, no. 3 (2017): 949–963.

[50] Ibid.
[51] Ibid., 9. The authors note that if there are "temporal dynamics on unobservables," lagging simply moves endogeneity back one period rather than addressing it.
[52] Eli Berman, Jacob N. Shapiro, and Joseph H. Felter, "Can Hearts and Minds Be Bought? The Economics of Counterinsurgency in Iraq," *Journal of Political Economy* 119, no. 4 (2011): 766–819.
[53] S. Bazzi, R. A. Blair, C. Blattman, O. Dube, M. Gudgeon, and R. Peck, "The Promise and Pitfalls of Conflict Prediction: Evidence from Colombia and Indonesia" (2019).
[54] Ibid., 3.
[55] Although there are a variety of ways to staff the appropriate team, a critical feature should be ensuring that the team members understand their methods' limits. More damage can be done from bad statistical analysis than from no statistical analysis.
[56] USAID outlined the drivers in its 2011 policy based on its 2009 "Guide to the Drivers of Violent Extremism." Subsequent efforts, such as those by RUSI (see Allan et al., 2015, and Khalil and Zeuthen, 2016) and UNDP (see Holdaway and Simpson, 2018), have reconfigured and refined drivers based on new evidence and theories. The selected outcomes are derived from these and other documents, including academic literature.
[57] Naureen Chowdhury Fink, Peter Romaniuk, and Rafia Barakat, *Evaluating Countering Violent Extremism Programming: Practice and Progress* (New York: Center on Global Counterterrorism Cooperation, 2013): 3.
[58] Romaniuk (Peter Romaniuk, *Does CVE Work? Lessons Learned from the Global Effort to Counter Violent Extremism*, 2015), USIP 2018 (Holmer and Bauman, 2018), Baruch (Ben Baruch, Tom Ling, and Richard Warnes, "Evaluation in an Emerging Field: Developing a Measurement Framework for the Field of Countering-Violent-Extremism," *Evaluation* 24, no. 4 [2018]: 475–95), and others all make this argument.
[59] For example, Allan et al. found strong evidence for identity formation as an important factor in radicalization (Harriet Allan, Andrew Glazzard, et al., *Drivers of Violent Extremism: Hypothesis and Literature Review* [London: Royal United Services Institute, 2015]). Marc Sageman has made the same point about the importance of the search for identity in leading individuals to join VEOs (Marc Sageman, *Turning to Political Violence: The Emergence of Terrorism* [Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017]).
[60] As one example, the U.S. State Department and Creative Associates have been implementing a pilot program called ETTYSAL in Tunisia with 100 high-risk youth, trying to understand risk factors and respond with family counseling services. Creative has drawn on its gang prevention work in Latin America in doing this.
[61] Scott Atran, "Who Becomes a Terrorist Today?" *Perspectives on Terrorism* II, no. 5 (March 2008); Marc Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks* (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 2004); Marc Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad: Terror Networks in the Twenty-First Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008).
[62] Youssouf Kiendrebeogo and Elena Ianchovichina, "Who Supports Violent Extremism in Developing Countries? Analysis of Attitudes Based on Value Surveys," World Bank Policy Research Working Paper, No. 7691 (2016). Whereas the link between poverty and civil war is well known, studies generally find no link between unemployment and VE/terrorism.
[63] Eli Berman, M. Callen, Joseph H. Felter, and Jacob N. Shapiro, "Do Working Men Rebel? Insurgency and Unemployment in Afghanistan, Iraq, and the Philippines," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 55 (2011): 519. DOI:10.1177/0022002710393920.
[64] C. Christine Fair, Rebecca Littman, Neil Malhotra, and Jacob Shapiro, "Relative Poverty, Perceived Violence and Support for Militant Politics," *Cambridge University Press* (2016). DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/psrm.2016.6

[65] Mercy Corps, *Assessing the Effects of Education and Civic Engagement on Somali Youths' Propensity Towards Violence* (Mercy Corps, 2016); Mercy Corps. *Effects of Education and Civic Engagement on Somali Youth Support of Political Violence* (Mercy Corps, 2018).
[66] Mercy Corps, *Evidence from an Impact Evaluation of Vocational Training in Afghanistan* (Mercy Corps, 2015).
[67] Limitations include those associated with the matching techniques used, small sample sizes, and analysis of data at the student level when the intervention was as the school level. The Somalia evaluations were also ex-post. With regard to matching, ideally one would match on characteristics directly relevant to selection criteria for the intervention, but the evaluation matched on basic demographic variables. The 2016 report shows that matching resulted in statistically equivalent treatment and comparison groups, but the evaluation still compared intervention school students with school age students not attending school rather than regular school students. These limitations may have led the estimates to overstate the effects of the interventions. Also, the 2018 report does not provide sufficient detail on the matching and estimation approaches used to fully assess the methods.
[68] Eli Berman, Joseph H. Felter, and Jacob N. Shapiro, *Small Wars, Big Data* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018).
[69] Merel Molenkamp, Lieke Wouterse, and Amy-Jane Gielen, "Guideline Evaluation of PCVE Programmes and Interventions," Ex-Post Paper (RAN Centre of Excellence, 2018).
[70] Ben Baruch, Tom Ling, and Richard Warnes, "Evaluation in an Emerging Field: Developing a Measurement Framework for the Field of Countering-Violent-Extremism," *Evaluation* 24, no. 4 (2018): 475–95.
[71] See its compendium of assessment tools at:
https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/yv_compendium.pdf
[72] There is now a revised VERA-2 tool called VERA-2R. See: https://www.vera-2r.nl/.
[73] Ibid. The website explains: "The VERA-2R cannot predict who in the general population will become a violent extremist or terrorist. The instrument does however offer a systematic professional analysis of the risk by applying relevant and transparent risk indicators for violent extremism. The VERA-2R may be used to establish the risk status for detainees or persons under supervision in relation to violent extremism. It can also provide support for preventive programs and decisions on priorities for supervision of individuals. Regular and systematic reassessments are possible due to the dynamic nature of various risk indicators. Predictive validity is problematic due to the low base rate of terrorists and violent extremists. Moreover, extremists and terrorists may change their strategies, make unexpected decisions and use unpredictable triggers. Unpredictable and dynamic factors such as events at a personal, local or global level can also trigger unexpected violent acts. Due to such triggers and other dynamic factors, risks are time and context sensitive and are not able to be predicted with certainty. For each evaluation, limitations in the assessment must be clearly identified.
[74] B. Schuurman and E. Bakker, "Reintegrating Jihadist Extremists: Evaluating a Dutch Initiative, 2013–2014," *Behavioral Sciences of Terrorism and Political Aggression* 8, no. 1 (2016): 66–85.
[75] Much of the research focusing on evaluation cites this work as an example of a tool to use. This research team could find no evidence of it being applied in a non-Western context.
[76] Christine Nemr and Sara Savage, "Integrative Complexity Interventions to Prevent and Counter Violent Extremism" (Global Center on Cooperative Security, 2019).
[77] In its impact evaluations in Somalia, Mercy Corps used the random response technique to gauge attitudes and behaviors on violence. Fair et al. used endorsement experiments in their study of support for militant groups in Pakistan (C. Christine Fair, Rebecca Littman, Neil Malhotra, and Jacob Shapiro, "Relative Poverty, Perceived Violence and Support for Militant Politics," *CUP* 2016. DOI:
https://doi.org/10.1017/psrm.2016.6

[78] Jocelyn Belanger, Manuel Moyano, et al., "Radicalization Leading to Violence. A Test of the 3N Model," *Frontiers in Psychiatry* 10, no. 42 (2019). URL: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6396731/

[79] Molenbeek's centrality to the November 2015 terrorist attack in Paris and the March 2016 bombings in Brussels is well documented. The attackers came from there; Salah Abdeslam returned there after helping perpetrate the Paris attacks and managed to escape police detection there for four months, sheltered by friends and relatives, until his capture. Molenbeek's salient place in the world of European jihadism predates these events by at least 15 years. The killers of Northern Alliance leader Ahmad Shah Massoud, who was assassinated in Afghanistan under order of Osama bin Laden in 2001, started their journey from Molenbeek. Two of those involved in the March 2004 Madrid train bombings that left nearly 200 dead also came from there. Mehdi Nemmouche, the French national of Algerian origin who killed four people at a Jewish museum in Brussels in May 2014 spent several weeks in Molenbeek prior to the attack; Ayoub el-Khazzani, the Moroccan who tried to kill passengers on a high-speed train traveling between Brussels and Paris in August 2015 also lived in the neighborhood for a while. Just as importantly, Molenbeek was home to dozens of young men who left to wage jihad in Syria from the summer of 2011 onward (Carter and Denoeux, "Countering Violent Religious Extremism: An Analysis to Action Guide" [unpublished guide, 2016]). Other examples are the Mezwak quarter in Tetouan, Morocco, and the Buttes-Chaumont neighborhood in Paris.

[80] Harriet Allan, Andrew Glazzard, et al., *Drivers of Violent Extremism: Hypothesis and Literature Review* (London: Royal United Services Institute, 2015); Anneli Botha and Mahdi Abdile, *Radicalization and al-Shabab Recruitment in Somalia* (Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers, 2016). URL: https://www.peacemakersnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Botha-Abdile-Radicalisation-and-al-Shabaab-recruitment-in-Somalia.pdf

[81] The evidence is drawn from the literature on asymmetrical conflicts, not on VE in nonconflict environments.

[82] In 2013, Berman et al. found that CERP projects of less than $50,000 reduced violence but only in conjunction with troop strength, a variable not explored in the 2011 study. Adams in 2015 found the same thing: CERP projects over $50,000 increased violence. The median CERP project cost was $104,000 (Eli Berman, Joseph Felter, Jacob N. Shapiro, and Erin Troland, "Modest, Secure, and Informed: Successful Development in Conflict Zones," *American Economic Review: Papers & Proceedings* 103, no. 3 [2013]: 512–517; Greg Adams, "Honing the Proper Edge: CERP and the Two-Sided Potential of Military-Led Development in Afghanistan," *The Economics of Peace and Security Journal* 10, no. 1 [2015]: 53–61). Botha and Abdile argue that while local services are crucial to securing popular trust and support, security is an important component to achieving effective governance (Anneli Botha and Mahdi Abdile, *Radicalization and al-Shabab Recruitment in Somalia* (Network for Religious and Traditional Peacemakers, 2016).

[83] Harriet Allan, Andrew Glazzard, et al. *Drivers of Violent Extremism: Hypothesis and Literature Review* (London: Royal United Services Institute, 2015); Tim Krieger and Daniel Meierrieks, "Does Income Inequality Lead to Terrorism? Evidence from the Post-9/11 Era," Discussion Paper Series, Wilfried Guth Endowed Chair for Constitutional Political Economy and Competition Policy, University of Freiburg, No. 2015-04 (2015); Jeffrey Dixon, "What Causes Civil Wars? Integrating Quantitative Research Findings," *International Studies Review* 11, no. 4 (2009): 707–735; A. Krueger and J. Maleckova, "Education Poverty and Terrorism: Is There a Causal Connection?" *The Journal of Economic Perspectives* 17, no. 4 (2003): 119–144.

[84] Harriet Allan, Andrew Glazzard, et al. *Drivers of Violent Extremism: Hypothesis and Literature Review* (London: Royal United Services Institute, 2015); Seung-Whan Choi and James A Piazza, "Ethnic Groups, Political Exclusion and Domestic Terrorism," *Defence and Peace Economics* 27, no. 1 (2016): 37–63. DOI: 10.1080/10242694.2014.987579; Tim Krieger and Daniel Meierrieks, "Does Income Inequality Lead to Terrorism? Evidence from the Post-9/11 Era," Discussion Paper Series, Wilfried Guth Endowed Chair

for Constitutional Political Economy and Competition Policy, University of Freiburg, No. 2015-04 (2015); M. Schomerus and S. El Taraboulsi-McCarthy, with J. Sandhar, *Countering Violent Extremism: Topic Guide* (Birmingham, UK: GSDRC, University of Birmingham, 2017).

[85] James A. Piazza, "Poverty, Minority Economic Discrimination, and Domestic Terrorism," *Journal of Peace Research* 48, no. 3 (2011): 339–353. DOI: 10.1177/0022343310397404.

[86] Tamara Kharroub, *Understanding Violent Extremism: The Missing Link* (Washington, DC: The Arab Center, 2015).

[87] T. G. Sakketa and N. Gerber, "Relative Deprivation and Well-Being of the Rural Youth," Working Paper Series No. 296, (Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire: African Development Bank, 2016): 43–44.

[88] For additional information on V-DEM, see: https://www.v-dem.net/en/.

[89] Oskar Thoms and James Ron, "Do Human Rights Violations Cause Internal Conflict?" *Human Rights Quarterly* 29, no. 3 (2006): 674–705.

[90] Alan Krueger and David Laitin, "Kto Kogo?: A Cross-Country Study of the Origins and Targets of Terrorism," in *Terrorism and Economic Development*, ed. P. Keefer and N. Loayza, Chapter 5 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Alberto Abadie, "Poverty, Political Freedom, and the Roots of Terrorism," NBER Working Paper 10859 (2004); Alan Krueger, *What Makes a Terrorist: Economics and the Roots of Terrorism*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008).

[91] Drew Calcagno, "The Roots of Terrorism: Political Freedom and Other Determinants," *Small Wars Journal* (2016). URL: https://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/the-roots-of-terrorism-political-freedom-and-other-determinants. Calcagno finds that if there is "a one-unit decrease in political freedom (for example, elections are no longer free in a country like Kenya), then terrorism tends to increase by approximately 110 percent—so it tends to double the amount of terrorist attacks … by the estimation of my model. That estimation may be a bit presumptuous, yet the statistical significance is valid at the 1 percent level." Calcagno's findings are different from Abadie's, but then terrorism databases have improved since 2007. Capable authoritarian states (those scoring a 7 on political rights) can repress VE. States that score a 4 or a 5 in political rights often provide too little space for dissidents to pursue peaceful change and yet some space for them to mobilize.

[92] Harriet Allan, Andrew Glazzard, et al. *Drivers of Violent Extremism: Hypothesis and Literature Review.*

[93] "To analyse the link between the levels of political terror and terrorism carried out by non-state actors, the GTI was correlated to the Political Terror Scale, a one-to-five scale with one reflecting no political imprisonment and five reflecting unrestrained political terror which is waged against the whole of the population. Terrorism correlates significantly with the Political Terror Scale with r=0.69. Extrajudicial killings by government officials without due process of law, measured by the Cingranelli-Richards (CIRI) Human Rights Data Project hold a significant correlation of r=-0.65 with the GTI. This also includes murders by private groups that have been instigated by the government. IEP has analysed the location of all terrorist attacks included in START's Global Terrorism Database in which at least one person was killed between 1989 and 2014. Figure 38 highlights that 92 percent of all terrorist attacks occurred in countries where the Political Terror Scale was very high. Fifteen of the countries with the highest levels of terrorism in 2014 also had very poor Political Terror Scale scores in 2002." IEP, *Global Terrorism Index 2015*. http://economicsandpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Global-Terrorism-Index-2015.pdf.

[94] Harriet Allan, Andrew Glazzard, et al. *Drivers of Violent Extremism: Hypothesis and Literature Review.*

[95] The authors' "primary interest is to evaluate the effects of any violence that could cause disruption, instability, and ultimately the interest in terrorism that we outlined above. That would include widespread violent crime, unchecked and systematic sexual violence, and other forms of violence in addition to conventional intergroup conflict. Thus, we measure exposure to violence by asking respondents about the extent to which they feel that their community or neighborhood is affected by violence. The variable is coded 1 for 'never,' 2 for 'sometimes,' and 3 for 'often'" (Steven Finkel, John

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ANNEX 1: MOST FREQUENTLY CITED VIOLENCE DATABASES

Name	Violence Definition	Geographic Units	Perpetrator Label	Countries Covered	Data Sources and Updates	Pros	Cons
Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED)	Terrorism, protests and riots, nonviolent incidents that involve actors of conflict, and events where no fatalities occur	▪ Region ▪ Country ▪ State/province ▪ District ▪ Geocode	▪ Specific actor ▪ State forces ▪ Rebel groups ▪ Political militias ▪ Identity militias ▪ Rioters ▪ Protesters ▪ Civilians ▪ External/other forces	Worldwide	▪ 1997 (Sub-Saharan Africa), 2016 (MENA), 2010 (Asia), 2018 (Europe) through the present ▪ Curated by researchers from news reports, on-the-ground expertise, and third-party databases ▪ Updated monthly	▪ Detail level: highly detailed ▪ Geocodes: standard ▪ Formatting: structured .csv/Excel ▪ Access: free, easy to download	▪ Data sourcing: Global news reports ▪ Time series: limited depending on region
Global Terrorism Database (GTD)	An event that involves the threat or actual use of violence "by a nonstate actor to attain a political, economic, religious, or social goal through fear, coercion, or intimidation"	▪ Region ▪ Country ▪ State/province ▪ City ▪ Vicinity ▪ Geocode	▪ Group name ▪ Subgroup name ▪ Suspected group name	Worldwide	▪ 1970 through 2017 ▪ Sources include "electronic news archives, existing data sets, secondary source materials such as books and journals, and legal documents" ▪ GTD comprises several other databases that are now defunct, such as WITs, CETIS, and ISVG	▪ Detail level: moderately detailed ▪ Time series: extensive ▪ Formatting: structured .csv/Excel ▪ Access: free with registration	▪ Data sourcing: English news reports ▪ Time series: stopped with 2017 ▪ Geocodes: vary in detail and coverage ▪ Other: GTD itself notes that data are inconsistently detailed and that event coding issues abound
Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP)	An incident where armed force was used by an organized actor against another organized actor or against civilians, resulting in at least one direct death at a specific location and a specific date	▪ Country ▪ State/province ▪ District ▪ City/village ▪ Geocode	▪ Specific actor 1 ▪ Specific actor 2 ▪ Actors are labeled according to conflict—state-based, nonstate-based, one-sided violence	Worldwide	▪ 1940 through 2018 ▪ Sourced from NGOs, news reports, UN, government publications, academic research ▪ Continuously updated as reports are collected	▪ Detail level: highly detailed ▪ Time series: extensive ▪ Geocodes: standard ▪ Formatting: structured .csv, Excel, Stata, R. ▪ Access: free, easy to download.	▪ Data sourcing: news reports ▪ Detail level: focus on deaths and actor-actor violence may not be appropriate for all use cases

Name	Violence Definition	Geographic Units	Perpetrator Label	Countries Covered	Data Sources and Updates	Pros	Cons
						▪ Data sourcing: Broad sourcing with expert input	
Sexual Violence and Armed Conflict Geocoded Dataset GEO-SVAC	Conflict events involving actors reported to have perpetrated sexual violence	▪ Country ▪ State/province ▪ District ▪ City/village ▪ Geocode	▪ Specific actor 1 ▪ Specific actor 2 ▪ Actors are labeled according to conflict—state-based, nonstate-based, one-sided violence	Worldwide	▪ 1992 through 2009 ▪ Sourced from human rights reports	▪ Detail level: detailed for relevant sexual violence categories ▪ Geocodes: standard ▪ Formatting: structured .csv, Excel, Stata. ▪ Access: free, easy to download.	▪ Time series: limited through 2009 ▪ Data sourcing: use of human rights reports and news sources has been documented to overcount events and focus on state-based conflict.
Urban Social Disorder	Both violent and nonviolent politically motivated disorder	▪ Country ▪ Region/province ▪ City ▪ Geocode	▪ Specific actor 1 ▪ Specific actor 2	89 countries	▪ 1960 to 2014 ▪ Collected from news reports	▪ Detail level: highly detailed ▪ Time series: extensive ▪ Geocodes: standard ▪ Formatting: structured Excel and Stata files, data specifically set up for time series analysis ▪ Access: free	▪ Detail level: focus on urban areas only; VE analysis would likely need to filter out extensive coverage of nonviolent protests and perform other cleaning tasks ▪ Access: data are split across multiple datasets ▪ Data sourcing: global news reports
BFRS Empirical Studies of Conflict	Violence or the threat of violence aimed at political, economic, religious, or social goals against people or property	▪ Country ▪ State/province ▪ District ▪ Village/town ▪ Geocode	▪ Civil society group/ campaign group ▪ Foreign party ▪ Gang ▪ Informal group ▪ Intelligence agency ▪ Militants ▪ Military/paramilitary ▪ Police ▪ Political party ▪ Professional union/alliance ▪ Religious party ▪ Student group	Afghanistan, Colombia, Iraq, Mexico, Pakistan, Philippines, Vietnam	▪ Time coverage varies by country, but all data end in 2011 ▪ Collected from news reports	▪ Detail level: varies, but generally high ▪ Time series: limited to extensive depending on data set ▪ Geocodes: standard where present, GIS files provided for most countries covered. ▪ Formatting: structured ▪ Access: free.	▪ Access: data are split across multiple datasets for each country and sourced from multiple providers ▪ Detail level: limited country coverage ▪ Data sourcing: global news reports

Name	Violence Definition	Geographic Units	Perpetrator Label	Countries Covered	Data Sources and Updates	Pros	Cons
			▪ Tribal group ▪ Unaffiliated ▪ Unknown ▪ Other			▪ Data sourcing: datasets include many incidents from non-English press	
Political Instability Task Force	The deliberate killing of noncombatant civilians in the context of a wider political conflict	▪ Country ▪ Region/province ▪ District ▪ Locality	▪ State perpetrator ▪ Nonstate, internal state-sanctioned ▪ Nonstate, not state-sanctioned ▪ Transnational state ▪ Transnational nonstate ▪ Multiple (state, nonstate) ▪ Unknown/other	Worldwide	▪ 1995 through present ▪ Collected from news reports ▪ Updated on the 15th of the month	▪ Detail level: highly detailed, especially on reporting sources and event verification. ▪ Time series: extensive and regularly updated. ▪ Formatting: structured Excel file	▪ Access: Data are split across multiple datasets for different time series ▪ Geocodes: nontraditional format that would require cleaning to make useable for analysis ▪ Data sourcing: Global news reports and NGO documents
Conflict Site Dataset	Same as Uppsala Conflict Data Program data	▪ Country ▪ State/province ▪ District ▪ City/village ▪ Geocode	▪ Specific actor 1 ▪ Specific actor 2 ▪ Actors are labeled based on conflict—state-based, nonstate-based, one-sided violence	Worldwide	▪ 1989 through 2008 ▪ Collected from news reports ▪ Last updated in 2008	▪ Geocodes: Provides additional georeferenced details for UCDP	▪ Same as the UCDP data
South Asian Terrorism Portal (SATP)	Not formally defined. Lists attacks by outcome, group, and method	▪ Country ▪ Zone ▪ State ▪ District	▪ Security forces ▪ Militants ▪ Not specified	Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka	▪ Time coverage varies by country but runs through present. Sources not listed ▪ Updated monthly	▪ Detail level: moderately detailed and with country coverage and additional resources for little known conflicts ▪ Time series: extensive and regularly updated depending on country	▪ Detail level: No codebook ▪ Access: data are not provided in Excel or .csv ▪ Time series: Inconsistent timeframe across countries and incidents ▪ Geocodes: text details but no formal geocodes ▪ Data sourcing: No way to verify or validate data sources

Name	Violence Definition	Geographic Units	Perpetrator Label	Countries Covered	Data Sources and Updates	Pros	Cons
RAND Database of Worldwide Terrorism Incidents	Calculated events to create fear and alarm or intended to coerce certain actions; must include a political objective	▪ Country ▪ Province ▪ City	Specific actor	Worldwide	▪ 1968 through 2009 ▪ Collected from news reports	▪ Detail level: high-level detail over a large number of observations with distinctions between injuries and fatalities and detailed data on perpetrators ▪ Formatting: structured .csv/Excel ▪ Access: free, easy to download.	▪ Detail level: country and description are combined in a single column, which could make analysis difficult ▪ Geocodes: None ▪ Time series: limited coverage ▪ Data sourcing: global news reports
Action on Armed Violence (AOAV)	Any event involving bombing, mines, IED, or other explosive device resulting in a death	Geocoded sites	Specific actor	Worldwide	▪ 2011 through present ▪ Collected from news reports via Google	▪ Detail level: high-level detail with expert commentary and contextual data ▪ Access: free but slightly confusing to navigate	▪ Formatting: Unstructured data that are not easily accessible in a machine-readable format ▪ Time series: limited coverage ▪ Data sourcing: global news reports

ANNEX 2: BIBLIOGRAPHY

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ANNEX 3: STATEMENT OF WORK

Asia Bureau P/CVE Scope of Work

CVE Programs and Approaches to Measuring Outcomes of Interest

Research Questions

Drafted April 1, 2019

1. Under current conditions, is it possible to develop a model or methodology to test the relationship between P/CVE programming and the incidence of terrorist/VE violence?

a. How does/should the Agency define P/CVE programming and distinguish it from related forms of programming, given the array of country contexts in which P/CVE programming is implemented? Do such distinctions matter to this research question and, if so, in what way?

b. What are the data challenges or obstacles to testing this relationship? These might include difficulties compiling or accessing violent incident data, data concerning military and policing actions that would interrupt or affect violence, and the conceptualization of and availability of granular P/CVE program-related data for both USAID and other significant donors. Assess the extent of these challenges and how easy it would be to overcome them.

c. What other challenges exist such as: 1) the logic driving VE violence (e.g., attacking in major cities to obtain maximum publicity and not where a cell is based or has support); 2) willingness of the host government to tackle all aspects of the VE problem; 3) the competency of intelligence and police services; 4) the size and scale of P/CVE programs; 5) adequate data on other donor-relevant development assistance interventions; and 6) the tendency of P/CVE programs to work in the highest-risk areas that impede modelling the relationship between P/CVE programming and terrorist violence?

d. Given the challenges identified in items b. and c. above, is there merit in attempting to assemble the ingredients to build a model testing the relationship of P/CVE programming to VE violence? What are the resource and time requirements involved in assembling the required data and addressing the other challenges noted? What are the econometric challenges and the trade-offs between cost and rigor?

e. How feasible is it to find or construct a statistically valid counterfactual?

2. Short of being able to arrive at an understanding of the relationship between P/CVE programming and VE violence, what other higher-level outcomes of interest could/should P/CVE programming influence?

a. What are other second-order outcomes (more distant from violence) that might plausibly be linked to P/CVE programming and be of value given USG foreign policy and Agency development priorities?

Identify up to 10 such outcomes in consultation with USAID Asia Bureau staff. If available for review, what approaches have been used to measure changes in these outcomes? How well have approaches succeeded or fallen short in measuring these outcomes? What approaches could be used toward measurement? What would be required to put these approaches in place (e.g., human capital/expertise, time, money)?

Principal Deliverable:

One report with two major sections, one per question, up to 35 pages with a possible annex on how to approach survey research in this area.

USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

PONPES NGALAH FOR IUWASH PLUS

THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN ASIA

June 26, 2018

This publication was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development. It was prepared by Leslie Dwyer and Elizabeth Rhoads, Management Systems International, a Tetra Tech Company.

ACRONYMS

ADS	Automated Directives System
AIDA	Indonesia Peace Alliance
ALIMAT	Indonesian Family Movement for Equality and Justice
AMAN	Asian Muslims Action Network
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
AWID	Association for Women in Development
BNPT	National Agency for Combating Terrorism
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CVE	Countering Violent Extremism
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration
DI	Darul Islam
FIDH	International Federation for Human Rights
GCTF	Global Counterterrorism Forum
GBV	Gender-based Violence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GoI	Government of Indonesia
HRW	Human Rights Watch
ICG	International Crisis Group
IMU	Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan
IIPB	Institute for International Peacebuilding
IPAC	Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict
ISIS	Islamic State in Iraq and Syria
IWPR	Institute for War and Peace Reporting
JAD	Jamaah Ansharut Daulah
JAK	Jemaah Ansharul Khilafah
JI	Jemaah Islamiyah
KCD	Koperasi Cinta Damai
KUPI	International Forum of Women Ulama
LGBTI	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex
LSI	Lembaga Survei Indonesia
LTTE	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam

MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MIT	Mujahidin Indonesia Timur
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NU	Nahdlatul Ulama
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PAIMAN	Pakistan Initiative for Mothers and Newborns
P/CVE	Preventing/Countering Violent Extremism
PRIK	University of Indonesia's Police Research Center
SAVE	Sisters Against Violent Extremism
SCRA	State Commission on Religious Affairs
SFCG	Search for Common Ground
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution(s)
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USG	United States Government
USIP	United States Institute of Peace
VAW	Violence Against Women
VE	Violent Extremism
VEO	Violent Extremist Organization
WPS	Women, Peace, and Security
WWB	Women Without Borders

CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2011, the United States made a commitment to join countries around the world in accelerating the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000), the first resolution adopted by the Security Council to recognize the crucial role of women in promoting peace and security. In 2015, the United States supported UN Security Resolution 2422, the first resolution to make an explicit link between women and countering violent extremism (CVE), and called on the UN and member states to integrate gender as a cross-cutting issue across counterterrorism and CVE initiatives. Most recently, the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) Act of 2017 was signed into U.S. law, formally recognizing the importance of U.S. leadership in promoting women's participation in conflict prevention, conflict mitigation, security, and sustaining democracy in fragile environments.

These U.S. commitments form part of a growing international consensus on the importance of recognizing the role of gender in shaping violent extremism (VE), the impact of VE on women and girls, and the important contributions women can make to CVE efforts. Over the past decade, scholars, CVE practitioners, government actors and international organizations have highlighted the specific gendered push and pull factors that drive women's participation in VE groups, which may be distinct from the dynamics that drive men's recruitment. Research has also demonstrated women's capacity to serve as powerful bulwarks against radicalization, and to play key roles in prevention efforts at the family, community and national levels. This attention to the roles of women in VE has been complemented by increased attention to the broader gender dynamics that shape VE, including gendered social norms and cultural narratives of masculinity and femininity. Yet much more remains to be understood. Knowledge of the complex factors that drive women's support for VE is thin, as well as our understanding of how gender ideologies, social norms, GBV, and gendered political narratives affect women's involvement in both VE and CVE efforts. A primary emphasis on women's roles within families and local communities has often overshadowed attempts to understand women's positions within broader VE networks, despite indications that women are playing a part in strengthening transnational links among VE groups. In addition, comprehensive understanding of diverse local and national efforts to address gender and VE, including what works, what does not, and what challenges these efforts face, remains lacking. Finally, while there is enthusiasm in the CVE community for increasing women's participation in VE prevention, the evidence needed to evaluate the impacts of such efforts, including the extent to which taking on more active CVE roles might elevate risks to women's well-being, remains deficient.

As part of its commitment to mainstream gender into CVE efforts, USAID commissioned this study to provide analysis of the role of women in supporting and combating violent extremism in Asia. The Asia region has received relatively little analytic attention in the CVE field compared to other areas of the world, despite growing investments by national governments and the international donor community. In addition, CVE projects within Asia have often been framed with minimal attention to gender as a key dynamic shaping VE, limiting the available knowledge base on the role of women in VE in Asia.[1] This study was designed to address these gaps in our understanding and inform USAID policy and programming related to women and violent extremism in selected countries in Asia, across the Asia region, and globally. The study also serves as an opportunity to inform broader USG policy and programming via the WPS Act and forthcoming Strategy.

Focusing on the gender dynamics of women's engagement with VE and CVE in the USAID Asia region, the study covers several key areas. First, it analyzes women's support for and involvement in VE groups, include the push and pull factors that impact women, the gender-specific roles they play in promoting

[1] See The Asia Foundation 2017 for an overview of international donor CVE funding, including investments in CVE-focused projects in key development sectors including women's empowerment and inclusion.

VE, and how women's roles are shaped by the gender narratives of VE recruitment as well as local gender norms. Second, it analyzes the roles and potential roles women play in CVE efforts, including the broader gendered contexts that shape women's agency. Third, it considers the protection and safety of women and girls from VE, including the use and impact of GBV, gender inequalities, early and forced child marriage, and other human rights violations by extremist groups. Fourth, it addresses how social and cultural contexts shape both VE and responses to it, attending to how gendered cultural narratives about masculinity and femininity, as well as gendered social, political, and economic structures, shape women's agency. Finally, the study looks at analysis and evidence on the effectiveness and challenges of global, regional and local efforts to address gender and VE, providing recommendations for future USAID policy, programming and innovation. The study emphasizes the importance of an intersectional approach to gender and VE, recognizing the multiple factors, including nationality, race, ethnicity, religion, economic status and education level, that impact women's lives and their potential to effectively promote alternatives to violence and extremism.

In addition to providing an overview of global and regional issues of gender and VE, this study offers in-depth analyses of two country cases, Indonesia and Kyrgyzstan, to better understand how gender and VE dynamics play out in given contexts. Both countries have faced the challenge of addressing women's support for VE, as well as mitigating the impact of VE messaging and recruiting on women and girls. At the same time, each of these contexts offers lessons for policy and programming. Indonesia and Kyrgyzstan have both seen efforts expand to address the gender dynamics of VE, and learning from the successes and challenges of these endeavors can strengthen regional policy and programming. With their overlapping yet distinct gender dynamics, these two case studies demonstrate the importance of context-specific analysis and programming and are provided to illustrate more general points made in this report.

Key findings and recommendation of the study include:

1. Across the Asia region, including in the case study countries of Indonesia and Kyrgyzstan, insufficient attention has been paid to the complex dynamics of women's support for VE. Frequently, the frameworks that are used to explain women's participation in VE **fail to acknowledge women's agency**, describing them as naive victims of manipulative recruiters or unwitting followers of powerful husbands and religious leaders. While it is essential to understand the exploitation and inequality that women participants in VE organizations experience, it is also critical to gain a deeper understanding of **the range of push factors** that motivate them to join, including the intersection of gender with other forms of identity, such as ethnicity, religion, education, and socio-economic status. Women who experience multiple and intersecting forms of marginalization are more receptive to VE messaging, and indeed may actively choose to join VE groups in pursuit of economic well-being, as a means of combating social or political inequality, or in response to perceived injustice. The stereotype of the impoverished, uneducated, disempowered woman victim continues to shape many programmatic responses to VE, undercutting the effectiveness of CVE work.
2. Understanding women's roles in supporting VE requires broad attention to the development context. As USAID has long recognized, conflict-affected and fragile environments, as well as those rife with discrimination, inequality, corruption, repression and poor governance, provide the **enabling conditions for extremism and violence** to flourish. More recently, research has demonstrated that contexts with elevated levels of gender inequality are more prone to intrastate conflicts (Center for Human Rights and Global Justice 2011), which generate the grievances and operating space that help VE groups thrive. The overall level of violence against women (VAW) has been found to be a better predictor of state peacefulness than the levels of democracy and wealth; democracies with elevated levels of VAW are in fact more insecure and

unstable than non-democracies with lower levels of VAW (Hudson 2017). Addressing these development challenges, including the specific impacts they have on women, is crucial. In addition, efforts to combat VE can be strengthened by **mainstreaming a robust emphasis on gender equality into CVE work**, and increasing collaboration between CVE and gender equality and women's empowerment programs. In both Indonesia and Kyrgyzstan, the messaging of VE groups draws upon long-standing local social norms that limit women's rights and roles in both families and public life, while at the same time promising women new opportunities to gain respect and protect themselves from GBV. While ensuring that women receive education and economic opportunities, that their rights are respected, and that GBV is effectively addressed is not a guarantee against VE, addressing these gendered drivers, based on analysis of how they impact the experiences of women from different socioeconomic and identity groups, is a core aspect of minimizing the appeal of VE recruiting.

3. Much more needs to be done to support women as key actors in CVE work, and to understand and address the challenges they face. **The Asia region provides powerful examples of successful CVE efforts** led by women's groups and directed towards women's capacities to provide early warning of the rise of VE in families and communities, to spread messages of peace and tolerance, and to promote resilience to extremist ideologies. However, **these efforts face several challenges**. Groups that focus on gender issues are often poorly funded or ignored by state and CSO actors working on CVE. Divides also persist between secular women's rights groups and those working with religious women due to mutual suspicion and widespread social misunderstanding of the distinction between extremism and religiosity. In both Indonesia and Kyrgyzstan, women's organizations have expressed concern that participating in VE work means collaborating with state security actors with a poor track record of respecting women's rights and lacking a clear commitment to gender issues. Even when women's CVE efforts receive respect and assistance, they are often limited by assumptions about women as "natural peacemakers" whose proper social role is as mothers or wives tasked with mitigating the risk of family radicalization. In addition, as Asian women's rights activists have highlighted, including women in CVE efforts without analysis of the risks they may face when standing up to VE in insecure environments marked by elevated levels of GBV can violate principles of Do No Harm (Sølna 2017, UN Women 2015). Addressing these challenges, while opening **new spaces for women to contribute their knowledge to policy and program design**, can help accelerate the effectiveness of gender and VE efforts.
4. More clarity is needed at the analytic and programmatic levels about the relationship between **VE and gender dynamics and how to ensure that CVE programming is gender-sensitive**. Often, discussions of gender in the VE/CVE field remain focused primarily on women's roles as participants in and mitigators of VE. While clearly these are critical issues, what is often missing from the conversation is a focus on gender as a set of social and cultural norms and narratives shaping what masculinity and femininity means in a given context. In both Indonesia and Kyrgyzstan, hyper-masculinity – a social emphasis on male aggression, violence and power over women – helps drive VE, while stereotypical ideas of femininity as limited to home and family are strengthened and manipulated by VE narratives. **Efforts to address the cultural aspects of gender dynamics** by, for example, promoting "positive masculinity" or providing alternate religious or media narratives of femininity have demonstrated success in both the Indonesia and Kyrgyzstan contexts. Likewise, a focus on women's empowerment and inclusion in CVE efforts does not necessarily **ensure that projects and activities are fully gender-sensitive**. More work is needed to ensure that the concerns and experiences of men and women, and boys and girls, are addressed in programming, and that the risks of backlash against women's participation is minimized through attention to the broader gender context.
5. To fully capture the gender dynamics of VE, **comprehensive gender analysis** is necessary. As the Indonesia and Kyrgyzstan cases demonstrate, programming is frequently implemented

without thorough consideration of gender, or the specific needs, experiences and capacities of women. USAID is well positioned to take a leadership role in developing and disseminating frameworks for gender and VE analysis, and to ensure such tools are integrated into development strategy, project planning, and monitoring, evaluation and learning efforts. Gender and VE analytic frameworks should include not only an attention to women's roles and capacities, but an understanding of local, national and regional gender dynamics, as well as the impacts of current and past CVE programming on women, men, and cultural values of masculinity and femininity.

1. OVERVIEW OF VE AND GENDER

1.1 STUDY RATIONALE AND BACKGROUND

Efforts to understand and counter violent extremism (CVE)[2] continue to expand in response to the dynamic and evolving threats posed by violent extremist (VE) ideology globally. As a field, CVE has developed out of widespread recognition that effectively addressing the spread of VE will require attention to root causes and drivers that create the conditions and vulnerabilities easily exploited by violent extremist groups. Though there is little consensus on a singular definition of CVE, broadly these efforts are seen to be preventative in nature, differing from traditional counterterrorism tactics which have largely been responsive.

Although women's participation in VE, and in efforts to combat it, is far from new, the first wave of increased attention to CVE in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 attacks in the United States paid little attention to gender (USAID 2015). VE was assumed to be the work of men, and when women were considered, it was primarily as brainwashed pawns of manipulative men who lured them into supporting agendas they did not fully understand (Sjoberg and Gentry 2016; Huckerby 2015a). Efforts to combat VE were directed primarily at men, or were at best framed as "gender neutral," failing to recognize the distinct experiences, concerns, and motivations of women, as well as the gendered narratives in which both male and female extremists were embedded. However, over the past decade, sparked in large part by the unprecedented efforts of ISIS to recruit women into its ranks, as well as the extreme gendered violence and inequality that marked life in ISIS-held territories, scholars, CVE practitioners, government actors and international organizations have increasingly come to recognize the crucial roles women play in promoting, preventing, and mitigating VE, as well as the gendered ideologies that undergird VE.

At a policy level, attention to the role of women in CVE has also increased. For example, the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, first developed in 2004, recognized the specific role of women in counter-terrorism efforts in the General Assembly's 2014 review (Fink, Zeigler and Bhulai 2016). That same year, the UN Security Council also began drawing a closer link between CVE and the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda, first with the adoption of UNSCR 2178 focused on addressing foreign terrorist fighters, which calls for the need to include women in these efforts, followed by UNSCR 2422 in 2015 which drew an explicit link between the UN WPS Agenda and the role of women in CVE (D'Estaing 2015). CVE policy in the United States has demonstrated similar trends, with the release of the 2016 Department of State and USAID Joint Strategy on CVE which highlighted the role of women and grassroots organizations in preventing and countering VE (U.S. Department of State and USAID 2016), and the Women, Peace, and Security Act of 2017 which will incorporate gender and CVE into a forthcoming national strategy.

Currently, there is a strong global consensus among scholars and practitioners in the CVE field that attention to the gender dynamics of VE is urgent. Research has highlighted the specific gendered push and pull factors that drive women's participation in VE groups, which may be quite distinct from the dynamics that drive men's recruitment. For example, while both women and men may be motivated by ideological factors, women are also subject to gender-specific calls to use their roles as mothers to encourage husbands and sons to fight, or are promised a community where women are revered and safe from GBV. Meanwhile, recruitment propaganda directed towards men may emphasize the shame and

[2] Here the CVE acronym is used to refer to both PVE (preventing violent extremism) and countering violent extremism.

humiliation of not acting according to stereotypical notions of masculine strength and pride (Beutel and Perez 2016). Women and men may serve distinct roles within VE organizations, such as the early division of labor within ISIS where women took on primarily domestic, logistical and security roles within strictly gender-segregated spheres. At the same time, research has also demonstrated women's capacity to help prevent radicalization, both at the community and national levels. The CVE field has begun to recognize the capacity of women to provide early warning and first response to rising levels of extremism within families and neighborhoods, to participate in security forces to help gain local trust, and to promote community resilience through their roles as educators and formal or informal leaders.

Much more remains to be understood, however. Knowledge of the complex factors that drive women's support for VE remains thin, and a stereotypical image of the impoverished, uneducated, easily-manipulated woman victim of VE recruiting remains dominant. Analysis of gendered push factors frequently fails to take an intersectional approach, which requires that we view women's experiences as shaped not only by gender, but by other identity factors like religion, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and educational levels. Likewise, the field still has a weak grasp on how gender ideologies, social and cultural norms, GBV, and gendered political narratives impact women's involvement in both VE and CVE efforts. A primary emphasis on women's roles within families and local communities has often overshadowed attempts to understand women's positions within broader VE networks, despite indications that women are playing a part not only in planning and executing attacks outside of their communities, but in strengthening transnational links among VE groups through both kinship ties and women's work as propagandists, logisticians, fund-raisers and recruiters. In addition, a thorough understanding of diverse local and national efforts to address gender and VE, including what works, what does not, and what challenges these efforts face, remains lacking. Comprehensive frameworks for gathering much-needed data on gender and VE are also missing from the field's analytic toolkit. While USAID has pioneered tools for gender analysis, as well as gender-sensitive conflict analysis, there are no established methodologies for conducting gender and VE analyses and assessments, which means that data collection is often piecemeal and of varying quality, with crucial elements of the complex gendered landscape of VE often left out, raising the risk that programs are poorly designed to benefit women and address the gender dynamics of VE.

Focusing on the gender dynamics of women's engagement with VE and CVE in the USAID Asia region, the study covers several key areas. First, it analyzes women's support for and involvement in VE groups, include the push and pull factors that impact women, the gender-specific roles they play in promoting VE, and how women's roles are shaped by the gender narratives of VE recruitment as well as local gender norms. Second, it considers the protection and safety of women and girls from VE, including the use and impact of GBV, gender inequalities, and other human rights violations by extremist groups. Third, it addresses how broader social and cultural contexts shape both VE and responses to it, attending to how gendered cultural narratives about masculinity and femininity, as well as gendered social, political, and economic structures, impact women's relationships to VE. Fourth, it analyzes the roles and potential roles women play in CVE efforts, including the broader gendered contexts that shape women's agency. Finally, the study looks at analysis and evidence on the effectiveness and challenges of global, regional and local efforts to address gender and VE, providing recommendations for future USAID policy, programming and innovation.

In addition to providing an overview of global and regional issues of gender and VE, this study offers in-depth analyses of two country cases: Indonesia and Kyrgyzstan. Both countries have faced the challenge of addressing women's support for VE, as well as mitigating the impact of VE messaging and recruiting on women and girls. At the same time, each of these contexts offers powerful lessons for CVE practitioners. Indonesia and Kyrgyzstan have both seen efforts expand to address the gender dynamics

of VE, and learning from the successes and challenges of these endeavors can strengthen regional policy and programming.

1.2 STUDY METHODOLOGY AND SOURCES

This study relies primarily on publicly available data, including published reports from donors, think tanks, scholars, international organizations and NGOs, governments, and civil society actors. In addition, the Kyrgyzstan and Indonesian case studies draw upon Russian and Indonesian language materials produced by CSOs, scholars and the media, as well as select interviews with key analysts, academics, CSO representatives and policymakers.

1.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE EVIDENCE BASE

This study draws upon the emergent knowledge base on gender and VE to provide analysis of the role of women in supporting and combating violent extremism in Asia. The Asia region has received relatively little analytic attention in the CVE field compared to other regions of the world, despite growing investments by national governments and the international donor community, as well as rising concerns that regions traditionally considered peaceful or tolerant of difference are at increased risk for VE. In addition, CVE projects within Asia have often been framed with minimal attention to gender as a key dynamic shaping VE, limiting understanding of the role of women in supporting and preventing VE.[3] The quality of available evidence is not consistent across countries, with more attention paid to gender and VE in Muslim-majority countries like Pakistan, Bangladesh, Indonesia and the Central Asian countries, and very little research done on countries with significant Muslim minorities, including Thailand, Cambodia, and Sri Lanka, making it difficult to draw consistent regional conclusions. Much of the reporting on gender and VE in Asia draws upon anecdotal information, including journalistic accounts that often tend towards sensationalist portrayals of the "women of ISIS" or stereotypical assumptions about women's lack of agency.

A majority of the existing evidence also fails to look at gender with an attention to its intersections with other forms of identity. This makes it very difficult to gain a comprehensive understanding of how gender identity intersects in complex and context-dependent ways with age, ethnicity, religion, sexuality, race, education levels, socio-economic status, or rural/urban location. This lack of consistent and reliable evidence means that gender and VE programming in Asia is often designed based on models used elsewhere in the world, or based on assumptions about women's roles and effectiveness that have not been validated by comprehensive gender analysis. As emphasized in the "Conclusions and Recommendations" section of this study, much more research is needed to provide a dependable basis from which to design effective, inclusive, gender-sensitive CVE interventions in Asia.

1.4 AN INTERSECTIONAL GENDER LENS ON VE

This study advocates for turning a more focused gender lens on the challenges of VE as well as the opportunities for increased women's participation in CVE efforts. A gender lens allows for a more robust and inclusive analysis of how gender shapes the drivers of VE, as well as how to ensure the meaningful participation of both women and men in prevention efforts, including policymaking and local-level programming. Such an approach has become increasingly urgent given the ways that VE organizations (VEOs) have used gender to target potential recruits and supporters by acknowledging

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[3] See The Asia Foundation 2017 for an overview of international donor CVE funding, including investments in CVE-focused projects in key development sectors including women's empowerment and inclusion.

and exploiting gendered grievances and using gendered logics to radicalize both men and women to their cause. Beyond understanding the specific factors which lead men and women to engage in VE, a gender lens can reveal the gender-specific impacts of VE, including the promotion of gender inequality, GBV, early and forced marriage, and the curtailment of women's rights by VEOs. Rising support for the implementation of *shari'a* law, when *shari'a* is defined as application of the hudood ordinances (e.g., stoning for adultery) and restrictions on women in the public sphere, hold the potential to erode gains made by women in Muslim majority countries in Asia.

Much existing analysis of gender and VE focuses primarily on women's roles, investigating the actions they have taken to support or mitigate VE. However, using a gender lens for analysis means understanding not only what women and men do, but how the socio-cultural contexts they inhabit shape possibilities for their agency. As USAID notes in its Automated Directives System Chapter 205 on Integrating Gender Equality and Female Empowerment in USAID's Program Cycle, effective programming requires attention to the cultural norms and beliefs that shape gender. The ADS states that: "Every society has cultural norms and beliefs (often expressed as gender stereotypes) about what are appropriate qualities, life goals, and aspirations for males and females. Gender norms and beliefs are influenced by perceptions of gender identity and expression and are often supported by and embedded in laws, policies, and institutional practices. They influence how females and males behave in different domains and should be explicitly identified in the gender analysis at the country level and especially in project design because they affect potential participation of males and females in project activities" (USAID 2017). The USAID gender analysis framework combines an attention to these cultural norms and beliefs with analysis of gendered social roles, gendered patterns of power and decision-making, gendered restrictions on the access to and control over assets and resources, and the laws, policies, regulations and institutions that influence women and men's agency and decision-making.

In addition, USAID emphasizes the importance of an intersectional approach to gender, requiring that gender analysis "not treat women and men as monolithic categories but should reflect the intersection of sex with other characteristics in order to capture the extent to which intersecting identities may heighten marginalization or exclusion" (USAID 2018). An intersectional gender lens is a crucial element of a comprehensive analysis, allowing policies and programs to respond to the specific needs of diverse women and men.

This study follows USAID guidance in analyzing the gender dynamics of VE and CVE in Asia, attending to the gender roles of women and men, as well as the gender dynamics of the contexts in which they enact these roles. It emphasizes the importance of understanding how cultural narratives of femininity and masculinity shape both the actions of women and men and the possibilities they envision for social change. In addition, the study emphasizes the importance of understanding the gender-specific impacts of both VE and CVE programming, advocating for greater attention to the Do No Harm principles embedded in USAID's approach to conflict more generally.

2. GENDER AND VE IN ASIA

Across Asia, women have served as key actors and combatants in conflicts from Aceh to Nepal to Sri Lanka, and have been targeted for recruitment into terrorist groups, including ISIS. While precise figures are difficult to obtain, it is estimated that several hundred women from Central Asia, South Asia and Southeast Asia travelled to join ISIS in Iraq and Syria, with many more supporting extremist ideologies in their home countries. Recent high-profile incidents of women planning and participating in terror attacks in Indonesia and the Philippines have drawn increased attention to Asian women's involvement in VE, increasing the urgency of calls to better understand women's roles in VE. However, compared to what is known about gender and VE in the MENA region, there is comparably little data or analysis attempting to synthesize the gender dynamics of VE in Asia. This is a problem for generating effective CVE

responses, especially given the 2017 Global Terrorism Index ranking of South Asia as second globally in numbers of terrorist attacks and deaths, with Asia-Pacific at fifth place (above Russia/Eurasia, North America, South America and Central America/the Caribbean) (Institute for Economics and Peace 2017).

In Asia, it is important to understand the context-specific push/pull factors that lead women to join or support violent extremist organizations, as well as how gender inequalities, pervasive throughout the region, also affect the use of violence by extremist groups. A stronger understanding of the intersections of conflict, including both armed conflict and localized violence, with VE and its impacts on women is also crucial, given its widespread prevalence.[4] Little is known, for example, about gender and refugee vulnerability to VE in the Asia region, especially in contexts like Burma, Bangladesh and the Philippines where many women and men displaced by armed conflict hold grievances against state actors. Asia is also facing the challenges of returning foreign fighters, both male and female, considering the dissolution of a physical Islamic State Caliphate. One estimate places the total number of Southeast Asians who have joined ISIS at over 1,500, and the number of Central Asians at over 4,000.[5] As the 2017 armed conflict in Marawi city, Philippines illustrated, there is some indication that fighters not originally from the region are choosing to travel to Southeast Asia due to fewer restrictions on their operating space than in other parts of the world (The Soufan Center 2017). While many analysts have stated that the "returnee challenge" has not proven as overwhelming as first anticipated, there is still little consensus on how to address the specific situation of women returnees,[6] as well as those women who were either prevented by authorities from traveling to Syria or who have maintained allegiance to the ISIS's aims. In addition, while much of the attention to VE in Asia has focused on Islamist extremism, Asia's religious and ethnic diversity calls for a wider focus and in some countries the intersection of competing religious extremisms. In India, communal violence and attacks by Hindu and Muslim extremists have targeted women for sexual assaults, and have been marked by the use of heavily gendered language glorifying violent masculinity and justifying violence as a defense of honor and a protection of idealized mothers and daughters (Minority Rights Group International 2017). Defense of women is also present in the discourse of Myanmar's Buddhist extremists, including monks, who have instigated anti-Muslim speech and riots across the country since 2012 (Beech 2013). The majority of the outbreaks of violence from 2012-2014 began after alleged violent threats or actions by Muslim men towards Buddhist women (except for in Okkan which involved a Muslim girl bumping into a Buddhist monk[7]) (BBC 2014). Frequently, the triggers for Buddhist extremist anti-Muslim riots have been allegations of rape of a Buddhist woman or girl by a Muslim man (BBC 2014; Radio Free Asia 2014).

2.1 GENDER IDEOLOGIES AND GBV IN ASIAN VE

Throughout the Asia region, patriarchal gender norms and ideologies pose a threat to women's well-being and safety. While it is important to recognize local and regional variations in Asian women's empowerment, as well as the region's long history of women's activism, the big picture remains grim. GBV is responsible for more Asian women's deaths than armed conflict and communal violence

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[4] See The Asia Foundation 2017. The Asia Foundation's overview of conflict in Asia highlights the links between conflict and VE, emphasizing both the impact of conflict on creating the push factors for VE recruitment by generating grievances and undermining institutional legitimacy and effectiveness, while at the same time shaping spaces of weak governance in which VE groups may thrive.

[5] See The Soufan Center, 2017. The Soufan Center cautions that these numbers are estimates due to challenges with collecting accurate data and the reluctance of many governments to share precise numbers.

[6] The Soufan Center estimates that close to 350 women have returned to Asian countries, with the majority coming from Indonesia (~113) and Kazakhstan (~200). Again, these numbers are estimates, and are most likely on the conservative side since some governments have not released sex-disaggregated data.

[7] See Tha 2013.

combined (The Asia Foundation 2018). The percentage of women who believe that husbands are justified in beating wives under certain circumstances ranges from a low of 13.1% in Thailand to a high of 59.6% in Tajikistan.[8] Women's participation in public life also remains limited, with the proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments standing at 19.4% in both the East Asia-Pacific and South Asia regions.[9] Women in many Asian countries lack access to and control over resources, with only 21.5% of Cambodian women, 35.8% of Bangladeshi women, 36% of Uzbek women holding accounts at financial institutions or with mobile money service providers.[10] Women in many Asian countries also lack control over their own bodies, with the percentage of wives reporting that they are the main decision-makers about their own health care ranking at 14.1% in Bangladesh, 14.5% in Tajikistan, 25.7% in Nepal and 31.2% in Kyrgyzstan.[11]

This context of gendered inequality and harm has a complex relationship to VE in Asia. Unlike the case of Syria and Iraq, where ISIS used sexual violence against local populations as part of their strategy to gain a territorial hold, their recruitment strategy in Asia focused on persuading women from Muslim populations in the region[12] that the caliphate offered an ideal community of protection and safety for women and girls, as well as the opportunity for them to make meaningful social contributions often inaccessible in their own local environments. These VE narratives have cast GBV, including sexual violence and sexual harassment, and a perceived lack of respect for women in both traditional pre-Islamic and Westernized Asian societies as grievances to exploit, portraying the defilement of Muslim women as motive for them to live under *sharia* law, as well as encouragement for men to defend women's honor by engaging in jihad. This illustrates how gender inequality, GBV, and restrictive gender ideologies in Asia may serve as a push factor for the recruitment of women, and even men, to VE organizations. At the same time, however, VEOs, through their spread of messages espousing an essential division between women and men, as well as their glorification of violent masculinity, have been responsible for exacerbating gendered inequalities and advocating GBV as a legitimate strategy of war, both in the territories where they hold sway and in the online sphere where their influence on Asia is far greater. UN Women research notes that some of the most popular searches on well-known online sites for violent *jihadist* content are "rape and ISIS," and that these sites contain not only videos and images of executions, beheadings and battles, but rapes, forced prostitution, human trafficking and other forms of GBV (UN Women 2018c). UN Women warns that these graphic representations of GBV accessible online via VE Internet channels risks a more general social "normalization" of sexual violence and violence against women, girls, and LGBTI people (UN Women 2018a).

The competition for influence over gender ideologies in Asia also has turned women's bodies into sites of struggle for power (UN Women 2015; AWID 2015). New restrictions on women's freedom of movement, decreased access to public spaces and education, changes in socially acceptable clothing for women, and subjection increases in GBV can all signal a rise in intolerant religious ideologies often linked with violent extremism. For example, in the southern Philippines, Marawi women report having witnessed increased pressure for women and girls to dress conservatively before fighting broke out between government forces and ISIS-affiliated fighters (UN Women 2018b). At the same time, failures to distinguish between women's religiosity and their support for VE has led to restrictions on women's bodily integrity and religious freedom. For example, in Tajikistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, state

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[8] World Bank Gender Data Portal.

[9] Ibid., data for 2016.

[10] World Bank Gender Data Portal.

[11] Ibid.

[12] The USAID Asia Region includes countries with both Muslim majorities (Bangladesh, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Maldives, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan) and significant Muslim minorities (Burma, Cambodia, China, India, Nepal, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand).

officials have called for bans on women wearing hijab head coverings or black niqab robes, with the president of Kazakhstan stating that black is "only for funerals" (Radio Free Europe 2017) and the president of Kyrgyzstan opining that "women in miniskirts don't become suicide bombers" (BBC 2016).

2.2 GENDERED RECRUITMENT AND ROLES

In the Asian context, the participation of women in perpetrating organized violence is not new. Women comprised up to 30% of LTTE fighters in Sri Lanka (Stack-O'Connor 2007), 30-50% of Maoist soldiers in Nepal (Pettigrew and Shneiderman 2004), and large numbers of Naxalite cadres in India (BBC News 2013). Analysis of women's roles in these combatant forces focused primarily on understanding their motivations, which encompassed ideological commitments to their movements' aims, personal suffering at the hands of opposition forces, and the desire for opportunities unavailable to women in traditional social contexts. However, in recent years, as groups like ISIS demonstrated an unnerving capacity to understand and exploit gendered vulnerabilities to recruit followers to their cause (Pearson 2016 & 2017; Winter 2015; Haynie and Gaudry 2016), attention has turned not only to the push factors driving women towards VE, but to gendered pull factors, especially the messages embedded in VE recruitment narratives directed at both women and men. Such attention is crucial given research showing that in some Asian countries, almost as many women as men are attempting to access extremist content on the Internet.[13]

While much media attention has focused on the control male ISIS fighters have claimed over women's bodies through sexual slavery and polygamy, or on stereotypical images of passive "*jihadi* brides" (Carter Center 2017), the Asia context demonstrates that the gender of VE messaging is often far more complex. For example, ISIS has leveraged cultural notions of masculinity that are prevalent across Asia to call upon men to join the caliphate or commit acts of terror at home. Some of these messages play on the intersection of masculinity and shame by promising men living in poverty the opportunity to live up to socially valued male roles as family providers, framing participation in VE as a viable pathway to restore men's honor (Bloom 2011). ISIS has also used hyper-masculine messaging in its propaganda, glorifying violence as linked to masculine pride and blaming Western notions of feminism and gender equality for emasculating men, claiming that "if women would be women, then men could be men" (Winter 2015; Mehmet 2016).

Recruitment of women has differed dramatically, and in the case of ISIS, has typically been carried out by other women, both through face-to-face contacts and social media. Just as has been found for the MENA region, ISIS recruitment messaging targeted at Asian women has focused less on the thrill of violence or promise of material rewards[14] than on the honor of supporting jihad and the significant role of women in establishing and growing the caliphate through their work as wives, mothers, and guardians of morality (Haynie and Gaudry 2016). Much of this propaganda emphasizes the separate and distinct roles of men and women, with women urged to adhere to a strict and narrow definition of femininity that links them to the domestic sphere. It would be oversimplifying, however, to see ISIS messaging as advertising the disempowerment of women. Gendered messaging directed at women in Asian contexts where gender inequality and GBV are prevalent has promised an ideal way of life in which women are revered and safe from gendered harm, and where women have opportunities to pursue meaningful

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[13] See UN Women 2018a. UN Women's research shows women's share of Internet users attempting to access extremist content at 10.9% for Bangladesh, 33.9% for Indonesia, 33.8% for the Philippines, and a high of 48.8% for Malaysia.

[14] For information on gender-specific recruiting messages in the MENA region, see USAID, 2015. "Research Brief: People, Not Pawns: Women's Participation in Violent Extremism Across Mena." Available at: https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1866/CVE_RESEARCHBRIEF_PEOPLENOTPAWNS.pdf

livelihoods and social roles. As research from The Carter Center notes, "Women are offered an alternate vision of freedom and empowerment and a perceived chance to become part of a community where they can practice their faith unapologetically and feel a sense of belonging and sisterhood" (Carter Center 2017). ISIS propaganda also emphasizes the detrimental impacts of poor governance, corruption, and poverty on women, promising a land where justice and family welfare are ensured. For example, the manifesto of the Al-Khanssaa Brigade, the ISIS women's police force, states that: "Women felt the effects of poverty more than men. It meant that they were not able to sustain themselves as easily as they should have been able to. This miserable situation [is] obliterated by the Zakat chamber [of ISIS], which [is] installed so women could take their rightful livelihood from it, which God guaranteed her and her children. Hence, all due respect and capability is given back to women and harm does not come to them" (The Quilliam Foundation 2015). ISIS has also targeted female migrant workers, women who are often subject to elevated levels of economic disempowerment, social alienation and isolation, and abuse.[15] In Singapore, at least nine radicalized domestic workers have been repatriated, while over 40 overseas Indonesian women have been reported to have been recruited by ISIS (Mahmood 2017). While the reality of what ISIS offered women was far from utopian, with women and girls subject to sexual violence, forced and early marriage, and the denial of their basic human rights, many Asian women who lacked awareness of the real conditions in ISIS territories were persuaded by the promise of a life of safety, meaning, honor and community.

As participants within VE groups, Asian women have played diverse roles. The active combat roles that women played in many of Asia's armed conflicts, including those in Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Aceh, make it a mistake to discount Asian women as violent actors. However, more recent VE organizations, most notably ISIS, have assigned women recruits more gender-segregated roles. While the ISIS precursor Al-Qaeda in Iraq deployed women as fighters, in large part to "shame" potential male recruits into joining the organization (The Atlantic 2017), ISIS, as well as Asian regional VE organizations like the Southeast Asian Jemaah Islamiyah and Darul Islam, assigned women to "indirect" roles, including reproductive and sexual service to husbands, the care and education of the next generation of *jihadis*, logistical support and fundraising, and the moral policing and recruiting of other women (GCTF 2014; IPAC 2017a). An essay from ISIS's flagship magazine *Dabiq*, published in September 2015 entitled "A Jihad Without Fighting," explains this gender division, with the author emphasizing that "if the weapon of the men is the assault rifle and the explosive belt, then know that the weapon of the women is good behavior and knowledge" (The Atlantic 2017). In the name of an idealized gender-segregated community, these groups have prohibited women's engagement in acts of violence except for self-defense. However, there is some indication that this policy has changed with the dissolution of ISIS's territorial control and that individual women extremists have been inspired by images of women fighters and suicide bombers in Chechnya, Europe, and the Middle East (IPAC 2017a). This potential shift has important implications for Asia in the aftermath of ISIS. It is women's roles in networks of kinship that have perhaps the broadest implications for the post-caliphate landscape in Asia, however. Indonesia's Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict (IPAC) warns that widows of ISIS fighters who remarry help to build connections among Southeast, South and Central Asian *jihadi* networks. They have also detailed a lengthy history of women serving as links between VE actors in Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines, both through strategic marriages and women's courier services on behalf of imprisoned husbands (Ibid.). These findings affirm that effective analysis of women's roles requires a regional approach.

[15] As the Indonesia case study shows, ISIS and its affiliates have targeted female migrant workers primarily for cash contributions and assistance with money laundering and logistics (IPAC 2017a).

2.3 INTERSECTIONAL ANALYSIS OF GENDER AND VE IN ASIA

As noted above regarding the current evidence base on gender and VE in Asia, few analyses take a comprehensively intersectional approach to considering the gender dynamics of VE. Nevertheless, the evidence that does exist for Asia underscores the importance of attending to how gender intersects with other forms of identity, including religion, ethnicity, age, educational level, socio-economic status, and migrant status. It is evident that in settings where multiple forms of disempowerment and violence threaten women's well-being, vulnerability to VE recruitment, along with difficulties in engaging with CVE efforts, multiply for women. This is clearly visible in the case of women's labor migration, where women's isolation, powerlessness and susceptibility to abuse amplify their vulnerability to VE messaging that promises them respect, security and an economic safety net. For non-migrants as well, socio-economic factors intersect with gender to shape the dynamics of VE. Women, as well as men, who live in poverty with few options for sustainable livelihoods may fall prey to VE recruitment narratives that advertise material benefits for joining VEOs, or that hold out the promise of attaining respect for a man unable to provide for his family and thus unable to meet the threshold requirements for being an adult male, or a meaningful social role in establishing an idealized caliphate for a woman who feels trapped by socio-economic constraints. Likewise, these factors may also limit the ability of women to participate effectively and safely in CVE efforts. For women living in conditions of poverty, or those who are required to work long hours and care for families, participating in program activities may be difficult. Young, unmarried women, or those who live in communities where social norms discourage women's activities outside the home, may also find it challenging to safely engage in CVE efforts without facing a backlash. In the latter case, where norms discourage women interacting in public spaces with men, the potential to engage with VE via social media opens new avenues of participation for women. Such opportunities will be more available in many cases to more affluent, better educated women with access to smart phones, a computer and Internet. Without a context-specific intersectional analysis, CVE programming focused on the inclusion of women may end up involving primarily elite women, or could risk placing participants in danger.

Given the prevalence of VE groups espousing religious ideologies in Asia, attention to women's religious identity is also important. At the same time, intersectional analysis demonstrates that stereotypes such as "Muslim women" or "Buddhist women" are insufficient grounds on which to base effective programming. Across the region, there are intense debates over religion and how to define the roles of women and men within it, with women's religious interpretations often differing on issues of gender equality, appropriate women's dress, support for VE principles and actors, and the religious permissibility of violence.[16] In many Islamic contexts, CVE practitioners argue that it is in fact those with a stronger knowledge of Islamic doctrine who are less prone to engage in VE; in some settings, secular or public secondary schools and universities provide common pathways to VE recruitment. The diversity

[16] Results vary by country, VE organization and survey. Using Pew's World Muslims Data Set from 2011-2 for 20 countries (including countries in but going beyond the Asia region), C. Christine Fair and Parina Patel found that women were statistically more likely to support Islamist terrorism than men (personal email communication, C. Christine Fair to Lynn Carter, June 1, 2018, publication forthcoming). In other examples, regressions carried out on USIP-funded survey data collected in Bangladesh in 2017 showed that women were more likely to support the goals and means of three well-known VE organizations using violence than were men. Women were also more likely to believe that it was women's right to choose whether to wear a hijab or not. In Pakistan, in survey data analysis conducted by Fair, Goldstein and Hamza 2016, women gave more support to the anti-Shi'a VE organization Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan than men, while men were more likely to support the Taliban. In a USAID-funded survey in Indonesia in 2017, women's views on VE and democracy did not differ significantly from those of men. Like the women in Bangladesh however, more Indonesian women than men felt it was their right to decide whether to wear a *hijab*, though a high percentage of men and women felt the *hijab* was compulsory for Muslim women.

of Asian religious contexts means that intersectional approaches to gender, VE and religious identity must be context-specific and based on comprehensive analysis.

2.4 GENDER AND COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN ASIA

Historically, counter-terrorism measures and efforts to combat VE have lacked the robust participation of women or attention to gender dynamics. Across Asia, women's participation in security forces is low, with the average percentage of women military and police members averaging less than 5%, despite global evidence that when women serve in a security role, they are more likely to gain the trust of communities, especially local women (UN Women 2015; UN Women n.d.). While data on the overall participation of women in Asian CVE efforts, or the gender sensitivity of Asian CVE programs, is lacking, research on bilateral and multilateral aid flows from 2006 to 2014 showed that out of 197 projects focusing on CVE in Asia, only two had a primary focus on women's equality or women's organizations. (The Asia Foundation 2017). While grassroots projects, including efforts by secular and religious women's groups to counter VE messaging, provide early warning of rising extremist threats, and reintegrate returnee or de-radicalized women and girls into communities, have proliferated across Asia, especially in Central, South and Southeast Asia, it is only recently that the mainstream CVE field has begun to take seriously the potential of women. There is still much to learn about the unique contributions women can, and do, make to CVE, and about what has been learned by efforts on the ground about how to ensure effective and sustainable programming. Specifically, there is a need to expand the understanding of women's capacities beyond their role as mothers and community organizers, to capture women's full sphere of influence and potential contributions to national and regional security and policymaking (UN Women 2016).

Efforts to promote women's participation in CVE efforts, in Asian contexts as well as globally, have cohered around several key frameworks. Recognizing the patriarchal values and structures that shape many Asian societies, CVE practitioners have tried to leverage women's traditional positions within the home and local community to strengthen the capacity of mothers to detect early warning signs of radicalization among family members and serve as "first responders," dissuading children or husbands from responding to VE propaganda. For example, Women Without Borders/SAVE has established a network of Mother's Schools, which has offered training for mothers in India, Pakistan, Indonesia and Tajikistan on the signs of radicalization to strengthen their capacity to safeguard their families and communities against VE.[17] Similarly, the PAIMAN Trust has worked with women and at-risk youth in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas, and has supported training of teachers, in an effort to promote tolerance and respect for human rights within communities and prevent children from embarking on a path of radicalization (UN Chronicle 2015). As the number of returnees to Asia from Syria and Iraq increases, women have also been brought into efforts to reintegrate women and children into families and communities, addressing social stigmas towards returnees as well as the challenges they face in securing livelihoods and resisting calls to return to extremism. However, these programs, including pioneering state-mandated deradicalization programs in Singapore and Indonesia, typically remain focused primarily on psychosocial intervention at the individual level rather than broadly engaged with community receptiveness and resilience, with the United States Institute of Peace suggesting that deradicalization efforts have much to learn from the post-conflict Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) field, which has evolved towards a broader view of the gendered social challenges faced by former combatants and their families (USIP 2017; cf. PRIO 2016). There is also little published evidence evaluating the effectiveness of programs focused on the potential of mothers to help prevent VE in Asia, or considering these programs from a Do No Harm perspective. Future research on the

[17] For more information, see http://www.women-without-borders.org/projects/underway/42/.

impact of these programs, and how they might mitigate any risks that arise from placing women in positions of new public prominence as opponents of VE in insecure contexts, is warranted. It would also be helpful for future research to analyze whether programs that emphasize women's roles as mothers responsible for their children's behavior risk legitimizing gendered inequalities that confine women to a domestic sphere.

Recently, as CVE practitioners have become more attuned to the risks of women's recruitment to VE groups, more attention has been paid to the importance of understanding the gender-specific ways in which Asian women interact with VE messaging, and the need to develop effective counter-messaging that addresses their concerns. For example, data from UN Women on Asia-Pacific women's use of the Internet to engage with VE propaganda indicates that in some countries, including Malaysia, women were less likely than men to participate in VE social media forums, but equally likely to use more "private" search engines to seek out information on VE groups (Hurst 2018). Based on this data, UN Women and the Japanese government have collaborated on developing gender-targeted redirect methods for search engines, as well as online video content designed to counter the appeal of extremist messaging for women.[18] Such efforts to generate effective counter-messaging that resonate with young people and include attention to gender have begun to flourish in the region, with the UAE-based Hedayah and the Jakarta Center for Law Enforcement Cooperation hosting a 2016 meeting of representatives from across Southeast Asia to collaborate on compiling a library of best practices for creating counter-narratives to VE (Hedayah 2016).

Efforts by Asian women's groups to counter VE have also focused attention on the broader set of push factors considered to provide conducive environments for the expansion of VE groups. Research has demonstrated that levels of religiosity are poor predictors of the propensity to participate in VE, and that, in fact, those with stronger doctrinal knowledge may be more resistant to VE messaging.[19] Incorporating this insight into their theories of change, local religious actors, including women preachers, wives of imams, and religious scholars, have attempted to strengthen community knowledge of religion to counter extremist messaging. Some of these efforts have focused on promoting a greater understanding of and respect for women's rights among religious communities. For example, In the southern Philippines, the Canadian International Development Agency and The Asia Foundation supported local organizations to produce and disseminate religious sermons, or *khutbah*, that counter VEO's interpretations of Islam, including sermons focused on women's rights.[20] Elsewhere in Southeast Asia, the Malaysian groups Sisters in Islam and Musawah, as well as the Indonesia-based International Forum of Women Ulama (KUPI), Rahima, and Rumah Kitab (among many others), work to advance interpretations of Islam that promote women's empowerment, interfaith tolerance, and alternatives to VE. In Bangladesh, The Asia Foundation has worked to advance social justice for women within an Islamic framework, collaborating with male religious leaders as well as wives of imams, supporting them to promote women's rights and counter violence (The Asia Foundation 2015). IFES has done similar

[18] For an example from India, see: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JlaQdaclljA

[19] See Mandaville, Peter and Melissa Nozell 2017. "United States Institute of Peace Special Report: Engaging Religion and Religious Actors in Countering Violent Extremism." https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/SR413-Engaging-Religion-and-Religious-Actors-in-Countering-Violent-Extremism.pdf. Mandaville and Nozell state that "there is now significant evidence to suggest that high levels of religious devotion or observance are poor predictors of support for or participation in violent extremism. Indeed, some leading analysts have suggested that a strong grounding in religion can actually reduce the likelihood of people accepting the narrative of violent extremist groups."

[20] For the English-language sermons, see: https://issuu.com/lgspa/docs/selected-khutba-english--revised-

work in India, advancing Muslim women's rights drawing on both Islamic tenets and the Indian constitution (Mohan and Tabassum, 2012).

Many Asian women's organizations have also coupled attention to the threat of VE with support for women's economic empowerment, considering this as a pathway to increase women's voice and decision-making power within families and communities, thus strengthen their capacity to effectively support CVE efforts (Idris and Abdelaziz 2017). For example, Bangladesh's "Polli Shomaj Women," or "Community Women's Groups," combine a focus on women's economic empowerment activities with training on women's rights and preventing the spread of VE in families and communities (UN Women 2018a). In addition, given the large number of female labor migrants from many areas of Asia, especially from southeast, central and south Asia, a number of programs have been implemented that combine safe migration and anti-trafficking training with CVE awareness. In July of 2017, Singapore announced that its "Settling in Program" for migrant workers to the country would include an emphasis on the threat of radicalization (The Straits Times 2017), while in Indonesia, local NGOs have made efforts to connect female religious leaders with women working abroad using online platforms (Sølna 2017). Such efforts demonstrate the possibilities to integrate a CVE focus into broader sectoral development work, both as a means of mitigating push factors for VE recruiting and as a way of addressing the concern that when women are disempowered economically and politically, or threatened by discrimination or GBV, their ability to serve as effective participants in CVE efforts is diminished.

Other efforts have targeted issues of policy and governance, promoting legislation and institutional capacity-building to ensure the protection of women and girls from GBV, to increase girls' access to education, and to counter the spread of discriminatory laws and regulations, many of which reflect growing extremist influence over mainstream conceptions of gender. For example, in Bangladesh, UN Women supported civil society to provide input into the country's National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security, helping to ensure their experiences with CVE and their concerns with security will be integrated into policy (UN Women 2018a). At the regional level, following the 2017 ASEAN Joint Statement on Women, Peace, and Security, civil society groups from across Southeast Asia participated in the ASEAN-UN Regional Dialogue on women's roles in CVE in December 2017 in Kuala Lumpur (Association of Southeast Asian Nations 2017).

As CVE and gender efforts expand across Asia, however, it has become clearer that involving women in CVE efforts is not without its challenges. One important risk that must be considered is that of violence and threats against those who stand up to extremist messaging within their communities. The case of Bangladesh, where VE actors have targeted bloggers and activists speaking in support of the rights of women and LGBTI communities for murder and rape, is an important cautionary example.[21] In addition to the risk of physical violence, many Asian women's groups have expressed concern about what has been termed the "securitization" of women by CVE efforts, in which efforts to promote women's rights are seen as meaningful only to the extent that they serve national security agendas, or women's groups are brought into closer collaboration with security actors who may have a poor track record on supporting women's rights.[22] Such concerns have been observed in context as diverse as the Philippines,

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[21] See for example, Hashem, Rumana 2018. "Has Rape Become a Weapon to Silence Atheists in Bangladesh?" OpenDemocracy.Net, January 5, 2018; The Guardian, 2016. "Inside Bangladesh's Killing Fields: Bloggers and Outsiders Targeted by Fanatics." June 11, 2016. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jun/11/bangladesh-murders-bloggers-foreigners-religion

[22] See for example, UN Women 2015; Anderlini, de Jonge Oudraat and Milani 2017. For a strongly critical take on incorporating women into CVE efforts, see Saferworld, 2017, "The Countering Violent Extremism Agenda Risks Undermining Women Who Need Greater Support." April 26, 2017. https://www.saferworld.org.uk/resources/news-and-analysis/post/221-the-countering-violent-extremism-agenda-

where President Duterte has notoriously deployed sexually violent language to characterize anti-terrorism activities (BBC 2017), and Tajikistan, where authoritarian government crackdowns on human rights advocates, information access, and religious freedoms, including the wearing of the hijab by Muslim women and beards by Muslim men, have undercut possibilities for state and civil society collaboration on CVE (Human Rights Watch 2018). In addition to mistrust between state actors and women's rights groups, there have also been tensions between secular women's rights groups and those women's groups working on CVE from within religious communities. For example, across Asia there have been women's rights groups which have been reluctant to collaborate with programs that focus on strengthening women's understanding of Islamic law and doctrine, despite evidence that it is women with little formal Islamic education who have been most susceptible to extremist messaging. Religious women may also be suspicious of the aims of secular women's groups, or wary of working with those who fail to distinguish between signs of women's religiosity (for example, wearing a hijab or participating in Qur'anic study groups) and extremism, stereotyping all religious women as potential terrorists, as has taken place in countries as diverse as Tajikistan, Indonesia, Thailand, and Myanmar.

In sum, the Asia experience demonstrates that engaging women in CVE efforts at all levels, from grassroots and civil society projects to policy and program design, has the potential to bolster the success of CVE policy and intervention. At the same time, it also shows that women's meaningful participation in designing and implementing CVE policy and programming must be supported to ensure interventions are locally-relevant and do not put women at greater risk within their communities.

3. CASE STUDY: INDONESIA

Indonesia, the fourth-largest country in the world, is a Muslim-majority secular state that is home to the world's largest Muslim population. As a case study, Indonesia mirrors recent developments across Asia, including women's involvement in VE, the exploitation of gender ideology by VE networks, the impact of VE on gender norms, and concerns about returning foreign fighters from the conflict in Syria and Iraq. Estimates put the number of Indonesians departing to join ISIS in Syria and Iraq between 2013 and 2017 at 800 (Schulze and Liow 2018) with an estimated 500 Indonesians remaining in Syria and Iraq as of January 2017, 300 of these dependents (McBeth 2017).[23] Indonesia is number two (behind Russia) in numbers of nationals arrested in Turkey trying to join ISIS, with a total of 435 through July 2017 (Wockner 2017). While these numbers represent a very tiny minority for a country with over 260 million people, Indonesians have comprised the largest Southeast Asian group fighting with ISIS.

Jakarta's first major terrorist attack since 2009 occurred in January 2016 and was officially claimed by ISIS but organized by the local pro-ISIS group Jemaah Ansharul Khilafah (JAK) (Schulze and Liow 2018: 1). Most recently, in May 2018, a series of deadly attacks in East Java, West Java and Riau were carried out by the ISIS-affiliated Jamaah Ansharut Daulah (JAD). These attacks, which included the bombings of Christian churches and a police station in Surabaya, Indonesia's second largest city, were notable for the role of women in executing violence, with three entire families, including husbands, wives and children, involved in detonating bombs at Christian churches, a police station, and inside an apartment complex. These attacks heightened Indonesians' attention to the role of women in VE, as well as the potential for

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risks-undermining-women-who-need-greater-support. As The Asia Foundation (The Asia Foundation 2017) notes, debates over the "securitization" of aid are not new, however, the global CVE agenda has renewed them.

[23] An earlier study published in 2017 found that approximately 600 Indonesians were fighting with ISIS in Syria and Iraq with 384 remaining with ISIS in Syria, based on media sources (see Barret, 2017). The 2018 study is based on interviews with Indonesian counterterrorism officials in July 2017 and puts 700-800 Indonesians remaining in Syria as GoI sources noted that Indonesians continued to travel to Syria in 2017, apparently due to poor information about conditions there.

ISIS-linked groups to carry out attacks, and gave new urgency to fears of what will become of deportees and fighters returning to Indonesia from Syria and Iraq or from arrests en route.

Some Indonesians returning from ISIS-held territories go through brief under-specified de-radicalization programs in shelters run by BNPT or the Ministry of Social Affairs, but returnees are not automatically detained (unless they are believed to have violated Indonesian law, which requires illicit acts on Indonesian soil) and monitoring depends on police resources (Wockner 2017; McBeth 2017; IPAC 2017a). Recent reports suggest some returnees, including women (who along with children make up most of the returnees at this writing) are leaving the shelter program early. De-radicalization efforts amongst convicted terrorists have long been thwarted by the Counter Terrorism Act of 2003 (*UU No. 15/2003 Tentang Pemberantasan Tindak Pidana Terorisme*) which does not provide a legal framework for mandatory de-radicalization programming. Thus, more than 400 released terrorism convicts have not gone through de-radicalization programs, while as of early 2017, 184 ex-convicts had joined government programs (Affan 2017). However, following the May 2018 attacks, in which the prominent role of women shocked the nation, the Indonesian Parliament fast-tracked approval of amendments to the law which included lengthening detention periods for suspected terrorists to more than two years from arrest to trial; giving the military a newly expanded role in domestic counter-terrorism; strengthening the ability for the state to prosecute radical clerics who inspire terror acts and those who traveled abroad to join ISIS; and expanding the definition of terrorism to include disruptions to security.[24]

While overall support for ISIS and for VE violence remain low in the country (a 2015 Pew study estimated a 4% favorability rating among the general population), the sheer size of the population, as well as a political climate increasingly favorable to Islamist movements, makes Indonesia of real concern for regional security. In addition, Indonesia's social media-saturated landscape, as well as a new openness to women's participation on the part of *jihadi* groups, indicates that traditional limitations on Indonesian women's recruitment into VE are diminishing. Indonesia's Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict (IPAC) recently warned that "the need to know more about Indonesian extremist women suddenly has become urgent" (IPAC 2017a: 24).

As a case study, Indonesia also offers a compelling window into the cross-border nature of VE. IPAC (2017a) research found that Indonesian widows of ISIS fighters who remarry help to build connections among European, North African, Middle Eastern and Southeast, South and Central Asian *jihadi* networks. In addition, there is evidence that Indonesian female migrant laborers in East Asia have become involved in VE networks, indicating that research into VE and gender should take a geographically broad analytic lens. Data on Indonesians living in and attempting to travel to ISIS-controlled territory shows that many Indonesians have traveled to join ISIS with their families. IPAC reports that since 2013 over 100 Indonesian women and children have entered ISIS territory (2017a). There are many more who have been arrested en route; women and children made up 60 percent of Indonesians arrested in Turkey trying to cross into ISIS controlled territory between 2014 and 2016 (McBeth 2016). By early 2017, the percentage of women and children among those Indonesians deported from Turkey for attempting to join ISIS had increased to 79.2 percent (Wocker 2017).

These developments have had substantial impact on women and girls linked to VE networks. Those who have traveled to join ISIS as family units, where they may have been married, widowed, remarried, and subject to sexual or psychological abuse, typically return to Indonesia needing economic, social and

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[24] Human rights advocates have been highly critical of the amended law, arguing most forcefully against lengthy pre-trial detention periods and the re-involvement of the Indonesian military in domestic affairs, citing the limitations on the military's role in civil affairs after the downfall of the dictatorship of former President Suharto in 1998 as one of Indonesia's key democratic victories. See Amnesty International 2018.

psychosocial assistance (McBeth 2016). In addition to its impact on women and girls involved in VE networks, VE has had significant impacts on Indonesian social norms of masculinity and femininity and gender roles. This includes the exploitation of Indonesian and Islamic gender norms in recruitment and radicalization, as well as cultural struggles over family size and women and men's proper gender expression and behavior.

At the same time, Indonesia is notable for the level of work that is being done on CVE locally, including efforts by government ministries, local and international non-governmental organizations, and Islamic organizations. Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), a moderate Islamic organization that claims 60 million members within Indonesia, has been most prominent in developing media and programming to combat VE, and its women leaders have taken a role in developing gender-focused messaging and working with women's groups. Several other smaller civil society organizations have played key roles in working with *jihadi* and de-radicalized families and promoting community-level CVE efforts.

3.1 INDONESIAN GENDER ROLES: STATE MOTHERHOOD AND "WOMEN'S NATURE"

Despite frequent stereotypes of Southeast Asian women as lacking in agency, gender norms and ideologies in Indonesia have been historically complex. In the 1950s and 1960s, Indonesia was home to a vibrant array of women's movements, which advocated for issues as diverse as an end to polygamy and increased education for women. In many regions of Indonesia, including the most heavily populated central island of Java, women have traditionally held the family purse strings and participated actively in agricultural and commercial activities (cf. Geertz 1961; Brenner 1995). However, this economic role did not necessarily afford women social status or prestige, as Javanese cosmology saw concern with money to be less "refined" than the otherworldly pursuits traditionally seen as the domain of men (Anderson 1990; Brenner 1998). There is some debate over whether women traditionally took responsibility for finances and market trading because they had less spiritual power, or because they were seen as more capable of resisting the desire to gamble, drink or otherwise spend away the family income (Brenner 1998).

Women's political and economic activity was constrained following the 1965-66 anti-communist mass killings that led to the rise of President Soeharto. Former President Soeharto, whose New Order regime ruled Indonesia from 1966-1998, promoted a conservative national gender ideology that Julia Suryakusuma has dubbed "state motherhood," which promoted women's confinement to the domestic sphere, viewing women as "appendages and companions to their husbands, procreators of the nation, mothers and educators of children, [and] housekeepers" (Suryakusuma 1996: 101). Women's activism was curtailed, and women who advocating for issues that challenged state doctrine risked being stigmatized as anti-national "communists."

With the fall of Soeharto's government in 1998, new democratic space opened for women's groups to address gender inequality. Yet nation-wide, men are still viewed as heads of the household, a role that remains legally enshrined in the 1974 Marriage Act. Fifty-seven percent of respondents in the 2010 National Socioeconomic Survey reporting that in their families, husbands were the earners and wives the homemakers (Utomo 2015). The same survey showed dual-earner families as 33 percent of total respondents, with rates rising to 62 percent among tertiary-educated couples (women's tertiary education rates outpace men's in the country) (Utomo 2015). Women who do work are often positioned socially as secondary earners in the family unit, in accordance with state-disseminated ideologies that women may contribute to family incomes as long as they maintain their "women's nature (*kodrat wanita*) or God-ordained role as the primary care giver in the family" (Utomo 2015).

3.2 INDONESIAN WOMEN'S ROLES IN VE

Historically, Indonesian VE networks Darul Islam (DI) and Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) emphasized women's roles as mothers in raising the next generation of mujahidin, and women were prohibited from engaging in jihad (IPAC 2017a: 5-7).[25] But the convergence of the declaration of the caliphate in Syria by ISIS and the expansion of social media has allowed for women's involvement in VE and CVE to evolve rapidly, leading analysts to claim that "ISIS has brought about a fundamental shift in how extremists, male and female, view women" (IPAC 2017a: 14). While patriarchal Indonesian society tends to view women as secondary earners with primarily reproductive role as obedient wives and mothers, involvement in ISIS allows pious women to feel a sense of equality with men. ISIS messaging directed at Indonesian women includes "an ideological recognition of their [women's] unique role in building an ideal state" (Marcoes 2015). This is not to say that *jihadist* movements are not highly patriarchal, but rather to highlight how the framing of women's spousal and reproductive contributions as "soft jihad" or "small jihad" gives these traditional patriarchal gender roles an appealing ideological value, casting them as crucial to the future of the movement (Marcoes 2015; KSI 2016).

At the same time, the fact that Indonesian women have taken on new operational roles within VE networks points to their desire for increased acceptance and respect in highly patriarchal VE communities and a drive to elevate their status. Researchers have argued that Indonesian women's increased operational activity in VE in recent years can be framed at least in part as a response to both highly patriarchal VE networks and the broader gender inequality in Indonesian society which contributed to their motivations for joining (Marcoes 2015; KSI 2016). Indeed, recent research has cautioned that Indonesian engagements with ISIS may be influenced more by these kinds of local dynamics than ISIS propaganda and recruitment (Schulze and Liow 2018: 2).[26]

Indonesian women's roles in VE include financial and logistical support; bookkeeping; connecting extremist networks through marriage; domestic roles in running the household, bearing, raising and educating children; proselytizing and propagandizing; administering financial support in VE networks and liaising with beneficiaries; running online media, blogs, chatrooms and social media groups; hiding known terrorists in their homes; and even volunteering to be bomb-makers, suicide bombers, and combatants (IPAC 2016; Arianti and Yasin 2016). Indonesian women have engaged in these roles in Indonesia, in ISIS territories, and in third countries where they work as overseas workers. Contrary to prevalent assumptions that women extremists are radicalized by men, there have been a number of cases where Indonesian women were responsible for radicalizing their husbands or children (IPAC 2016: 11; Jones 2018).

While in the 1980s and 1990s, radicalization and recruitment to *jihadi* groups was accomplished through face-to-face contact in university groups, Qur'anic study groups (*pengajian*), or family indoctrination, since 2009, increasing access to social media and online blogs and websites has dramatically changed both VE recruitment and women's roles in VE organizing, proselytizing and propagandizing (Mostarom and Yasin 2010; Arianti and Yasin 2016: 10). Previously, women were prohibited from recruiting men due to religious restrictions in *jihadi* communities against fraternizing with men who are not one's

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[25] IPAC notes: "JI forbade women to take an active role in fighting except under extreme emergency conditions. No Indonesian women went to Afghanistan unlike the many who have gone to Syria" (2017a: 6).

[26] While ISIS propaganda may have a broader appeal, it is also important to remember that ISIS has built upon pre-existing VEOs and *jihadi* family networks in Indonesia, including Darul Islam and Jema'ah Islamiyah (IPAC 2015a). ISIS messaging is still disseminated initially through family and friends already linked to VE activity online before it reaches a wider audience over social media. The face-to-face recruitment through friends, family and religious study groups is still very important (IPAC 2015b).

husband or close family member. Internet access has provided a loophole around this prohibition, allowing women to set up and lead online groups without male permission and to have increased engagement and even debate within broader *jihadi* communities not segregated by sex (IPAC 2017a: 16-17; 2017b; Arianti and Yasin 2016). Women have become active as bloggers, writers and active chat room or social media group participants, as well as participants in VE actions that begin online and continue offline, such as recruiting fighters for ISIS, providing guidance on migration to ISIS territory, and organizing and fundraising for *jihadi* causes, including supporting detainees and their families (Arianti and Yasin 2016: 12-13; IPAC 2017a; 2017b).

Women both within Indonesia and working as overseas migrant workers have been key players in fundraising and supporting ISIS-linked charities, particularly those that serve families of convicted or "martyred" terrorists (IPAC 2017a: 18). The most well-known is Gerakan Sehari Seribu (Gashibu or the 'one-thousand rupiah a day movement'). Other charities have been set up by women to aid other women, like the Dapur Ummahat Aseer (Kitchen of Prisoners' Wives), or monthly rotating savings group (*arisan*) that transfer money to a pool of beneficiaries (IPAC 2017a: 19-20). While these economic activities by women VE supporters are extensions of traditional Indonesian women's activities, what is novel is their express intention to support those involved in VE networks who are struggling financially, creating a sense of community and support within VE networks mimicking those typically found in a village, clan or extended family community.

In addition to supporting families in *jihadi* networks, women also play an active role in terrorism financing or "money jihad" (IPAC 2017a: 18). Through these activities, traditional Indonesian gender roles that place women in charge of finances are replicated in *jihadi* networks. These actions may be as simple as running money transfers through women's bank accounts and using the funds for combatant supplies, as was the case of a woman arrested in January 2015 for aiding the VE group MIT[27] (IPAC 2017a: 13). In other cases, Indonesian women have actively supported terror plots and bomb making through contributions (IPAC 2017a: 20), and funded fighters looking to emigrate to Syria (IPAC 2017b: 14).

IPAC has identified four main subsets of Indonesian women extremists: overseas migrant workers; women who have joined ISIS in Syria with their families; women deportees who were unsuccessful in crossing into Syria from Turkey and were arrested and deported; and women combatants from the conflict in Central Sulawesi (IPAC 2017a: 2).[28] Interestingly, while Indonesian extremist groups have their own genealogies and trajectories, as Santoso, the now deceased leader of the insurgency in Sulawesi pledged allegiance to ISIS in 2014, the recent subsets of Indonesian women involved in VE activity identified by IPAC are all linked to ISIS.

3.3 INDONESIAN WOMEN'S INVOLVEMENT AS COMBATANTS OR TERRORISTS

Prior to 2016, Indonesia saw very few arrests of women on terrorism-related charges (IPAC 2017a).[29] By 2016, however, these numbers began to increase. Of the 120 terrorism suspects arrested in 2016,

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[27] Mujahidin Indonesia Timur an armed group active in eastern Indonesia which later retreated to Central Sulawesi where their leader Santoso was killed by Indonesian law enforcement in 2016.

[28] IPAC recognizes that while the extremist networks involved in the Central Sulawesi conflict have been mostly dormant since the death of their leader in July 2016, they could re-emerge and the involvement of the wives of three leaders could signal "a greater willingness of extremist groups under certain circumstances to include women in training in the future" (IPAC 2017a: 2).

[29] IPAC notes that those who were arrested prior to 2016 were often charged with "failing to report their husband's activities" (2017: 7).

eight were women, including three combatants captured in Central Sulawesi, two would-be suicide bombers, the founder of a pro-ISIS charity, and a woman who assisted her husband in making a bomb (McBeth 2017; IPAC 2017a). This rise reflects the warning by IPAC that "chatter on social media… as well as evidence from the small number of women arrested, has shown that the Indonesian women themselves are looking for a more active role" (2017a: 24).

Dian Yulia Novi, a returned overseas domestic worker, radicalized online while working in Taiwan, was arrested in December 2016, the day before a planned attack on the presidential palace that would have made her Indonesia's first female suicide bomber (Campbell 2017). Dian was the second wife of Nur Solihan, a skilled bomb-maker and leader of a Bekasi terrorist cell whom she married online over Telegram from Taiwan (Campbell 2017; McBeth 2016; 2017). Dian was sentenced to 10 years in prison in August 2017, becoming the first Indonesian woman convicted for direct involvement as the perpetrator of terrorism rather than assisting in a terrorist act (Utama 2017). Dian was ordered to attack the presidential palace by Bahrun Naim, an Indonesian ISIS fighter in Syria and Jamaah Ansharut Daulah (JAD) leader (Campbell 2017). A few days after Dian's sentencing, Ika Puspitasari, a former domestic worker in Hong Kong also supported by Bahrun Naim, was arrested for planning a suicide attack in Bali on New Year's Eve (Nuraniyah 2017; Campbell 2017; Lamb 2017). It was reported that she had previously engaged in "money jihad," but the loss of her job and her inability to continue these contributions provided one motivation for her to offer herself instead (Australian Broadcasting Company 2018).

The timeline of women's involvement in VE as potential terrorists suggests that it was heavily influenced by ISIS and the founding of the al-Khanssaa Brigade in Syria. Al-Khanssaa is an all-female police force that has been used as a recruitment tool by ISIS, using *jihadi* gender roles to shame men into joining jihad by showing that even women are brave enough to join the fight for the caliphate (Campbell 2017). Mujahidin Indonesia Timur (MIT), the *jihadi* group active in Central Sulawesi, used a similar method in photographs depicting Santoso's second wife Jumaitun alias Ummu Delima and other women with firearms to call for recruits to move from social media support to active fighting (IPAC 2017a). Yet, while women may see increased involvement in VE, men continue to call the shots – they make the plans, give the orders, and choose the targets (Campbell 2017).

3.4 INDONESIAN WOMEN EMIGRATING TO JOIN ISIS

Since the declaration of the caliphate in 2013, Indonesian women have been willing to travel abroad to join VE networks. As of January 2017, an estimated 500 Indonesians remained with ISIS in Iraq and Syria, 300 of these are suspected to be women and children (McBeth 2017)[30] IPAC reports that 60 percent of Indonesian deportees from Turkey – who never made it to Syria – are women and children (IPAC 2016: 13). Of those deported to Indonesia from Turkey in 2017, women and children under 15 years old comprised 79.2 percent of the first three batches of deportees, or 137 individuals (Wockner 2017).

Analyst Sidney Jones of IPAC has attributed this number of women and children trying to enter Syria to the pattern of traveling to Syria with families in order to bring them up in an Islamic state (Wockner 2017). In some cases, IPAC has found that it was the women who were encouraging families to leave for Syria in order to raise their children under Islamic law (IPAC 2017a: 2). Those leaving with their families intended to spend their lives in the Caliphate, and with no intention of returning to Indonesia, and typically sold all their possessions and depleted their savings to fund their trip as a family unit (IPAC 2015: 24). Many of these women who traveled to join the caliphate may now be widows and they and

[30] This number may be slightly elevated. IPAC estimates that from 2013 onwards "well over 100 Indonesian women and children have successfully crossed into ISIS territory" (2017a: 15).

their daughters may be entering new marriages with foreign or local fighters in Syria. IPAC warns that this could further internationalize extremist networks (IPAC 2017a: 2).

3.5 OVERSEAS MIGRANT WORKERS

Indonesian women have also been recruited as members and supporters of extremist networks from third countries where they work as migrant laborers. The government of Indonesia estimates that there are 6.2 million Indonesians working overseas, approximately 69-75% of whom are women, with the clear majority serving as domestic workers (UNODC 2017: 16). There are reports of at least 45 domestic workers in Hong Kong actively supporting ISIS (Nuraniyah 2017) with a handful of others in Taiwan and Singapore (IPAC 2017b: 12). While there are about 1 million Indonesian domestic workers in the Gulf States (in contrast to the estimated 150,000 in Hong Kong), none have tried to join ISIS in Syria (while several have left from Hong Kong) and only about a dozen in Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the UAE are active on extremist social media groups (Nuraniyah 2017; IPAC 2017b: 2, 15). IPAC reports that overseas migrant workers thus far have focused on supporting ISIS in Syria and pro-ISIS attacks in Indonesia (2017b: 12).[31]

Labor protections in East Asia provide for days off which, when employers follow the law, permit domestic workers to congregate more easily than they can in the Middle East (Nuraniyah 2017). Female migrants often attend *dakwah* (Islamic propagation) groups on Sundays, which offer a source of community and support as well as religious teaching. However, some of these *dakwah* groups invite extremist preachers (IPAC 2017b). Yet, it seems that domestic workers' initial exposure to extremist ideology occurs through social media – which is different from previous modes of Indonesian exposure and recruitment to extremist ideology through face-to-face meetings.[32]

Due to Indonesian domestic migrant workers' international contacts, foreign language abilities and incomes, IPAC reports that they are "sought-after partners for *jihadi* men" (2017b: 12). Due to the perception that they have good salaries and international experience, overseas migrant workers have been called upon to give travel advice and arrange travel for those attempting to enter Syria, as well as for assistance in purchasing tickets either directly or through fundraising amongst fellow migrants or foreign contacts (IPAC 2017b: 14). There is a perception amongst radicalized overseas migrant workers that their fundraising and financial contributions are a form of *jihad* (IPAC 2017a: 18).

Several Hong Kong domestic workers have entered online marriages with ISIS fighters in Syria or ISIS supporters in Indonesia and at least one emigrated to Syria to join her husband (IPAC 2015: 22). Others have funded their would-be ISIS combatant husbands' honeymoon trips to visit them, so that these men have a record of international travel before departing for Syria (IPAC 2017a: 18). It has been suggested that mandatory government training for migrant workers before they go abroad should include lessons on religious extremism and recruitment tactics, as migrant workers are a vulnerable target by *jihadis* looking to extract money to finance their aims (Nuraniyah 2017; IPAC 2017a; 2017b). It has also been suggested that the Indonesian Ministry of Manpower and the Foreign Ministry, along with civil society organizations, work to produce counter-messaging online that would be accessible to migrant workers (Susilo 2018).

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[31] While an attack by a rocket on the Marina Bay Sands casino in Singapore was foiled in 2016, the attack was planned by men arrested on the Indonesian island of Batam, rather than Singapore-based attackers (Arshad 2016).
[32] IPAC notes that many of those radicalized through social media and introduced to others later meet face-to-face (2017b: 13).

3.6 INDONESIAN GENDER ROLES, GENDER INEQUALITY AND EXPLOITATION BY VE

While there is a growing body of literature on the roles of women in VE in Indonesia and women's potential roles in preventing or countering VE, there has been less focus on the effects of gendered norms and identities used in recruitment and mobilizing VE. The focus of VE groups on gendered identities and gender norms can have broad repressive effects in addition to mobilizing VE (True and Eddyono 2017: 12-13). The use of gendered recruitment strategies, including GBV and gendered symbolism, have led recent researchers to argue that ISIS is "not merely an insurgency: it is a patriarchal counter-cultural movement" (True and Eddyono 2017: 20).

Saskia Wieringa has written about the recent movement in Indonesia to promote gender harmony and the "happy, peaceful family" (*keluarga sakinah*), arguing that the discourse of "obedient busy housewives of the New Order" active in state-run community organizations and in the later New Order work outside the home, has been replaced by an "emphasis on obedient and pious housewives" (2015: 28). This understanding of gender roles is even more restrictive than the New Order understanding, as the "pious wife in a *keluarga sakinah* should only leave the house to attend the mosque (and only after she has finished her domestic tasks)." The new understanding does not include the community and economic activities found during the later New Order (Wieringa 2015: 35).

It is not only women's gender roles that are changing. Masculinity is also undergoing change in contemporary Indonesia, reflecting what some scholars have referred to as a crisis (Wichelen 2009: 180). In Indonesia, hegemonic masculinity was conceived not as Islamic, but as shaped during the struggle against colonialism and during the New Order period as one of "Javanese fatherism" (bapakism) and "Indonesianness" (Wichelen 2009: 180). Yet, this is changing in post-New Order Indonesia as Islamic definitions of masculinity are gaining ground at the same time as women's emancipation and gender equality discourses circulating outside of Islamic contexts. The result is that Islamic discourses, while challenging hegemonic New Order Javanese ideas of masculinity, end up reaffirming hypermasculinity and Javanese paternalism in an Islamic framework – continuing long-held patriarchal definitions of Indonesian masculinity (Wichelen 2009: 181).

Lies Marcoes, founder of Rumah Kita Bersama (Rumah KitaB), a Jakarta-based think tank that has conducted research with women involved in extremist groups, writes that the allure of radical groups for Indonesian women "can be explained partly by the position of women in patriarchal society and the desire of these women to contribute to building 'an ideologically pure state' grounded in the laws of God" (Marcoes 2015). For women who are already living in a *keluarga sakinah* that limits their involvement outside of the home and their roles within it, joining a VE movement may feel like an expression of an emancipatory ideology, or at least one that gives women's roles greater meaning. Marcoes argues that the idea of the caliphate for Indonesian women is about "their mandatory duty according to sharia as an answer to social and economic disparity." Indonesian women care about injustice and inequality and are drawn to calls for a caliphate to answer these concerns, as the Indonesian state has not been able to (Marcoes 2015).

3.7 PROTECTION OF WOMEN AND GIRLS DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY INVOLVED IN VE

GBV takes many forms in Indonesia, although hard data on its prevalence or how it might be rising in conjunction with the dissemination of extremist gender ideologies is lacking.[33] One of the key domains

[33] UNFPA, in conjunction with Indonesia's National Women's Commission, began carrying out the first nationwide prevalence survey on violence against women in 2016, with data expected in Fall 2018. UNFPA states: "In Indonesia, the scale of gender-based violence is still largely unknown. Service statistics are available, but this does

in which it operates in conjunction with VE is early and forced marriage. In Indonesia the age of consent for marriage for women is 16 years of age, while for men it is 19 (Marriage Law, No. 1/1974). Efforts to promote the ideal of the *keluarga sakinah* or harmonious family have taken forms including arranged, early (age 15-19) and mass marriage (Nisa 2011: 797). In communities who oppose Indonesia's Marriage Law for setting a minimum age for marriage which they argue is not specified in Islam, there is no ban on early marriage or child marriage (Nisa 2011: 809-810). Researchers have recently argued that advocacy of child marriage could be an early warning sign of violent extremism (True 2017).

In *jihadi* families, women are tasked with bearing, raising and educating *mujahidin* children; mentally preparing and supporting their husbands in jihad; and becoming breadwinners and caretakers for their families when *mujahid* husbands are fighting, incarcerated or on the run (IPAC 2017a: 5-6; Saputro 2010: 214). Girls who grow up in *jihadi* families are likely to be married to *mujahid* in their family networks, whether through encouragement by parents or due to the prestige *mujahidin* carry in *jihadist* circles. This creates strong kinship networks in and between extremist groups (IPAC 2017a: 5-6; Saputro 2010: 221-222). These kinship networks, created through marriage of women to male leaders, serve as a communication link and familial bond in extremist networks, in what Saputro terms the "reproduction of a 'terrorism dynasty'" (*reproduksi 'dinasti terrorisme'*) (Saputro 2010: 222). This familial link is evidenced by the high numbers of second-generation *mujahidin* who traveled to Syria (Jones 2018). Leaving an extremist group thus also means leaving behind one's family and support network (Woodward et. al 2010: 46).

With women and children making up most Indonesians deported from Turkey for attempting to cross into ISIS-controlled territory, VE places women deportees in the role of breadwinner and head of the family unit both in Turkey and upon return to Indonesia (McVey 2016, 2017; Wockner 2017). Indonesian women widowed in ISIS territory are remarried as soon as their period of waiting is over, during which time they must live in ISIS safe houses if they do not have a living male relative, which means rather than return home, they may become part of international terrorist networks through marriages to their new husbands (IPAC 2017a: 16). For those women who become combatants or actively involved in terrorism, they cannot work in a mix-gender team without a husband or close family member, thus, they are married to their contacts, often in polygamous marriages, as in Dian Yulia Novi's case (IPAC 2017a).

Jihadi families are isolated from the broader community due in part to choices of clothing, running their own *pengajian* (Qur'anic study group), and restrictions on movement without male relatives. Families of known terrorists deal with significant social stigma (Amindoni 2018). As *jihadi* families focus on women's roles in child-bearing, child rearing and educating, when a husband goes to jail or goes off to combat, women become the breadwinners with little background or training in business and often little to no work experience. Wives of terrorism convicts also experience discrimination at work (Amindoni 2018). This places women as the head of the family but without social support except from their VE network, further marginalizing these women and giving them little chance to leave VE.

3.8 EFFECTS OF VE ON GENDER ROLES

While women's roles in *jihadi* families focus on bearing many children and disseminating values to the next generation of *mujahidin*, fundamentalist Muslims in Indonesia have also linked a discourse of family values to having multiple children. While Indonesia was previously very successful in a coercive state-run family planning program (Dwyer 1999), the VE and fundamentalist focus on large families leads to

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not show the magnitude of the problem. This lack of credible data in Indonesia has been a consistent barrier to effective action against gender-based violence." (UNFPA 2016).

resistance to family planning not only amongst VE and fundamentalist networks, but in the broader society (Berkley Center 2013). Family planning is an example of just one of the areas where the Indonesia government has been reticent to get involved in the discussion, leaving the framing of whether or not family planning is acceptable and the make-up of the ideal Muslim family and women's reproductive role within Muslim families to VE and fundamentalist discourse (Berkley Center 2013).

A Female Apocalypse?

In an IRI-conducted Focus Group Discussion in urban Java in late 2017, members of Islamic political parties expressed views on the possibility of electing a woman president of the country. A member of one party said, "[T]he expansion of women has gone everywhere. Men's jobs are almost all taken away. So, if these are all taken and the president is taken, what do men get to be? Soon it will be the apocalypse." A member of a different Islamic party said women should create male leaders, rather than become leaders: "In my opinion…there is a special role of women that is so noble: to create leaders is the woman's main job."

In particular, Schulze and Liow (2018) argue that the Indonesian state's reticence to enter debates on Islamism, Islamic law, the definition of heresy, and Muslim identity created a space for ISIS ideology domestically, allowing it to fill ideological gaps where the state was reluctant to engage. The space available to VE ideology in Indonesian political discourse and debates around what it means to be a "good Muslim" or the "nature of Muslim identity" (Schulze and Liow 2018: 2) has in turn contributed to shifting everyday Indonesian discourses on gender and Islam towards a more conservative slant.

On the other hand, in Indonesia there is a tendency to perceive Wahhabism and VE as linked and interdependent (Woodward et. al. 2010). This tendency in Indonesian discourse, including calls by CVE practitioners to view changes in *hijab* use as an "everyday warning sign" and systematically monitor women's dress (True and Eddyono 2017: 14), has repercussions for women. An Indonesian stereotype that links wearing the *niqab* or *cadar* (face veil) with terrorism is one of the ways in which women are stigmatized in their fashion and religious choices by VE narratives. In some communities this has led women to drop out of university due to restrictions on wearing the cadar (Nisa 2012: 372-373). The State Islamic University Sunan Kalijaga in Yogyakarta recently attempted to record cadar wearing students (they found 42) and make them attend up to nine counselling sessions, after which time if they still wore the cadar they would be asked not to come to campus (BBC Indonesia 2018). Shortly thereafter, the ban was withdrawn, under pressure.

Conversely, women who do not wear the *hijab*, or do not conform to changing notions of the "correct" way to cover their hair, may be accused of being "non-Muslim" (True and Eddyono 2017: 36). This leads to a situation where women are constantly judged by others as either "extremists" or "not-Muslim-enough" based on their choice of head covering, creating near constant debates over women's bodies as symbols of piety, morality, or threats to the nation (Izharuddin 2015). Some research has pointed towards an increased social perception in Indonesia that women's choice of head covering reflects on men's masculinity and piety. An unmarried woman without a *hijab* reflects poorly on her father, making it not solely her choice whether to cover, but a sin of her father if she does not. Likewise, it is sinful for husbands to have wives who do not wear *hijab* (True and Eddyono 2017: 38).

3.9 INDONESIAN CVE AND GENDER PROGRAMS

A recent national survey[34] by LSI (*Lembaga Survei Indonesia*), supported by UN Women and the Wahid Foundation, found that women were more unwilling to become radical (80.8%) than men (76.7%). It also

[34] The survey was conducted in October 2017 with 1500 male and female respondents (1:1 ratio) in 34 provinces in Indonesia.

showed that women respondents rated their autonomy to make decisions in their lives (53.3%) as less than male respondents (80.2%) (Wahid Foundation 2018).[35] Yet, the survey results showed that while women may be less likely to actively partake in radical activities, more women (1 in 10) than men (1 in 13) are likely to be ideologically supportive of VE groups like ISIS and JI (UN Women 2018a: 15). Many of the non-governmental CVE programs in Indonesia focus on the intersection of these issues highlighted in the survey results and work towards women's economic and social empowerment and women's leadership in peaceful and tolerant communities. This section will highlight general approaches to local CVE programming in Indonesia before turning specifically to CVE programming that specifically addresses gender.

3.10 *PESANTREN* AND *ISLAM NUSANTARA*

Islam Nusantara ("Islam of the archipelago") is a term used by many Indonesian Muslims to refer to long-standing practices of accommodating Islam to local contexts and traditions. The concept was revived and promoted in 2016 by Indonesia's largest Muslim organization, NU, as a counter-narrative to the spread of extremist ideologies. By emphasizing the "Indonesianness" of local Islamic practice, proponents of *Islam Nusantara* have hoped to cast VE discourses as foreign to the country, emphasizing instead a tolerance for local cultural practices. Indonesia's president Joko Widodo has lent his support to the Islam Nusantara concept as a counter-ideology to VE messaging, calling it a bulwark of support for Indonesia's constitution and its national motto of "unity in diversity."

Multiple scholars have noted the role that Indonesian Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) play not in radicalization (with a few notable exceptions)[36] but in the prevention of violent extremism (Woodward et. al 2010). These boarding schools are led by respected religious leaders known as *Kyai*. As Woodward et. al (2010:35) note, "The respect with which *Kyai* are regarded has significant implications for understanding counter-radical discourse in Indonesia. A simple statement denouncing radicalism and violence by a prominent *Kyai* carries more weight among traditional Indonesian Muslims than elaborate educational programs designed by government ministries, NGOs and international donors." Some Islamic boarding schools have attempted to counter extremism through their curriculum, offering required courses on comparative religion (a subject that is not offered in compulsory religious education in Indonesia's state schools), or sports activities with local Catholic schools (Woodward et. al 2010: 42).

Scholars have associated students with secular backgrounds who attend secular schools and universities with vulnerability to radicalization, contrasted with students from pesantren who often attend Islamic universities (Woodward et. al 2010: 32, 42). This is due to the perception that secular schools, while mandated to teach religion, offer simplistic understandings and interpretations of Islam (Woodward et. al 2010: 34). Religious extra-curricular programs in state schools have been the site of radicalization of some of Indonesia's most militant extremists (Jones 2018).

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[35] This was based on indicators such as who made the choice of partner in marriage; who made the choice to work or not; party that has the most influence over religious views; and determining who to vote for in the general election. It was found that women had the least autonomy in religious views, with 49% of respondents reporting that religious views were determined by men rather than themselves, with 37.6% reporting that they chose their own religious views (Wahid Foundation, 2018).

[36] Jema'ah Islamiyah (JI) were known to have a network of pesantren based in Ngruki, Surakarta, Central Java (ICG 2002). Search for Common Ground (SFCG) had a program with 10 pesantren in Indonesia that were perceived as being involved in or sympathetic to local VE activity. The program included documentary filmmaking and student-run radio stations and creating a comic book series within the schools to enable discussions on identity, tolerance and diversity (SFCG 2017c: 31).

Indonesian religious organizations are also working towards gender equality in Indonesian society, with a focus on countering gender inequality in the home. NU organization ALIMAT (Indonesian Family Movement for Equality and Justice) is working to promote gender equality in the family, challenging the predominant cultural view of men as decision makers and head of the family. Through their research, ALIMAT found that family hierarchies have not caught up to demographic realities in many Indonesian families. For example, when women migrate and become breadwinners for the families, their symbolic or decision-making roles do not change even though they have become the primary provider (True and Eddyono 2017: 47).

The Wahid Foundation,[37] the University of Indonesia's Police Research Center (PRIK), the Aliansi Indonesia Damai (AIDA – Indonesia Peace Alliance), Muhammadiyah's Maarif Institute, and the INGO Search for Common Ground (SFCG) all have programs working to engage youth in the prevention of violent extremism. Some programs, like those of the Wahid Foundation and SFCG, focus on broader issues of multiculturalism, pluralism, conflict management, leadership, peace and tolerance, while PRIK and AIDA bring former extremists and/or victims of terrorism to speak with schools and universities across the country (Sumpter 2017: 122-123). Maarif Institute runs a week-long youth camp targeting schools with a reputation of extremist leanings or schools affected by radicalism/extremism, focusing on character building and experiential learning, including an interfaith component through meeting with people from other religions (Sumpter 2017: 124). Some students from the camp are invited to a three-day Peace Journalism Workshop to improve media literacy and social media skills for counter-messaging on social media (Sumpter 2017: 124-125). However, challenges remain for these programs with ensuring the continuing support of participants and measuring their long-term impact, with programs tending to consider only short-term outputs rather than medium and longer-term outcomes. More investments in the evaluation of programs to recruit youth to CVE efforts, and how young men and women may experience specific challenges in this arena, are clearly needed.

With NU's 60 million members and the modernist Muslim organization Muhammadiyah's 30 million members, their involvement in the promotion of public celebrations of local Islamic traditions like the *Takbir Keliling* processions on the eve of *Idul Fitri*, or celebrations of the Prophet's birthday, can contribute to feelings of community and "fun" that is considered haram by extremist interpretations of Islam (Woodward 2010: 43-44). Encouraging and participating in these sorts of festivals may serve as a form of "counter-radical action" (Woodward et. al 2010: 44). This demonstrates that there are multiple avenues to CVE in Indonesia, including simply strengthening existing cultural and Islamic practices such as festivals, pesantren and *Islam Nusantara*. Community-based interventions and initiatives serve two purposes: to provide an alternative community and interpretation of Islam to that of *jihadi* communities and to approach *jihadi* families and those at-risk of radicalization on a community level rather than from the state security apparatus.

While these programs are laudable in engaging with youth of all genders and the broader community, programs that specifically address gendered components of VE may be needed in greater number now that Indonesian women have not only emigrated to join ISIS but have attempted terrorist attacks in their home country. To address these challenges, some Indonesian CSOs have been working on women's economic empowerment and involving women in the promotion of peaceful and tolerant communities, while others have approached at-risk families, particularly wives of incarcerated or recently released terrorists.

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[37] The Wahid Institute is run by Yenny Wahid, daughter of former Indonesian President and former leader of NU Abdurrahman Wahid ("Gus Dur").

3.11 CIVIL SOCIETY CVE EFFORTS

The trust between CSOs and communities often makes CSOs better suited than state institutions to engage in prevention and de-radicalization efforts with communities and individuals at risk for VE (Sumpter 2017: 120). Yet states should not exclusively rely on civil society and donor-led initiatives for CVE and need to continue to be actively involved in CVE programming (True and Eddyono 2017: 65). Sumpter (2017: 120) notes that many CSOs in Indonesia try to distance themselves from CVE and de-radicalization language. As Sumpter explains, civil society practitioners think that "if audiences or individuals identified as being vulnerable to adopting extremist convictions believe interventions are premised on a perceived security threat, they will be less likely to participate actively" (2017: 120). In civil society-led efforts to prevent or counter VE, economic empowerment programs, particularly microfinance and savings groups, are popular ways to approach communities, while some recent efforts have included community libraries and human trafficking prevention to build rapport with target communities (interview, Yogyakarta CSO, January 2018).

Since 2009, the University of Indonesia's Police Research Center has applied a personal approach to incarcerated terrorists, released terrorism convicts and their families. Wives of incarcerated terrorists receive three visits coordinated by the center, from a policewoman, an *ustadh* (Islamic scholar or teacher), and a psychologist. To counter to the livelihood funding from *jihadi* networks, women receive entrepreneurship training (Varagur 2017). The Institute for International Peacebuilding (IIPB; known by the Indonesian name Yayasan Prasasti Perdamaian or YPP in it English acronym) gives small business loans to women whose husbands are out of prison. Both programs are small-scale and must rely on non-governmental funding as convicted terrorists do not trust the government and particularly do not trust the counterterrorism agency (BNPT), but private donors are hard to come by due to fears of possibly financing terrorism by supporting terrorism convicts or their families (Varagur 2017).

While these programs are laudable, the interventions are still framed as enabling the wife in supporting the husband to keep him from returning to VE. The underpinning of these programs is that while the husband gets access to de-radicalization programming in prison there is not similar programming for his wife who needs to support him when he finishes his sentence. Thus, there is a need to support the wife so she can support her released husband. Yet, what if the wife is more radical? What if the couple became involved in VE due to her ideology, or they both came to it separately and met in a VE network, like Indonesia's recent would-be female suicide bombers? While Indonesia is a patriarchal society, and women's autonomy is more limited than men's, as evidenced by the 2017 Wahid Foundation, UN Women and LSI survey, CVE programming should also respond to the possibility that some women may be involved in VE of their own volition, perhaps even encouraging their husbands to join VE networks.

Local organizations have realized that women play considerable roles in not only the support and propagation of VE networks but also increasingly in operational roles, which signifies the need to address women's involvement in VE directly. These organizations believe that women look to operational roles in VE networks as a way to be active on a par with men, rather than serving subservient roles or reproduction focused-roles (Borpujari 2017). Asian Muslims Action Network (AMAN) and Rumah Kita Bersama are two organizations harnessing the experience and knowledge of Indonesia's women ulama to reach out to women involved in VE networks. The idea is that "women have an advantage that their male counterparts don't: the experience of being a woman, trying to establish herself in a patriarchal world", and this can be used as a catalyst in countering extremist views (Borpujari 2017). Rumah Kita Bersama is developing a curriculum for women ulama from areas where there have been arrests of extremists. The idea, like other Indonesian groups, is to work with the families of jailed extremists, but the difference is the involvement of women ulama and acknowledgement of women's active operational roles in VE.

Several Indonesian organizations, particularly those aligned with NU, such as ALIMAT, Fatayat, Fahmina, Rahima, and the Wahid Foundation, have focused on broader programs promoting gender equality and women's rights in Islam as a means of countering the gendered ideologies spread by VE supporters. Many of these efforts focus on economic empowerment, while others focus on redefining the role of women within Muslim families, Islam and women's rights, and empowering women as religious and community leaders. One example of Muslim women's leadership is the recent congress of Indonesian women *ulama* (now called KUPI) held in Cirebon in 2017, where *fatwa* were issued against child marriage, sexual violence and environmental degradation (Wardah 2017).

Wahid Foundation's savings group *Koperasi Cinta Damai* (KCD) launched in 2013 in West Java and has reached 2,000 women in through business units and small capital loans. The aim of the program is both economic empowerment and "building a sense of respect for differences… reinforcing religious tolerance in the society" (Wahid Foundation n.d.). The KCD facilitated by the Wahid Foundation meet weekly and learn about small business development and financial management with women of various social and religious backgrounds. For the past year, UN Women has supported the groups with capital for loans (Demolis 2017). The KCD also started a laundry business called One Laundry to increase women's economic empowerment in Bojongsari. Women involved in the laundry project play roles from washing to serving as marketing executives (Wahid Foundation 2017).

Wahid Foundation and the UN Women "Empowered Women, Peaceful Communities"[38] program have launched *Kampung Damai*, funded by the Government of Japan, to create 30 model peace villages. The villages are spread throughout Central, East and West Java. The theory of change is that empowering women will lead to social cohesion and peaceful communities which will lead to preventing violent extremism. The idea is to encourage women's roles in inclusive social and economic activities beginning with peace within the family and then collectively deciding guidelines for the community, as an inclusive, interfaith endeavor. Women Without Borders (WWB), a Vienna-based INGO, began promoting Mothers' Schools in Indonesia in 2013 (BBC Indonesia 2016). Indonesian women's activists have adapted the model to local conditions, and in 2016 inaugurated a "Parenting for Peace-Mother School Indonesia program in Jember, East Java, a region chosen for its large migrant worker population, with the aim of encouraging participants to spread its teachings and attend to the issue of children left behind by migrating parents. Program participants, who include women police, members of Islamic women's groups, and women migrant workers, are taught how to strengthen their bonds with their adolescent children but also how to identify and respond to early signs of youth radicalization (Jatim Times 2016).

These civil society programs acknowledge that the drivers leading women to participate in VE are not purely ideological, social, or economic in nature but are instead multi-dimensional. Programs that work to promote women's equality, economic empowerment, and interfaith tolerance, as many of the Indonesian civil society-led interventions do, focus on the interconnected push and pull factors involved in women's engagement with VE.

Indonesia has also seen an increase in the number of independent filmmakers addressing the issue of VE as a central or sub-plot, including *3 Doa, 3 Cinta* (Three Prayers, Three Loves) starring major Indonesian film stars Dian Sastrowardoyo and Nicholas Saputra, the documentary *Jihad Selfie*, and *Mata Tertutup* starring Jajang C. Noer and directed by the well-known Garin Nugroho. In Mata Tertutup (The Blindfold) Nugroho used research from Muhammadiyah's Maarif Institute to create the vignettes in the

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[38] UN Women's Empowered Women, Peaceful Communities program is supported by the Government of Japan, and includes research on VE and gender in Indonesia, technical support to the National Agency for Combating Terrorism to create a gender-sensitive National Action Plan to Counter and Prevent Violent Extremism (UN Women 2018a).

film. Two of the three vignettes in the film are told from the vantage point of women involved in VE, one whose daughter was abducted by a VE group while she was in the process of going through a divorce, and one who was trying to discover her own identity and ended up joining an Indonesian VE group as a recruiter. She later became disillusioned by the roles offered to women (Lehmann 2012). Films like these show real and fictional stories that depict women's roles in VE as complex and contextualized by issues such as motherhood, divorce, identity and Indonesian gender roles. They provide powerful examples of the role of popular media in countering the narratives that help drive VE.

3.12 CONCLUSION

While the past few years have seen an increase in Indonesian women playing active roles as combatants and terrorist plotters, there has also been an increase in CVE efforts targeted at women and focusing on broader understandings of gender equality in Islam and Indonesian society. These efforts acknowledge the role women play in society and work to further empower women to be effective agents in preventing radical extremism at the village and household level. Yet CVE efforts in Indonesia need to also realize the role of women as active agents of extremism and work to prevent women's radicalization as well as support women in preventing radicalization of their families and communities.

More attention needs to be paid to men's experience of gender roles and pressures to fulfil such roles as an entry point for VE recruitment. Further research on the intersection of Indonesian normative gender roles and recruitment to VE networks would allow for more targeted P/CVE programming aimed at not only general improvement in gender equality but specifically at the gendered dynamics that can become causative pathways to VE.

4. CASE STUDY: KYRGYZSTAN

Kyrgyzstan is an important case study to examine issues of gender and VE in a post-Soviet, majority Muslim, Central Asian republic. While it is the most democratic of the Central Asian republics, Kyrgyzstan also has the distinction of having the largest number of nationals in the region travelling to Syria and Iraq to join ISIS. With a reported 863 people emigrating from Kyrgyzstan to become foreign fighters in Syria and Iraq from 2011 to June 2016, Kyrgyzstan is the largest contributor to the Syrian conflict in the region, both per capita and in total numbers.[39] As of the end of 2016, over 20% or 188 of those who travelled to join ISIS were women (Speckhard et al. 2017: 4). When travel from Kyrgyzstan to Syria was at its highest point, one in four Kyrgyz leaving for Syria were women (UN Women 2017b).

Kyrgyzstan has witnessed domestic attacks by VE actors and Kyrgyz citizens have committed violent attacks abroad. The terrorists involved in the 2017 St. Petersburg Metro attack, the 2013 Boston Marathon bombing, and the 2016 Istanbul airport attack all had links to Kyrgyzstan (Yeginsu and Callimachi 2016; Nechepurenko and MacFarquhar 2017). Domestic attacks by violent extremists including a 2016 suicide bomb attack on the Chinese embassy in Bishkek. Local data shows over 400 people in prison for terrorist and extremist crimes,[40] a five-fold increase from 2010 (UNODC 2018). It is no surprise that VE in this Central Asian republic has become a concern for donors, the Kyrgyzstan government, religious and civil society organizations, neighboring countries and ordinary Kyrgyz citizens.

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[39] MSI interview with an official from the State Commission on Religious Affairs (SCRA) put the number of Kyrgyz citizens who traveled to Syria and Iraq at over 1,000 (interview, April 4 2018).

[40] This does not necessarily mean violent extremism, as holding Hizb ut-Tahrir pamphlets can be enough to trigger a conviction in Kyrgyzstan under article 299 of the Criminal Code ('inciting national, racial, sectarian, or interfaith strife'). Hizb ut-Tahrir has been banned in Kyrgyzstan since 2003.

Kyrgyzstan is home to multiple groups who may be ripe for recruitment by VE networks, including the under- and unemployed (particularly youth), the ethnic Uzbek minority in the south of the country, and migrant workers in Russia, Kazakhstan and Turkey. Coupled with low literacy levels and low levels of educational attainment, perceptions of the lack of opportunity in these communities may lead to the positive reception of ISIS messaging and propaganda (SFCG 2015: 5; Speckhard et al. 2017). Corruption is also a major issue in Kyrgyzstan, which ranks 154th out of 176 countries on Transparency International's 2012 corruption perceptions index (Martini 2013).

A considerable number of the Kyrgyz foreign fighters in Syria are from the Uzbek minority community. The Kyrgyzstan government estimates that 70 percent of Kyrgyz in Syria are ethnic Uzbeks (State Department 2016). The overthrow of President Bakiyev in 2010 was accompanied by inter-ethnic violence targeted primarily at ethnic Uzbek communities in southern Kyrgyzstan. The violence displaced 400,000 ethnic Uzbeks, 111,000 of whom fled across the border into Uzbekistan. It also destroyed more than 2,800 homes and led to the deaths of 470, three quarters of whom were ethnic Uzbeks. More than three quarters of those detained were also ethnic Uzbeks (Zenn and Kuehnast 2014: 3; ICG 2016: 8; Equal Rights Trust 2016: IX, 135). Although Uzbeks accounted for most of the deaths and victims of violence, 24 of the 27 individuals accused of murder were Uzbek (Equal Rights Trust 2016: 136). There are credible accusations of torture and ill-treatment of ethnic Uzbeks during detention following the 2010 violence (Equal Rights Trust 2016: 138).[41] The unresolved grievances of this conflict, along with perceptions of ongoing social inequality and discrimination among ethnic Uzbek citizens of Kyrgyzstan may be one push factor leading to their disproportionate recruitment by violent extremist groups (Zenn and Kuehnast 2014: 4; Speckhard et al. 2017: 18).[42] There is also a state narrative that frames those attracted to VE as Uzbeks and vice versa, which has been adopted by the general public (Mercy Corps 2016: 16), further increasing their marginalization.

Ethnic divisions are one of many major social fault lines in Kyrgyzstan. After almost 30 years of transitioning from 70 years of Soviet rule, Kyrgyzstan remains divided between those upholding Soviet-style secularism and those who view Islam as increasingly important to personal and national identity (Zenn and Kuehnast 2014: 1, 11). This divide leads to perceptions that outward expressions of piety are linked to extremist views on the one hand, and that religious people are targeted by the state because of their religiosity on the other. Official rhetoric and actions by security forces lump violent, non-violent, and political and apolitical groups together as a threat to the nation and as 'bad Islam' (McBrien 2006: 55, 62; Tromble 2014). This is also present in policy and academic work, as definitions of extremism are unclear and distinctions are not made between violent and non-violent actions and rhetoric (cf. ICG 2009; SFCG 2016: 12; Speckhard et al. 2017; Zenn and Kuehnast 2014).

4.1 WOMEN AND VE

Extremist groups have recruited and involved women in a variety of roles, including as companions of male fighters, replacements for their incarcerated or labor migrant husbands, as mothers in jihadi families, and as militants who draw less suspicion from authorities. Both ethnic Kyrgyz and Uzbek women experience similar types of recruitment into VE networks, including social media, and face-to-face methods through prayer groups, family ties and migration (ICG 2016: 7; Speckhard et al. 2017a: 8).

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[41] Human Rights Watch reports that some ethnic Kyrgyz also made allegations of torture and ill-treatment (2011: 1).

[42] The tendency to recruit and promote Kyrgyz-speaking imams over other ethnic groups and the state's reliance on Kyrgyz as the official language but also as the language of the *fatwas* and official instructions of the Muftiate (Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Kyrgyzstan) may be part of this dynamic as well, as Uzbek speakers will have to look to non-Muftiate imams (SFCG n.d.: 25, 31).

Women's reasons for joining VE networks are diverse, but the Kyrgyzstan case study shows a strong degree of perceived marginalization amongst women interested in VE. Lack of economic and educational opportunities, lack of mobility, widespread domestic violence, and desire to live in the caliphate are some of the push and pull factors influencing Kyrgyz women (ICG 2016: 11).

Following the 2010 violence in the south, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU)[43] began to more actively recruit women. While initially women were recruited as companions for IMU Central Asian fighters in Afghanistan, they later began to feature women in recruitment videos (Zenn and Kuehnast 2014: 6-7). Through IMU, and later ISIS, propaganda the idea of a caliphate that would include all Muslims resonated with ethnic Uzbeks who expressed feelings of marginalization and injustice in Kyrgyzstan (Speckhard et al. 2017a: 8). Ideological motivations and desires for inclusion and belonging seem to have been compounded by economic incentives to travel to Syria, particularly for poor and rural women (Speckhard et al. 2017a: 11). Rumors of "signing bonuses" for recruiting family members to ISIS may have led to multiple extended families traveling to Syria, led by women (Speckhard et al. 2017a: 10-11). However, available data on men and women from Kyrgyzstan who have traveled to Syria shows that for the majority, their socio-economic situation was not the key factor in the decision to leave for Syria (Esengul 2016).

As in other countries, social media and websites have become not only key tools in recruitment but have allowed women to engage as recruiters without leaving the home or interacting directly with men. Social media sites popular for recruitment include Youtube, Facebook, WhatsApp and Russian social networks Odnoklassniki and VKontakte, popular among migrant workers. Two Kyrgyz women in Jalal-Abad were sentenced in 2016 to prison terms of six and seven years for attempted recruitment of another Kyrgyz woman to travel to Syria to join ISIS (Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty 2016). Social media communication over WhatsApp has also been cited as a method of recruiting young women to come to Syria as brides (Speckhard et al. 2017: 10).

But ISIS did not only target fighters and brides through online recruitment campaigns in Kyrgyzstan. SFCG staffers found that ISIS targeted women in medicine. Women studying in medical school must spend more years in school and often remained unmarried after 25 – by which time marriage is expected. These women are marginalized by Kyrgyz society and their own families, but they are welcomed by ISIS (Seldin 2015). Several young women have been apprehended at Osh airport in southern Kyrgyzstan, en route to Syria. According to SFCG, those detained gave explanations for wanting to travel to ISIS territory such as "access to 'halal husbands' and 'free diapers,' as well as the opportunity to play empowering functions like 'medical nurses and snipers'" (SFCG 2017).

Kyrgyzstani security officials believe that almost all women traveling to Syria were either part of a family unit or following their spouses to Syria, rather than leaving for Syria to become brides (Speckhard et al. 2017: 10). Law enforcement officials and government authorities in Kyrgyzstan tend to view women involved in extremist networks as duped or seduced into a life of VE by their husbands or families (Speckhard et al. 2017: 10). As extremists' views of gender roles are seen in opposition to Soviet ideals of gender equality and the emancipated woman, explanations of women's involvement in VE groups often center on coercion (McBrien and Pelkmans 2008: 93). The dominant stereotype used by government officials is that of the traditional obedient wife who travels to Syria with her husband rather than of her own volition (Speckhard et al. 2017a: 10). Due to this prevailing view, although involvement in foreign conflicts is a criminal offense in Kyrgyzstan, women returnees from Syria are often not judged as harshly as their husbands and may not be imprisoned. Of the three known women who have

[43] The IMU is declared a terrorist organization by the US government and has carried out attacks in Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Afghanistan and Pakistan (Zeen and Kuehast 2014: 6).

returned from ISIS, only one is in prison (Speckhard et al. 2017a: 6). For women returnees, a return to the community where they face stigma and the potentially inability to remarry or find acceptance into their parents' or in-laws' homes could lead to re-recruitment by VEOs (Speckhard et al. 2017a: 11, 14).

4.2 LABOR MIGRATION

Labor migration is a major source of income for Kyrgyzstan, with remittances accounting for 30% of GDP in 2014 (ICG 2016). This puts Kyrgyzstan in third place globally for the percentage of GDP derived from remittances (Beishenaly 2016). Labor migrants from Kyrgyzstan travel primarily to Russia, followed by Kazakhstan and Turkey. In 2015, there were officially 500,000 Kyrgyzstani migrants in Russia (Beishenaly 2016). While official statistics are unreliable, recent estimates have put labor migrants at 10 to 20% of the entire population (not just of the labor force), with 50,000 leaving the country annually for work abroad and up to 1,000,000 involved in labor migration (FIDH 2016: 4).

Labor migration is gendered, with men constituting a majority of Kyrgyzstan's labor migrants. This significantly alters rural and town dynamics, as women, children and the elderly are left behind while men migrate domestically or abroad for work (Ismailbekova 2014: 375). Women left behind in agricultural areas take on considerable roles in caregiving and domestic tasks as well as in livestock tending and agricultural work traditionally performed by men (Muldoon and Casabonne 2017: 5). In addition to their household and farm work, women left behind by migrating spouses handle finances and make family decisions that would otherwise fall to men (Muldoon and Casabonne 2017: vii).

While abroad, men may take a second wife or divorce their wife at home in Kyrgyzstan (Speckhard et al. 2017a: 8). Many women are involved in Islamic marriages (*nikah*) that are religious marriages but are not state-sanctioned or registered. Thus, when they divorce, they can be expelled from their in-laws' house without any rights over property, alimony or child support (IWPR 2017; FIDH 2016: 40-41). The combination of Islamic marriages and migration creates an additional vulnerability for women when only one spouse is involved in migration, as their husbands may easily divorce them while abroad leaving them with no financial or social support (FIDH 2016: 40-41; ICG 2016: 11). Women in this situation may be particularly vulnerable to exploitation; children left behind by migrating parents are also vulnerable (FIDH 2016: 49). This can make those left behind by migration easy targets for VE recruiters (ICG 2016: 11).

While labor migration from Kyrgyzstan has traditionally involved male laborers, the feminization of migration has increased in recent years. Official Russian figures from 2016 show that 223,073 Kyrgyz citizens in Russia are women, accounting for 40% of Russia's official Kyrgyz migrant community (FIDH 2016: 4). Some reports claim that married women may be forced into migrant work by the in-laws, some with their husbands remaining at home unemployed (Speckhard, et al. 2017a: 10). While abroad, unaccompanied female migrants may be victims of sexual violence. They may also be involved in premarital or extra-marital relationships due to their relative social freedom as migrants, which may leave them vulnerable to terrorist recruitment through coercion and blackmail or emotional and financial distress (Speckhard et al. 2017b: 26). When female migrants return to Kyrgyzstan, unmarried women may choose to remain in cities rather than returning to their native villages, afraid of losing their independence or being stereotyped as 'easy' or other negative stereotypes of migrant women (UN Women 2017a: 59). They may also be vulnerable to recruitment by VE networks as they remain outside of their family homes but are also limited in access to finance and jobs in the Kyrgyz economy, making it difficult to deploy skills and capital gained abroad once they return to Kyrgyzstan (UN Women 2017a: 59).

While women are affected by men's labor migration, taking on agricultural or wage labor at home, the recent feminization of migration from Kyrgyzstan has challenged traditional gender norms that view

women's roles as primarily in the domestic sphere and men's roles as breadwinners for the family. Men left behind by their migrant wives may be more active in childcare – seen as traditionally a woman's duty – while living in a social milieu that has expectations of the performance of masculinity (Muldoon and Casabonne 2017: vii). Men left behind may also be easily recruited by VE groups using local conceptions of masculinity, drawing gender ideologies of men as breadwinners and offering socio-economic incentives.

Both male and female migrant laborers experience mistreatment, low wages and job insecurity, as an estimated 65% of all migrants are working in Russia illegally (ICG 2010: 5).[44] Estranged from social networks, migrants may be easy targets for extremist recruiters (State Department 2016). In fact, the Kyrgyz government has stated its belief that most Kyrgyzstani violent extremists are radicalized abroad (State Department 2016), although evidence confirming this is thin. For those experiencing mistreatment and danger in their host country, VE recruiters' offers of housing and financial assistance may seem competitive with remaining in a tough situation abroad (Speckhard et al. 2017a: 8).

4.3 RELIGIOUS AND SECULAR EDUCATION

After 70 years of Soviet rule and official policies of atheism, Kyrgyzstan's Muslim communities have comparatively weak religious knowledge. However, weak religious knowledge is not only a problem amongst Kyrgyzstan's practicing Muslims. A 2015 SFCG survey found that a lack of religious education amongst Kyrgyzstan's secular communities led to stereotypes "causing radical sentiments towards religious representatives…some respondents noted that 'extremism is the very religion of Islam'" (SFCG 2015: 5).

The secular education system has experienced significant decline since independence from the Soviet Union. Corruption occurs on the part of students and educators, where educators are underqualified and have gained their positions through bribes or personal connections and students are able to pay for grades and degrees. This leaves an education system where the degrees are not equal to the level and quality of education received, and the available jobs in the country do not match the educational qualifications, which contributes greatly to labor migration and unemployment (Beishenaly 2016). In ethnic Uzbek areas, education is provided in Uzbek language through secondary school. However, while previously offered in Uzbek, state exams necessary to enter university are only available in Russian and Kyrgyz since 2014, significantly diminishing opportunities for Uzbek speakers who are not fluent in Kyrgyz or Russian (Equal Rights Trust 2016: 2).

Religious youth, the most visible of whom are women who wear modest clothing and head coverings, face discrimination even when they are university graduates (ICG 2016: 3). This is particularly the case in accessing education for post-pubescent girls. There is a "verbal" headscarf prohibition in secondary schools, but it is inconsistently enforced, and after advocacy in 2011 there was another "verbal" agreement permitting the *hijab* (ICG 2016: 6; IWPR 2009; Commercio 2015: 544). As *hijab*-wearing young women face discrimination in school many families choose to withdraw their children altogether (ICG 2016: 6).

Leaving school early contributes to early marriage, as women have few employment options outside of the home without education. Likewise, parents may be less willing to invest in educating their daughters

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[44] Central Asians can enter Russia and Kazakhstan without a visa. They are required to register upon entering the country and receive a temporary registration card which does not grant the bearer any employment rights. However, there are national and municipal quotas for migrant labor in Kazakhstan and Russia that can enable a percentage of Kyrgyz migrants to work legally (ICG 2010: 5).

as they will join their husbands' families and contribute to their household and family line after marriage (Saferworld, n.d.). Nationwide, in 2006 12.2% of women aged 20-49 were married before their 18th birthday, increasing to 28.4% of women without a secondary school education, with much higher rates of underage marriage in some parts of the country (World Bank 2012: 11-12).

Once young women are married, they join their husband's families, as Kyrgyzstan is highly patriarchal society which follows patrilineal descent and is patrilocal, with women moving into their husband's family home after marriage and living with their in-laws (Ismailbekova 2014). If a new bride wants to continue her education or work outside the home, she requires approval and support not only by her husband, but also her in-laws. Yet, childcare services, highly accessible under the Soviet system, have declined greatly since independence and most kindergarten programs have been closed. Data from 2009 shows that less than 20 percent of pre-school age children are enrolled in childcare programs (World Bank 2012: 17). This further constricts women's mobility to the domestic sphere as they are re-entrenched in childcare duties.

However, as a pious and modest woman is seen as a good daughter-in-law (ICG 2009: 7), women are often permitted to attend prayer groups or Quranic study groups outside of the home. However, since the Muftiate, the highest Islamic body in Kyrgyzstan, no longer has a women's department (it was closed in 2014), women interested in learning more about Islam often turn to prayer groups from banned organizations or groups with VE ideologies (ICG 2016: 12, 15). While men can pursue religious knowledge in madrassas and mosques, women may be limited to the Internet (Toktonaliev 2018). While Islamic NGOs and NGOs that work with religious women are growing, they are underfunded and under-supported by the Spiritual Directorate of Kyrgyzstan's Muslims (ICG 2016: 12). As women do outreach to other women, state religious organizations need to increase women's leadership and numbers of women staff to provide services to religious women.

4.4 PROTECTION OF WOMEN AND GIRLS

Violence against women in Kyrgyzstan is normalized, with high rates of domestic violence, underage and forced marriages, and the lack of protection from violence by the Kyrgyz state continues even when women leave the country as migrant workers (cf. HRW 2015). Recent research found that there is a link between lack of protection and radicalization. The International Crisis Group reported that the "oppression and violence some women face at home is a significant reason why they seek religious outlets, which sometimes lead to radical and extremist groups" (ICG 2016).

Since 2012, Internet shaming of Kyrgyz women migrant workers by abducting them abroad, videotaping them naked and/or beating them, and posting the videos online has been perpetrated by Kyrgyz men who call themselves "patriots." These men attack and Internet-shame Kyrgyz women for violating the norms of Kyrgyz womanhood by liaising with non-Kyrgyz men (FIDH 2016: 38). In 2016, when three of these so-called "patriots" were arrested in Russia - the first arrests for this sort of behavior - a high ranking government official from the same ministry that arrested the patriots posted about the incident on their Facebook page. He wrote: "The view of knives and stun guns should scare anybody who has seen these videos. But naturally, as a brother and future father, I cannot support the lifestyle that some of our young women lead, which provokes a strong reaction amongst Kyrgyz countrymen" (FIDH 2016: 38).

Bride-kidnapping, while formally outlawed in Kyrgyzstan, has been revived since independence as a 'national tradition', with consensual and non-consensual kidnapping accounting for up to half of ethnic Kyrgyz marriages in the early 2000s (Ismailbekova 2014: 380; Kleinbach, Ablezova, and Aitieva 2005). In 2013, the sentence for bride kidnapping increased from three years to ten years (UN Women 2013). More recent data from a UNFPA nationwide survey in 2016 showed that the practice continues, with

one-fifth of marriages in Kyrgyzstan the result of bride kidnapping (consensual and non-consensual). In some areas, non-consensual kidnapping of brides accounts for up to 21 percent of marriages (Muldoon and Casabonne 2017: 8). UN Women uses figures obtained from local NGO Women Support Centre that puts rates of non-consensual bride-kidnapping at 11,800 per year before the increased sentence in 2013, with 2,000 women reporting rape during the kidnapping (UN Women 2013).

In recent years there has also been a revival of the custom of widows remarrying their husband's next-of-kin (Handrahan 2004: 212). In families involved in VE networks, this means that women may not be able to leave when their husbands are killed, leaving little economic or social space to break away from VE networks.

4.5 GENDER NORMS AND VE

Much of the social restrictions placed on unmarried women come from ideas about a woman's "value" on the "marriage market" relative to the expense to the family of educating a woman or caring for her as a dependent if she remains unmarried (UN Women 2017a). This creates a gender dichotomy where standards for women's behavior to be a "good wife" and "good daughter-in-law" are high, but the expectation of a good husband is significantly lower, as the husband's family dictates the terms of what constitutes a good wife. A good husband, on the other hand, is described in recent UN Women research as someone who "does not drink, does not smoke and does not beat" (UN Women 2017a: 28).

Gender roles for men place strong emphasis on marriage and the continuation of patrilineal families. In 1990, only 0.1 percent of men over 50 (0.2 percent of women) had never been married (Ibraeva et al. 2011: 5-6). Some scholars have argued that bride-kidnapping has become strongly associated with Kyrgyz masculinity in the post-Soviet era (Handrahan 2004). Men who may be afraid of rejection of their marriage offer or who have little socialization with women may instead choose to kidnap a bride (Skoch 2010). However, others note the socio-economic motives for the practice, particularly the lowering of the bride price paid to the bride's family due to the kidnapping placing the groom's family in a better bargaining position (cf. Muldoon and Casabonne 2017: 8-9).

The power struggle between secularism and public expressions of piety in Kyrgyzstan often involves women's bodies, clothing and behavior as a key battleground. During the Soviet era the state condemned outward, formal trappings of religious expression, promoting atheism over Islam. Yet, expressions of Muslim identity through life-cycle rituals and festivals were seen as central to national identity, and to be Kyrgyz became synonymous with being Muslim, but not necessarily religious (McBrien and Pelkmans 2008: 90; McBrien 2006: 69). Under Soviet rule, "Muslimness" became another ethno-national identity (McBrien and Pelkmans 2008: 88). Forms of dress such as the *hijab* and other outward expressions of piety such as regular prayer challenged local understandings of being Muslim that equated it to ethno-national identity (McBrien and Pelkmans 2008: 92).

There is thus a tendency on the part of the state and secular society to link all forms of non-Hanafi Islam to potential radicalization and extremism. This is epitomized in practices such as billboards in Bishkek depicting women wearing the *niqab* in a negative light (ICG 2016: 14; BBC 2016), or commonly held assumptions that "certain styles of clothing and bodily appearance indicated membership in certain 'radical groups'" (McBrien 2006: 64). The Equal Rights Trust reported that this is the case for Muslim men with beards or wearing non-Kyrgyz types of Islamic dress who may be arbitrarily detained or harassed by police and experience significant employment discrimination (2016: 124, 127). Women who wear the *hijab* also have difficulties in retaining employment that allows them to wear religious dress (2016: 127).

Women's share of the workforce according to 2015 data is approximately 40%, which has dropped from 44% in 2005 (Equal Rights Trust 2016: 175). This could be explained by the feminization of migration expanding during this time, or discrimination towards women in religious dress at a time when it is increasingly practiced by Kyrgyzstani women. Without knowing the exact cause, it is indicative of a downward trend of women's participation in the Kyrgyz workforce.

Local gender norms affect men's trajectories in extremist ideology and extremist networks as well. Normative gender roles that place emphasis on men as the family breadwinner provide an excellent entry point for ISIS recruiters amongst Kyrgyzstan's unemployed or underemployed men (Speckhard et al. 2017a: 9; SFCG 2015: 5). While Kyrgyzstan's unemployment rate is officially 8%, the true rate is likely much higher but is masked by labor migration and seasonal employment in agriculture and other sectors (ICG 2016: 4). Amongst young people, the employment rate is officially 14.7% in 2015 (Beishenaly 2016). Particularly for ethnic Uzbeks in southern Kyrgyzstan who felt disenfranchised after the 2010 violence, Zenn and Kuehnast found that "the prospect of becoming a mentor in a militant group and therefore 'being a somebody'" was appealing to those who felt deprived of other prospects (2014: 4).

In addition to men joining extremist groups due to a combination of economic and gender role pressures, a 2017 UN Women study found that: "Women left behind by their husbands can face dire economic, social and legal consequences and may follow them into ISIS for that reason as well" (Speckhard et al. 2017a: 10). Women's labor force participation rate was 48.3% in 2016 compared with men's at 75.4% (ILO 2016). This was down significantly from its recorded peak in 1995 at 55.7% (World Bank 2017). Which means that unmarried women may be in financial situations which may leave them more vulnerable to recruitment by VE networks. It also means that societal shifts in gender norms from the fall of the Soviet Union may have been responsible for the decline in women's labor force participation rates over the same period. Thus, gender roles of both men and women allow for VE groups to capitalize on the cultural idea of the male breadwinner, (and perhaps also the precarious social and legal situation of unregistered Islamic marriages), in winning over Kyrgyzstani recruits of both genders.

While ethnic Uzbeks may have experienced disenfranchisement in Kyrgyzstan, their resentment towards ethnic Kyrgyz includes religious and gender framing. Zenn and Kuehnast note that "they publicly questioned the Islamic credentials of the Kyrgyz and noted that many Kyrgyz women do not wear an Islamic headscarf (*hijab*) or pray five times a day" (2014: 4). The linking of religious expression to ethnicity further complicates the CVE landscape in Kyrgyzstan, as Kyrgyz may be seen by the state and other CVE actors as less in need of programming, or Uzbek areas may be militarized or under increased surveillance due to perceptions that ethnicity and religious expression are linked to extremism.

4.6 CVE AND GENDER

Following independence, in the 1990s and 2000s, local women's rights organizations had little if any engagement with "religious" women. While donors were active in supporting gender equality work, this often did not include addressing women's interest in Islam and the day-to-day lives of poor, rural, religious women (ICG 2009). Gender equality and women's political participation were perceived by many to be programming for elite women, run by elite women. At the same time, state officials and the Muftiate also were not responsive to the needs of religious women. Childcare and early childhood education were drastically cut, and the Muftiate eliminated its staffed Department for Women and Youth during reforms in 2014, while more than doubling its total staff (Hoare 2014: 8; ICG 2016: 15; SFCG n.d.: 25). The government continues to hold meetings on VE and CVE that are not inclusive of women, and does not engage with women religious leaders (Speckhard et al. 2017a: 14). The government's official religious policy, the Concept of State Policy in the Religious Sphere, was adopted in

2014, and does not include language about women's involvement (Toktonaliev 2018). Islamic organizations and faith-based NGOs tried to fill this gap in services and outreach to religious women, but there were diverse ideologies motivating these groups. There are signs in recent years, however, that donor agencies and faith-based organizations are starting to realize the need to engage religious women in a wide range of programs, including CVE.

As key issues in CVE in Kyrgyzstan are lack of secular and religious education, lack of employment opportunities which leads to out-migration, patriarchal gender roles with often dominant or violent depictions of masculinity and submissive depictions of femininity, state corruption and lack of services, socio-economic constraints, and disenfranchisement of ethnic minority communities, CVE programming in Kyrgyzstan is most often focusing on one of these issues, often combined with a peacebuilding, tolerance promoting, or moderate Islam component. Below are a few examples of recent CVE programming in Kyrgyzstan.

A recent government initiative is a collaboration between the Ministry of Education and the State Committee for Religious Affairs (SCRA) to develop a high school curriculum on 'moderate' Islam. The curriculum will also include a module on how to identify terrorist recruitment tactics (State Department 2016).

From 2013-2016 SFCG implemented a program funded by the UK Government on "Reducing Violent Religious Extremism and Promoting Peace in Kyrgyzstan and Central Asia." It sought particularly to provide a level playing field amongst stakeholders and thus involve women and youth (SFCG 2016: 7). Key successes included the formation of a Consultative Working Group linking security agencies, and religious leaders, including women religious leaders; a Central Asia Forum for Religious Women Leaders; as well as community level programming to discuss Islamic teachings and dynamics of radicalization, particularly focusing on women and youth (SFCG 2016: 8, 16). The Ramadan Drive is a SFCG program that focuses specifically on women and youth. The Drive involved law enforcement and government officials holding discussions on extremism, CVE methods, and religious themes (Abakirov and Menon 2015).

The Women's Progressive Public Association "Mutakallim" is a faith-based NGO working on rights of Muslim women. Mutakallim combines community level education on recruitment tactics of VE networks with women's rights, inter-ethnic community peacebuilding and women's economic empowerment. Mutakallim also works in a mentoring capacity with women identified as vulnerable to VE (Speckhard et al. 2017: 15). Mutakallim ran successful advocacy campaigns calling for women to be allowed to wear the *hijab* in passport photos and in school (Commercio 2015: 550). The organization has also worked closely with women inmates and released convicts who often have considerable trouble re-integrating in society and finding employment, which leads to reoffending (IWPR 2017), and could lead to recruitment by VE networks.

The United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office began a program in 2017 through four UN agencies (UNODC, UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA) to promote women's and girls' roles in P/CVE, in addition to community policing (UN 2017). The OSCE office is also working on a platform for improving coordination between state agencies and international NGOs working in Kyrgyzstan on programming broadly in the religious sphere, including CVE (OSCE 2018).

Umma, Kyrgyzstan's only Islamic lifestyle magazine, was founded in 2015 by a woman editor-in-chief. *Umma* advocates for women's rights and challenges traditional views of submissive Muslim women, while trying to educate the Kyrgyzstani public about women's rights in Islam and the differences between traditional forms of Islam and extremism (Toktonaliev 2017). The magazine educates both young Muslim women about women's rights and educates the broader society about Islam as a modern religion that

favors education, progress and peace (Toktonaliev 2017). While not specifically addressing CVE, *Umma* addresses multiple intersecting issues shown by this study to be important drivers of VE and linked to women's participation in both VE and CVE.

4.7 CONCLUSION

Discussions of women's involvement in VE and CVE programming in Kyrgyzstan cannot be separated from broader discussions of widespread violence against women and patriarchal gender norms that permeate everyday life. The ideological vacuum left by the break-up of the Soviet Union after 70 years of Soviet rule has pitted secularists against Islam and there are now multiple competing ideologies for how leaders should act, how society should be organized and the roles that women should play in the domestic and public spheres.

Kyrgyzstan's poverty and lack of employment opportunities for women and youth, widespread government corruption, as well as the disenfranchisement of ethnic and linguistic minorities are also key components of the VE and CVE landscape. These issues can serve to present involvement in VE networks as a rational choice for women, at the same time, creating a national climate where women can be brought into VE networks against their will with impunity for actors involved in GBV. More research needs to be done on how these various issues intersect and whether certain parts of the country or certain population groups experience different push and pull factors leading into VE.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Asia region offers important lessons for understanding gender and VE as well as powerful examples of efforts to integrate gender more fully into CVE efforts. This study indicates several key areas for analytic and programmatic attention to strengthen the knowledge base on gender and VE in Asia and to ensure the effectiveness of gender and VE programming.

- **Local context matters**. As the diversity of Asian contexts demonstrates, there is no one-size-fits-all approach to CVE. Despite widespread stereotypes about the nature of VE threats or the motivations of women supporters, national and local contexts have distinct characteristics that must be assessed and understood before designing programming. For efforts to be effective, they must be locally relevant and tailored to meet the specific vulnerabilities and challenges of women and men, including attention to the gender dynamics of VE groups and the socio-cultural contexts in which they operate. While there are globally-recognized defined drivers of VE, including conflict and fragility, understanding how local gender dynamics shape grievances and the likelihood of individuals joining or resisting VE organizations is central to the development of long-term prevention efforts.
- **Regional dynamics also matter**. Often, gender and VE/CVE issues are viewed solely through local or country-level lenses. However, both the Indonesia and Kyrgyzstan cases demonstrate clearly that women are deeply embedded in regional dynamics, including cross-border VE networks and labor migration. The widespread use of online platforms for disseminating VE messaging also requires attention to the transnational nature of information flows. Broadening our gendered analytic lens to account for women's regional and global engagements is vital.
- **Collaboration is crucial**. The most effective gender and CVE efforts are those that are targeted and multi-dimensional, addressing both the immediate pull factors for VE and long-term alleviation of grievances that push women toward VE. This requires a comprehensive analytic approach to gender dynamics, as well as multi-sectoral approaches to intervention. More collaboration among CVE efforts and human rights, development, and Women, Peace, and Security efforts are needed. Research has demonstrated a connection between frequency of terror attacks and degree of human rights violations (Green and Proctor 2016), and there is

staunch support for approaching CVE efforts through a human rights lens (GCTF 2014; Huckerby 2015a; 2015b). Development is also a logical ally in the fight to prevent VE, with conflict, fragility, gender inequality, corruption and lack of access to resources and livelihoods widely agreed upon as drivers of VE for both women and men (Ladbury 2015; Anderlini, Oudraat and Milani 2017). Increased integration between CVE efforts and Women, Peace, and Security efforts are also promising, given the close relationship between VE and conflict and the WPS experience of convening women to address security challenges in their communities and countries. The WPS agenda argues for women's meaningful participation in all aspects of conflict prevention and resolution, and calls for sustained attention to the unique ways in which men, women, boys, and girls are affected by conflict, including their risks and experiences of GBV.

- **Our knowledge base is lacking**. Currently, our understanding of VE and gender in Asian contexts is fragmented, and lacks established, effective methods of identifying and addressing the gender dynamics of VE through assessment, analysis, and monitoring and evaluation. Current analytic frameworks, including USAID frameworks for gender analysis and conflict assessment, do not include a robust focus on the intersection of gender and VE. To fully capture the gender dynamics of VE, comprehensive gender analysis is necessary. As the Indonesia and Kyrgyzstan cases demonstrate, programming is frequently implemented without thorough consideration of gender, or the specific needs, experiences and capacities of women, and programs working on push factors with the aim of influencing the enabling environment for VE face challenges with measuring the impact of their work on VE mitigation. USAID is well positioned to take a leadership role in developing and disseminating new frameworks for gender and VE analysis, and to ensure such tools are integrated into development strategy, project planning, and monitoring, evaluation and learning efforts. Gender and VE analytic frameworks should include not only an attention to women's roles and capacities, but an understanding of local, national and regional gender dynamics, as well as the impacts of current and past CVE programming on women, men, and cultural values of masculinity and femininity. There is also a clear need to mainstream an attention to gender into the monitoring and evaluation of purportedly "gender neutral" CVE programs, allowing for a greater understanding of their intended and unintended effects on women and for the ability to mitigate potential backlash.
- **Stereotypes of women hamper effectiveness**. Across the Asia region, including in the case study countries of Indonesia and Kyrgyzstan, insufficient attention has been paid to the complex dynamics of women's support for VE. Frequently, the frameworks that are used to explain women's participation in VE fail to acknowledge women's agency, describing them as naive victims of manipulative recruiters or unthinking followers of powerful husbands and religious leaders. While it is of course necessary to understand the exploitation and inequality that women participants in VE groups experience, it is also important to gain a deeper understanding of the range of push factors that motivate them to join, including the intersection of gender with other forms of identity, such as ethnicity, religion, and socio-economic status. Women who experience multiple forms of marginalization are more receptive to VE messaging, and indeed may actively choose to join VE groups in pursuit of economic well-being, as a means of combatting social or political inequality, or in response to perceived injustice. The stereotype of the impoverished, uneducated, disempowered woman victim continues to shape programmatic responses to VE, undercutting the effectiveness of CVE work.
- **An intersectional focus on diverse women's experiences and needs is lacking**. A majority of the existing knowledge base on gender and VE in Asia either fails to account for the diverse identity factors that intersect with gender, or considers these without sufficient analytic rigor, for example, by promoting homogenous images of "Muslim women" or "uneducated women." This makes it very difficult to gain a thorough understanding of how gender identity intersects in complex and context-dependent ways with age, ethnicity, religion, sexuality, race, education levels, socio-economic status, or rural/urban location. We do have anecdotal data

from specific country contexts that indicates how women's experiences differ: for example, we know that ethnic Uzbek women in Kyrgyzstan are subject to discrimination not only based on gender but on ethnic identity, and we know that educated Indonesian women are more likely to be recruited to VEOs through high school and university religious groups whereas impoverished rural Indonesian women are more likely to be recruited through networks of women migrant laborers. However, we do not have robust data demonstrating how these intersectional factors shape women's support for VE, or their ability to safely and meaningfully participate in CVE programming. Intersectional analysis is needed both in given contexts, and on a regional level, to inform programming and ensure that its benefits are equitably distributed and its risks mitigated.

- **The development context is key**. Understanding women's roles in supporting VE requires attention to the development context. As USAID has long recognized, conflict-affected and fragile environments, as well as those rife with discrimination, inequality, corruption, repression and poor governance, provide the enabling conditions for extremism and violence to flourish. More recently, research has demonstrated that contexts with elevated levels of gender inequality are more prone to intrastate conflicts, which generate the grievances and operating space that help VE groups thrive. Addressing these development challenges, including the specific impacts they have on women, is crucial.
- **A gender equality focus is essential**. Efforts to combat VE can be strengthened by mainstreaming a robust emphasis on gender equality into CVE work, and increasing collaboration between CVE and gender equality and women's empowerment programs. In both Indonesia and Kyrgyzstan, the messaging of VE groups draws upon long-standing local social norms that limit women's rights and roles, while at the same time promising women new opportunities to gain respect and protect themselves from GBV. While ensuring that women receive education and economic opportunities, that their rights are enhanced and respected (drawing on both Islam and democratic constitutions, where the latter exist), and that GBV is effectively addressed are not guarantees against VE, addressing these gendered drivers is a core aspect of minimizing the appeal of VE recruiting.
- **Attention to protecting women and girls is crucial**. A core pillar of the WPS agenda is the protection of women and girls, with the Women, Peace, and Security Act of 2017 mandating that the USG "promote the physical safety, economic security, and dignity of women and girls" in contexts affected by conflict and VE. As this study has illustrated, women in Asian contexts marked by gender inequalities and high GBV prevalence are subject to increased risks of violence, insecurity, and degradation when they are recruited into VEOs. VE also endangers women by disseminating hyper-masculine messaging that attempts to legitimize restrictions on women's dress and behavior as well as violence against women to potential male recruits. More research is needed to understand what causal links may exist between gendered VE narratives and the vulnerabilities of women and girls in regions where such messaging has been broadly circulated. Increased collaboration between CVE programs and efforts to monitor and address GBV are important, as are efforts to incorporate a focus on positive masculinities into community-level and school- or youth-based CVE work. In addition, more analysis is needed to account for and mitigate the potential risks – including risks of violent backlash – that women face when participating in CVE efforts. Efforts to increase women's role in CVE activities should be accompanied by efforts to improve their status within the family and community, as one means of enhancing their safety.
- **Gender and CVE work faces challenges**. Much more needs to be done to support women as key actors in CVE work, and to address the challenges they face. The Asia region provides powerful examples of successful CVE efforts led by women's groups and directed towards women's capacities to provide early warning of the rise of VE in families and communities, to spread messages of peace and tolerance, and to promote resilience to extremist ideologies. However, these efforts face several challenges. Groups that focus on gender issues are often

poorly funded or ignored by state and CSO actors working on CVE. Divides also persist between secular women's rights groups and those working with religious women due to mutual suspicion and widespread social misunderstanding of the distinction between extremism and religiosity. In both Indonesia and Kyrgyzstan, women's organizations have expressed concern that participating in VE work means collaborating with state security actors with a poor track record of respecting women's rights. Even when women's CVE efforts receive respect and assistance, they are often limited by assumptions about women as "natural peacemakers" whose proper social role is as mothers or wives tasked with mitigating the risk of family radicalization. Addressing these challenges, and opening new spaces for women to contribute their knowledge to policy and program design, can help accelerate the effectiveness of gender and VE efforts.

- **A stronger focus on broad social gender dynamics is promising**. More clarity is needed at the analytic and programmatic levels about the relationship between VE and gender dynamics. Often, discussions of gender in the VE/CVE field remain focused primarily on women's roles as participants in and mitigators of VE. While clearly these are critical issues, **what is often missing from the conversation is a focus on gender as a set of social and cultural norms and narratives shaping what masculinity and femininity means in a given context**. In both Indonesia and Kyrgyzstan, hyper-masculinity – a social emphasis on male aggression, violence and power over women – helps drive VE, while stereotypical ideas of femininity as limited to home and family are strengthened and manipulated by VE narratives. Efforts to address the cultural aspects of gender dynamics by, for example, promoting "positive masculinity" or providing alternate religious or media narratives of femininity have demonstrated success in both the Indonesia and Kyrgyzstan contexts.
- Both the Indonesian and Kyrgyzstan cases point to **the importance of a deeper understanding of the dynamics of women's organizing around CVE**. In both cases, tensions between organizations working with religious women and secular women's rights groups, as well as the concerns of women's rights activists that CVE work involves collaborating with state actors with a poor track record of respecting women's rights, has undercut the potential effectiveness of gender and CVE efforts. Both countries also demonstrate the importance of opening religious and state institutions to women, and encouraging state and civil society actors to move away from the self-fulfilling prophecy of marginalizing women based on a failure to distinguish between their religiosity and VE support.

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SECTION C - DESCRIPTION / SPECIFICATIONS / STATEMENT OF WORK

Countering Violent Extremism Analytic Services for Asia

C.1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this task order is to produce a series of analytic reports on highly salient countering violent extremism (CVE) issues in the Asia region to inform USAID and U.S. Government (USG) strategic thinking, planning and programming.

C.2. BACKGROUND

USAID has been assessing the threat of violent extremism and determining the appropriateness of development programming in addressing that threat since the adoption of the 2011 USAID Policy *The Development Response to Violent Extremism and Insurgency*.[1] The Policy includes key engagement criteria, the first of which is "an assessment of the drivers of violent extremism and insurgency, host country (government and population) commitment, and potential development responses." Analyses such as those requested in this task order are an important component of USAID planning under this policy.

Early USAID CVE analyses and reports prior to the rise of ISIS examined the drivers of violent extremism and insurgency as part of the creation of new USAID Country Development Cooperation Strategies (2011-2013). These risk analyses were conducted in Bangladesh, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Nepal, Philippines, Southern Thailand, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.[2] The reports found that while there were disconnected violent extremist movements in nearly every country, at that time there were no countries among those studied in which violent extremism posed a serious threat to stability or development. USAID missions in Asia for the most part focused on development priorities other than CVE in their new strategies.

After initial ISIS success in Iraq and Syria in 2014, Asia, along with Europe and North Africa, became a notable source of foreign fighters and volunteers for extremist organizations including ISIS. At the time, countries in Asia itself were not directly targeted or threatened by these VEOs. USAID, therefore, focused research on recruitment dynamics and designed new programs to assist groups most vulnerable to recruitment as foreign fighters. USAID commissioned a second round of studies (2014-2015) on foreign

[1] http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/Pdacs400.pdf

[2] Bangladesh (http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/pa00jshs.pdf), Indonesia (http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/pa00jsjj.pdf), Kazakhstan (http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/pa00jsk2.pdf), Kyrgyzstan (http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/pa00jsss.pdf), Nepal (http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/pa00jsjq.pdf), Philippines (http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/pa00jsjt.pdf), Southern Thailand (http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/pa00jsjx.pdf), Tajikistan (http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/pa00jskg.pdf) and Uzbekistan (http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/pa00jssq.pdf).

fighter recruitment and support for violent extremist organizations in Central Asia, Bangladesh and Southeast Asia.[3]

USAID's assessment of foreign fighters from Central Asia found that as economic pressures have prompted an increasing number of Central Asians to migrate to Russia for better economic opportunities some have become radicalized by a combination of poor conditions in Russia and active recruitment by extremist organizations online and on the ground. USAID partnered with the International Organization for Migration to educate potential migrants and their communities about the risks of radicalization, formalize migration planning, and promote safer migration policies, which together reduce the risk of radicalization and recruitment.

In Bangladesh, USAID's 2015 study found that while the country was not a significant source of fighters or volunteers for ISIS, much had changed since the 2013 study. The violent and flawed 2014 elections, ongoing political stalemate and the contentious prosecution of war crimes stemming from the 1971 liberation movement all contributed to a new vulnerability to violent extremist organization (VEO) activity and had created a fertile space for them to flourish. Starting in 2013, soon after the first USAID study, attacks in Bangladesh on bloggers, professors, activists and others by ISIS and Al-Qaida showed a telltale approach of "eliminating grey spaces" -- polarizing opinion through careful selection of targets. Attacks on foreign nationals as well as Shi'a and other religious minorities reflected the insertion of new and previously unknown narratives from the Middle East. This change represented an assault on the pluralism, tolerance, inclusion and culture of debate that has been at the core of Bangladesh's political self-identity since independence. In part because of this study, USAID has designed programs that will work with civil society, local governments, think tanks, universities, and other researchers to identify the drivers of violent extremism in Bangladesh and support tailored interventions to counter violent extremism and radicalization. USAID's democracy and governance programs also help counter the impact of what ISIS and Al-Qaida are trying to achieve in their attacks on tolerance, democracy and inclusion by supporting the academics, activists, and civil society who are being targeted.

In Indonesia and Malaysia, the 2015 USAID study found that the emergence of ISIS had dramatic impacts on the jihadist community in Southeast Asia. First, it further radicalized those sections of the jihadist community that were already extremist in disposition, as well as inspiring a new generation of young recruits to its cause. Second, it attracted hundreds of jihadists from Indonesia and Malaysia to fight in Syria and Iraq. Third, the responses of the Indonesian and Malaysian states have been more emphatic than for any previous jihadist threat, with record levels of funding and government resources devoted to counter-terrorism efforts. The study found that "most recruits have become involved in the organization via their involvement in existing radical groups or because they have personally known activists in such groups. This is particularly the case in Indonesia, where jihadist groups that pre-date ISIS's formation in 2013 have played a crucial role in popularizing the Islamic state and facilitating the selection and departure of recruits to Syria and Iraq." Since most recruitment was taking place among those already radicalized, there was little USAID could do through development programming to prevent new radicalization and recruitment of foreign fighters for VEOs in the Middle East.

[3] Central Asia (http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/pbaae879.pdf), Bangladesh (in clearance) and Southeast Asia (http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/pbaad863.pdf).

Over 2016-2017, even as they are being defeated on the ground in Iraq and Syria, ISIS, Al-Qaeda and other violent extremist organizations (VEOs) have increasingly perpetrated attacks across Asia and are building a cadre of returning foreign fighters and new local recruits in an effort to create Asia-based affiliates. Despite a robust security response, extremist attacks in Bangladesh have become more violent and well-organized. ISIS-flagged fighters, including many foreign fighters, have openly contested control on the ground in Mindanao, the Philippines. Extremist groups have been uncovered throughout Asia, reflecting a connected and organized threat that goes well beyond the local VEOs first described a in 2011 USAID studies.

In addition to understanding the rise and changing dynamics of violent extremism in Asia, some important dimensions of the problem are not yet well understood. Key among these are the role of women in violent extremism. Taking an inclusive view of gender roles in VE can strengthen programming interventions through more tailored design to better address VE dynamics. The U.N. Security Council recognized in 2000 through Resolution 1325 that women's participation is critical in efforts to resolve violent conflict. Global experience has demonstrated the need to mainstream gender in CVE efforts, with particular focus on the role of women as extremists and mitigators at regional, national, and local levels. Gender inequalities and gender norms affect the use of violence by extremist groups. Violent extremism can encourage the use of gender-based violence, a practice in part linked to "hypermasculine" identities, an identity used to appeal to new recruits on social media. Concepts of masculinity, including expectations of what it means to be 'masculine', can feed into men's and boys' engagement in VE, highlighting that gender roles are a vital consideration in understanding the drivers and mitigating factors of VE.

C.3. WORK TO BE PERFORMED

USAID seeks a series of analytic products to inform future CVE policy and programming decisions. While most of these activities will be desktop research, some may include field-based research. These analytic products include, but are not limited to, the following types of work:

- Analyses of VEO recruitment in particular geographic areas and among particular demographic groups
- Violent extremism risk analyses for particular countries and geographic areas
- Studies on particular thematic areas related to CVE, such as the role of women in violent extremism
- Reviews of innovations planning, implementing, and learning from development programming that may be applicable CVE programming, such as in monitoring and evaluation

USAID anticipates that initial analytic products to be completed under this Task Order will include the following:

1. A desktop review and social media analysis of new ISIS recruitment among non-labor migrant at-risk groups Central Asia;
2. Desktop violent extremism risk analyses for India, Sri Lanka and Maldives;
3. A desk-top study of the role of women and violent extremism, including female participation in violent extremist activities or organizations and female engagement in preventing or mitigating violent extremism across Asia; and,
4. A review of new CVE monitoring and evaluation approaches.

Final decisions on products to be completed and more detailed technical direction for each will be provided by the Contracting Officer's Representative (COR) as part of the work planning process. Report specifications and the review and acceptance process are detailed in section F.4 of this solicitation.

C.3.1 New ISIS Recruitment in Central Asia

Recent reports indicate that VEOs, including ISIS have begun recruiting supporters in Central Asia itself in addition to targeting vulnerable labor migrant groups from Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan abroad. USAID seeks to assess the dynamics of this new recruitment in order to determine what role development assistance may play in addressing it. This study will contribute to USAID, and U.S. government, policy and program decision-making related to preventing VEO recruitment and radicalization in Central Asia.

The purpose of this analysis is to identify emerging VEO recruitment streams in Central Asia beyond labor migrant groups. The analysis will complement earlier USAID-funded analyses focused on recruitment targeting labor migrants. The analysis on new ISIS recruitment will therefore EXCLUDE consideration of labor migrant recruitment.

The methodology for the analysis will consist of:

1. A review of recent scholarly reports, media coverage and other analyses, in English, Russian and other regional languages, that summarizes current thinking about radicalization in Central Asia itself other than from among labor migrant communities; and,
2. A review of social media in English, Russian and other regional languages that summarizes the recruitment themes produced by ISIS and other VEOs directed at Central Asians.

The analysis should consider, but not be limited to, possible recruitment among:

- University students;
- Students at religious schools;
- Prison populations;

- Youth and women;
- Ethnic minorities;
- Geographic regions.

C.3.2 Violent Extremism Risk Analyses: India, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives

As VEOs, particularly ISIS, extend their operational reach and influence across Asia, USAID seeks to assess the drivers of violent extremism and the dynamics of recruitment into and support for VEOs in several countries not covered by previous studies.

USAID anticipates three Violent Extremism and Insurgency Risk Analyses will be conducted initially, one each for India, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives. These analyses will inform USAID, and U.S. government, policy and program decision-making related to preventing and/or mitigating the spread of violent extremist ideology and activity in these countries. Specifically, these analyses will assess the following:

1. Violent extremism drivers and dynamics in the country, key VEO groups, their goals and approaches and their connections to global violent extremism;
2. Resiliencies that mitigate, or could potentially mitigate, the spread of violent extremist ideology and activity, including government and non-government efforts to address violent extremism;
3. Narratives used by VEOs in social media in these countries to recruit and/or create support for their activities;
4. A description of non-U.S. government-funded programs designed to address radicalization.

The analysis of violent extremism dynamics will be multi-faceted. It will include dynamics that may feed violent extremist ideology and activity, as well as existing and potential violent extremist actors. It will include the same for country and societal resiliencies, examining dynamics and actors that mitigate or discourage violent extremism. The analysis will also assess the impacts of violent extremism in each country. Given the findings on these dynamics, the analysis will postulate scenarios under which violent extremism may spread or intensify and the likelihood of these scenarios. Discussion of actors and targeted groups should be as specific as possible, using any applicable socioeconomic dimensions. This would include ethnicity, region of origin or residence, rural or urban, occupation, education level, religion, political affiliation, and any other salient grouping. Gender and age dimensions should be articulated throughout, specifically distinguishing any differences found in violent extremist dynamics related to men, women, LGBTI, and crossing this with age, ethnicity, socioeconomic, or other salient groupings. The analysis should highlight gender dynamics in each country with specific focus on the role of masculinity norms as push or pull factors; women's engagement in countering VE in families, communities, CSOs, and governments; and gendered vulnerabilities to recruitment.

The analysis shall explicitly incorporate a survey of violent extremism social media presence in, or targeting, the country. The aims of the social media analysis are to identify the targets of radicalization and recruitment messaging and the narratives being used. The social media analysis should also look for indications of the receptivity of target audiences and of the source of postings, domestic or international.

Finally, the analysis should inventory current non-U.S. government-funded development programs that specifically address radicalization.

C.3.3 The Role of Women in Violent Extremism in Asia

The U.N. Security Council recognized in 2000 through Resolution 1325 that we need women to help lead global efforts to resolve violent conflict. In 2015, the United States supported UN Security Resolution 2422, which was the first resolution to make an explicit link between gender and counter-terrorism, and called on the UN and member states to integrate gender as a cross-cutting issue across counterterrorism and CVE initiatives. Women are critical players who can help to address violent extremism at regional, national, and local levels. Global experience has demonstrated the need to mainstream gender in CVE efforts, with particular focus on the role of women in CVE responses including as extremists and mitigators. Gender inequalities, pervasive throughout the Asia region, also affect the use of violence by extremist groups.

USAID has a relatively limited understanding of the role of women in violent extremism in Asia. This analysis will inform USAID policy and programming related to gender and violent extremism in particular countries in Asia, across the Asia region, and globally. The analysis will help inform future programming stemming from the forthcoming U.S. Strategy to Support Women and Girls at Risk from Violent Extremism. Specifically, this analysis will encompass the following:

1. The role of women in promoting, enabling, and participating in violent extremism, or otherwise serving the interests of violent extremist organizations, whether voluntarily or due to coercion. This will include how women's roles are different, or similar, to that of men and any distinctions in how women are recruited versus men.
2. The role of women in promoting views that counter violent extremism and their participation in activity that mitigates its spread or intensification. This will include the related roles of women in decision-making and leadership positions, in families, communities, government and religious institutions, and civil society. It will address the degree and nature of women's meaningful participation in peace and political processes, decision-making, and leadership positions.
3. The use and impact of gender-based violence, gender inequalities, and other human rights violations by extremist groups.
4. A review of current CVE programming globally that addresses women's role in violent extremism funded through non-U.S. government sources, and its potential applicability and lessons for the Asia region.

Variations by country and subregion should be considered. Analysis of the intersectionality of other factors such as rural/urban, ethnicity, age, and background should be undertaken with the goal of identifying drivers of the radicalization of women and their role as mitigators.

USAID anticipates that findings from this analysis will raise additional questions that may become topics for further research. These may be thematic, sub-regional, or country-specific, such as the relationship of women's economic empowerment to risks of violent extremism, or women's engagement in CVE-related policy and planning in a particular country (e.g., the Philippines). Further analyses would provide

additional background and context for understanding trends or issues identified in the original analysis, with an emphasis on the relevance of gender dynamics, including gender based violence, for development strategy, planning, and programs. Any such follow-on gender-related analyses will be agreed upon as part of the work planning process.

C.3.4 Review of New CVE Monitoring and Evaluation Practices

USAID continues to advance the quality of its monitoring and evaluation of CVE programs. This analysis will inform USAID monitory and evaluation for CVE programming globally and within the Asia region.
The analysis will address monitoring and evaluation separately. For the purpose of this analysis, monitoring will encompass everything related to tracking programmatic progress in producing desired outcomes. It is set within the context of USAID monitoring and annual reporting requirements. Evaluation will encompass everything related to assessing programmatic impact, both intended and unintended, whether at the high-quality performance evaluation level or at the impact evaluation level.

Specifically, the analysis will review innovations in monitoring and evaluation approaches applicable to CVE programming designed to reduce radicalization and recruitment. In particular, innovations designed to provide evidence of effectiveness at lowering environmental support that enables recruitment and evidence of lowered incidence of recruitment based on programmatic activities is of interest. The current evaluation challenge is in ascertaining the effectiveness of CVE programming at the impact level, such as reducing radicalization, lowering environmental support that enables recruitment, and lowering support for extremist ideology. Monitoring and evaluation approaches to capture gender dimensions of intended and unintended program outcomes and impact also present a challenge. The analyses should include a review of the theoretical literature on monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of violent extremism programming aimed at preventing individual or group radicalization as well as examples of CVE programs that incorporate innovative approaches to evidence on radicalization.

[END OF SECTION C]