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Introduction: Cascades of war and crime

This book is about the phenomenon of violence. The explanatory framework uses the cascade concept. Drawing on a broad range of conceptualisations of violence, we demonstrate why the cascade idea matters in making sense of contemporary conflicts worldwide. A distinctiveness of the contribution is an integration of international relations (IR) perspectives with insights from political theory and criminological theory. We do not mean the book is an ‘application’ of criminological theory to the field normally occupied by IR. Rather, we merge the study of war with the study of crime during and after armed conflict in pursuit of an understanding of crime–war. The cascade idea organises our integration of concepts from criminological and political theory. One reason for this project is the way the literature on war has moved in recent decades to emphasise the criminalisation of the state and the criminalisation of whole economies through crony capitalism, ‘deep states’ (Filiu 2015) where intelligence and security operatives hold the key or ‘shadow states’ (Reno 1995) where business tycoons who buy the state can be more crucial.

As in the cascading of water, violence (and nonviolence) can cascade down from commanding heights of power (as in waterfalls), up from powerless peripheries and undulate to spread horizontally (flowing from one space to another). Writing about cascades in the social sciences reveals that a phenomenon such as violence can cascade through the agency of human actors and through physical flows—for example, cascades of mass killings, suicide bombs and cascades of bodies of refugees (Gladwell 2000;
Rosenau 1990; Sikkink 2011; Sunstein 1997). Cascades of objects such as improvised explosive devices (IEDs) or killer robots can provide hospitable contexts for cascades of violent action. Yet, there is critical cognitive content in how action cascades. Imaginaries of violence and nonviolence cascade.

One generalisation affirmed in this book is that empires can pacify large spaces for long periods—as the Ottoman Empire did across North Africa, the Middle East, Turkey and the Balkans—but, when empires break up, violence cascades (Ferguson 2006). Similar dynamics can be seen with big stable states that begin to fracture, such as Indonesia during the Asian Financial Crisis, cascading many ‘small town wars’ (van Klinken 2007). Some of the conflicts in Part II of this book reveal the ‘unsettling of power imbalances’ that create new security dilemmas for postcolonial state projects. We analyse cases such as longstanding violence in Afghanistan as being only partly about the breakup of the Soviet empire; very local cleavages, power imbalances and anomie in Kandahar province also constituted the geopolitical importance of the Taliban. The book tells the story of the cascading of violence as recursively related to how other phenomena cascade. Cascades of violence are conceived as recursively related to cascades of militarisation, cascades of domination and cascades of refugees, among other cascades.

The final chapters begin to explore the implications of a cascade analysis for violence prevention. The data reveal cascades of violence to be driven by complex interactions between macro-cleavages (including global ones) and very local cleavages (Kalyvas 2003, 2006). We revise 10 starting propositions in a way that suggests that preventive diplomacy—both great power and United Nations (UN) diplomacy—and local smothering of sparks often work, especially when combined as interscalar prevention (Böhmelt 2010). Our conclusion is, however, that diplomacy is required that is sensitive to averting the humiliation and preserving the dignity of local actors, from chiefs to child soldiers, who have prized open the local cleavages. It must do this while also preserving the dignity of national leaders. We pinpoint how places in South Asia have accomplished this.

Promises of dignity and carrots for joining a peace are not enough, however. Security sector reform must also deliver legitimacy and credibility to an armed force that can subdue armed factions that toy with trashing a peace (Toft 2010). Where state militaries cannot supply that legitimacy and credibility, credible guarantees from international
diplomacy and UN-sanctioned peacekeeping must do so (Walter 2002). We conclude that there is strong empirical evidence that greatly increased investment in UN peacekeeping might significantly dampen cascades of violence. Lessons are drawn from places where peacemaking and peacekeeping performance has been disappointing in the past, from Kashmir to Srebrenica to Rwanda. Cascades of domination through militarisation that drive cascades of violence can only be tamed by long-term engagement with an ugly mechanics of security sector reform. While we show in Chapter 11 that cascading a politics of nonviolence can also do much to tame militarisation, Gandhian politics that remains aloof from security sector reform is not enough.

Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals agreed by the UN General Assembly that came into effect in January 2016—including to reach specific targets, to end poverty and protect the planet by 2030—will not be enough to conquer the domination that drives cascades of violence. Chapter 11 uses our data to make new sense of the confusing state of the evidence on the relationships between poverty, inequality and different kinds of violence. Yes, we argue, continuous struggle to halve global poverty and inequality again and then again is important for a less violent world. Even though low gross domestic product (GDP) predicts war but not crime, and national inequality predicts crime but not war, Chapter 11 argues why tackling poverty and inequality in a complex way at multiple levels can reduce both crime and war. Part of the integrated social justice strategy required involves making power accountable at many levels, especially the power of the security sector, and tackling domination and humiliation at the local level, the national level and the level of global imaginaries and global institutions. Most importantly, these strands of a web of peace must be joined up to form a fabric of prevention.

Indonesia is a good example of a society that has performed reasonably well at the structural level in reducing poverty, in democratising and in countering terrorism and violence. Only a small handful of developing economies have less inequality than Indonesia as measured by the Gini coefficient. Yet, the Peacebuilding Compared data (Braithwaite et al. 2010a) show that when a local ethnic or religious minority—in North Maluku, for example (Chapter 3)—feels dominated by being excluded from a fair hearing over a land dispute with political institutions and legal institutions controlled by another group, small town wars (van Klinken 2007) can result; and small town wars can cascade from local domination to national militarised violence. Likewise in Indonesia and Timor-Leste,
abuse of power by tiny cabals of cronies with military connections is a form of domination at the very top that has recurrently ignited violence, notwithstanding Indonesia’s creditable macro-equality (Braithwaite et al. 2010a, 2012). These earlier Peacebuilding Compared data from Indonesia and Timor-Leste show why we specify domination reduction, rather than inequality reduction, as a more insightful way of seeing what is required to tame violence. We conclude that brute structural remedies to inequality can only address some of the interactions among local, national and international imaginaries of domination and injustice.

In sum, our policy conclusions are about the importance of redundancy in local and global prevention of cascades of all forms of criminal and militarised violence, disruption of those cascades once they start and restoration of ‘Awareness, Motivation and Pathways’ (AMP) (Honig et al. 2015) to nonviolent dissent. And we must likewise prevent cascades of domination and militarisation, strengthen alternative paths to them and strengthen checks and balances that humble their power. We can be multidimensional, plural and experimental in weaving this kind of fabric for the social control of violence.

While this book draws on insights from conversations that took place in South Asia over the past eight years, it is not only a South Asian story. Instead, our modest attempt is to explore how cascades of violence are about cascades of domination that have global implications. How do seemingly distant wars that cascade across Africa and Europe influence conflict dynamics in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan and vice versa? This book tells a story of how local identity politics is constructed and, in turn, constructs global identities and global grievances.

The key idea of this book—that violence can beget more violence—is not new. Indeed, it is ancient. We seek a richer understanding of the cascade idea, however, through a contemporary inductive method. This book develops and revises 10 propositions to explain patterns of violence that are evident beyond South Asia in contemporary warfare. Our ambition, therefore, is a bigger-picture story, a grand regional story and a globally relevant story of how cascades of violence spread and how they can be prevented. The next section lists the 10 cascade propositions that are the focus of the book.
10 propositions

**Proposition 1:** As coercion escalates, both deterrence and defiance increase. The deterrence effect exceeds the defiance effect only at high levels of coercion. During the large range of values of coercion when defiance effects are steeper than deterrence, violence cascades.

**Proposition 2:** Violence cascades when violent imaginaries are modelled; nonviolent resistance cascades when diffusion of nonviolence grasps the imagination of the public. Both are most likely to occur when architectures of extreme coercion begin to crack or cleavages in a society begin to open.

**Proposition 3:** Violence cascades through alliance structures when a cleavage motivates mobilisation of alliances or unsettling of power balances.

**Proposition 4:** Disintegration of the capacity of a single legitimate armed force to pacify a space through its domination over all competing armed groups enables the cascading of violence across that territory.

**Proposition 5:** Once cleavages put alliance cascades on the march, security dilemmas can further accelerate the cascade.

**Proposition 6:** Refugee and internally displaced person (IDP) flows further cascade violence. Violence cascades when those displaced by violence displace others from spaces to which refugees flee. Refugee camps become nodes of hopelessness and resentment for those they trap. This makes them ideal recruiting grounds for those with weapons and cash to enrol bereft young refugees into armed groups. In turn, these recruitment practices inside refugee camps make camps targets for atrocity by enemies of the recruiters.

**Proposition 7:** Cascades of violence that disintegrate the capabilities of one legitimate monopoly of force to dominate all other armed groups in a territory create conditions of anomie. No one knows any longer what the rules of the game are; no one knows who is legitimately in charge. Anomie cascades further violence.

**Proposition 8:** Cascades of violence recursively cascade militarisation and domination. Militarisation and domination recursively risk further cascades of violence.
Proposition 9: Crime often sparks cascades to war and war to crime. As crime–war–crime cascades from hotspot to hotspot, violence becomes less shameful and easier to excuse. When rape and violence become less shameful, this further cascades rape and violence.

Proposition 10: When war produces a cascade of violence that moves to many new spaces that bite back at a combatant nation, the costs of shutting down the violence in all those spaces can quickly exceed the benefits of winning the war. It can then be rational to cut one’s losses by pulling out of the war, leaving a festering cascade of violence behind, unresolved. The contemporary war economics of cascades therefore sustains cascades of violence (as we saw with cut-and-run policies in Vietnam, Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya).

If readers wish, they can jump straight to the Appendix, at the end of this book, which counts and summarises support for each proposition for each country case in Part II. It also provides a short narrative of why the evidence for a particular country case does or does not support that proposition. It can be seen from the Appendix that the above 10 propositions were revised a little in the final round-up of the data, but not too greatly, with only one proposition (5) being dropped entirely and replaced with a new one on democracy as a driver of domination, 5(a). Proposition 5(a) loomed as a more important pattern by the end of the study in 2017 (compared with the interim list above, which was finalised, after much earlier adjustment, in 2014 after pondering the history of the global cascades discussed in Part I and our South Asian data up to that point). The Appendix shows that the pattern of empirical support for these propositions is strong, but the qualifications are many, making that support far from consistent. Of the possible 88 comparisons of eight country cases for 11 propositions (with the addition of the new Proposition 5(a)), 74 are counted as supporting the proposition, 13 as not supporting it and one is coded as a hole in the data because it is too early to call.

There are, however, far more than 88 data points in the South Asian part of the data from the Peacebuilding Compared project. In the case of Pakistan, for example, evidence concerning our propositions sometimes points in quite different ways for the civil war in Balochistan compared with the armed conflict between the Pakistani state and the Pakistani Taliban. Moreover, what is true of the conflict with the Taliban in the Swat Valley is often quite different from the story of the Taliban conflict at another time in another place closer to the border with Afghanistan.
1. INTRODUCTION

For Pakistan’s conflict with India over Kashmir, there are many transitions from peace to violence and back to another period of peace during the 70 years of that conflict, including five interstate war–peace transitions, many failed UN peacekeeping initiatives, more than 150 rounds of failed peace talks between Pakistan and India and many sequences of moves on their nuclear chessboards. Even before that, conflict dynamics were different at the Partition of India and Pakistan in East Pakistan compared with those in West Pakistan; and, in West Pakistan, the Kashmir frontier story is different from the Punjab frontier conflict. So the case of Pakistan is not an \( n \) of 1; it is a case with hundreds of degrees of freedom.

India is a case with many more degrees of freedom than Pakistan. It includes a greater number and diversity of armed conflicts. India also includes a much larger number of cases, such as the post-Partition conflict in Tamil Nadu that led to some violence, but never to war in India, even though it was critical to understanding Indian military intervention in Sri Lanka’s civil war with the Tamil Tigers. This is why we think it is a methodological error simply to read the summary in the Appendix and believe that one has grasped the dynamic empirical story of our cascades of violence and nonviolence across space and time, and across the fuzzy boundaries of South Asia. We conceive South Asia as an interconnected region that diplomats of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) are attempting to turn into a complex adaptive system, rather than simply an assemblage of discrete states. As discussed in the next section, states are important, but we can reify them too much. We must be careful not to turn names such as India, the Indian state, Indian society or Indian culture into things. Rather, such names are complex bundles of relationships and, only by ‘placing them back into the field from which they were abstracted, can we hope to avoid misleading inferences and increase our share of understanding’ (Wolf 2010: 3).

What is to be done?

Implications of the research in this book are for greater investment in local peacemaking and reconciliation, and in UN peacekeeping, to douse local ignition points of conflict before they spread. The book shows that resilient peace and nonviolence can cascade and grow by testing them against the very worst conflicts. Hence, we conclude that the same ignition points that sometimes cascade violence also can cascade nonviolence. We see
restorative justice and reconciliation politics as useful to flipping cascades of violence to cascades of nonviolence. Gradually expanding peace zones and safe corridors for the escape of refugees is also important.

Good welfare policies for refugees, in our analysis, become more than simply a humanitarian imperative. They are also a war and crime prevention imperative. For example, investment in high-quality education for millions of Afghan refugees in Pakistan could have prevented their recruitment into madrasas funded by Al-Qaeda, where they were indoctrinated to become suicide bombers and Taliban.

Appreciating the complexity of how cascade risks unfold should cause major powers to transform their diplomacy in ways illustrated by the formation of the United Nations after 1945. In Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Libya and Yugoslavia (as in World War I), major powers acted competitively to advance their interests or to stay out of peacemaking where they ‘had no national interest’. This book shows that the United States, the European Union, Russia and China all lost more than they gained in the above conflicts. Short-term realism actually defeated their longer-run interests. All could be better off today had they been less ‘realist’ and more cooperative in striving for consensus over how to respond preventatively to the early sparks in Sarajevo (in 1914 and 1989), in Kabul (especially in 1988 and 2001), in Baghdad (iteratively, starting in 1990), Libya (2011) and Damascus (2011).

Chapter 12 argues that most violence prevention strategies fail most of the time, but trying one strategy after another, from a repertoire of very different strategies, works. While we fail to generate a general theory of cascades (we identify only recurrent patterns), we do generate a meta-theory and a meta-strategy of responsive layering in Chapter 12. A policy mix of escalating plural interscalar supports for peace, and deterrents for war, works if the iterated strategy mix is mobilised quickly to prevent cascades before they get out of hand. Once full-blooded warfare has cascaded to an existential struggle, however, escalation of deterrence generally does not work for two reasons. First, it evokes ‘liberty or death’ imaginaries that mean military escalations increase defiance more than deterrence. Second, while military deterrence can ultimately exceed defiance if the investment in it is huge and if concerned publics are willing to wade through the blood required, the publics of major powers rarely stomach this, and rarely consent to fund it. So major powers repeatedly err in making too small a peacemaking investment early on; they then
intervene militarily or supply arms that frequently make things worse and then pull out to leave the mess to the rest. This book hopes to educate major powers to behave with greater long-run rationality and ethicality in future. Chapter 12 argues that states can be assisted with this complex challenge by the participation and creativity of more minds sounding early warnings and touting preventive diplomacy ideas through open source preventive diplomacy—a preventive diplomacy wiki.

The book argues that structurally more equal parts of the world enjoy less-criminalised states, militaries and local institutions and suffer less violence from both war and crime. Gender discrimination is a particularly important structural factor in explaining violence. Gendered domination generates violence, which generates more gendered domination. Also important are inequalities between destitute landless people and their often criminal landlords, between homeless Aboriginal Australians and European criminals who stole their land at the point of a gun, between poor people who pay tax and crony capitalists or Western bankers who do not, and contextually endless other modalities of inequality. These structural inequalities demand structural remedies, the most important of which are separations of powers to render governance that is criminalised by money politics or tyrannies of the majority more accountable to the disenfranchised. Hence, our conclusion is that domination is the more fertile concept for explaining violence than inequality, with militarised domination and criminalised domination of governance particularly critical modalities of domination. Yet struggles against domination and discrimination must be contextually attuned and responsive to what are subjectively salient inequalities. Twenty years ago, few in the West would have conceived humiliation and discrimination against Muslims as a major risk factor for violence that required an antidiscrimination politics of inclusion. The Allied powers were much quicker to learn from the geopolitical humiliation of Versailles that Germany needed the politics of inclusion (the Marshall Plan and the European Union).

Policies are needed to combat anomie (normlessness). Vacuums of social order attract the most terrible of tyrannies, as is shown in Part II to have happened with the Taliban in Kandahar and other parts of South Asia. Norms about the shamefulness of violence are particularly critical, particularly for sexual and gender-based violence. So are norms about who has the legitimate right to bear arms that protect us against violence in
moments of normlessness. Finally, consensus about separations of powers that protect people against domination, that call the powerful to account, is critical.

No society conquers anomie perfectly in these ways to minimise domination and violence. Yet examples are plentiful of societies that have done reasonably well at it and that experience low levels of violence from crime and war. Many heavily militarised societies that were infused with a politics of domination, corruption and extreme inequality in the twentieth century have become more egalitarian, less dominating, low-violence societies in recent decades, including Japan, Germany, Italy, Spain, South Korea and Taiwan. It is harder for highly militarised societies such as Russia, Pakistan or the United States, where violence and domination are less tempered (Krygier 2015; Braithwaite 2017a) and less shameful, to deliver low levels of violence to their citizens.

Finally, we argue that conditions of complexity require creativity from civil society in resisting domination and violence. Model mongering (Chapter 3) that is creative with complexity, and resilient in the nonviolence of its resistance, is a fundamental policy prescription of this book.

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1 This is true even in the face of the welfare states such as Spain and Italy suffering major blows during the austerity of the past decade.
2 Some would view Taiwan as a controversial entry on this list because it has by far the highest homicide rate of all these countries, perhaps because it has higher levels of gun ownership than all of them. Yet, in general, Taiwan has an extremely low crime rate and its homicide rate fell to two per 100,000 in 2013 from 8.5 in 1997, when it had a homicide rate similar to the United States (Guomindang 2015). Like South Korea and Japan, Taiwan (from the 1950s) benefited from one of the few highly redistributive land reforms of the twentieth century that made all these societies much more structurally equal and less corrupt than Asian comparators (You 2014).
1. INTRODUCTION

Key concepts

South Asia

Map 1.1 Map of South Asia.
Source: Based on Map No. 4140 Rev. 4 December 2011, Department of Field Support Cartographic Section, United Nations.

Both South Asia and India, the focus of detailed empirical analysis in Part II, are geopolitical expressions. South Asia is a more recent construction that encompasses seven diverse yet interrelated sovereign
states of very different sizes: India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan and the Maldives (Alamgir and D’Costa 2011). The idea of India goes beyond the borders and boundaries of the sovereign state of India. Through the primordial (Geertz 1963, 1973) bonding of blood, language, tradition and norms, the South Asian states are tied by thousands of years of history and culture. This book argues that they also have important ties to Afghanistan and Myanmar through shared imperial dominations and shared identities such as Baloch, Pashtun and Naga that cross national boundaries and that have been the focus of major wars across South Asian boundaries. Afghanistan has often been investigated as part of Central rather than South Asia and Myanmar as part of South-East rather than South Asia. Nevertheless, a cascades theory requires us to be open to geographical fuzziness in our orienting concepts. Originally, Bhutan and the Maldives were excluded from our analysis because they did not share in major wars that cascaded across South Asian borders. By the time we completed our work, we realised this was a poor judgment, so Bhutan is included in the final analysis (Chapter 9). While August 1947 and March 1971 were unique moments of departure in history that saw the genesis of Pakistan and Bangladesh, the origin of their political and cultural complexes conflates with India’s past. Both Pakistan and Bangladesh were, after all, parts of India until 1947. While most scholarship on Partition focuses on the incision of India, the familiarity of these states as identity communities going beyond national borders has not been appropriately explained or addressed (D’Costa 2011). In this book, we trace these complex relationships across territorially defined borders.

Violence

Endorsing the Hobbesian principle that violence is a natural condition of society, Christian lay theologian Jacques Ellul (1969) believed that violence is pervasive in all cultures and across all times. This book opts for a broad conceptualisation of violence. Much has been written about organised violence, war and conflict (Shaw 1984; Wimmer and Min 2006). Sociologist Siniša Malešević (2010: 226) observes that there is a commonsense view—and an assumption in much of military history—that in war it is much easier to kill another person than to die for others. Violence includes our core concerns in this book—acts of crime and acts of war—yet extends even to suicide, which is violence against the self. Put simply, we employ a truncated form of the World Health Organization definition of violence:
[T]he intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, [or] psychological harm. (WHO 2002: 80)³

The breadth of this definition leaves space for diverse ways of conceptualising violence. As the distinction between war and organised crime becomes increasingly blurred, it becomes important to have a framework sufficiently broad to come to terms with situations where a peace agreement is signed or/and armies cease doing battle with each other, but where the number of people who are killed and wounded increases, the number of refugees rises and the subjective sense of feeling threatened by violence grows.

Cascades

Cascades and hotspots

The cascade metaphor has a long history in geology (Kun et al. 2014) and physics. Water is not the only matter that cascades; a spark causes fire to cascade up a mountain, down a gully and across a plain. In particle physics, a shower is a cascade of secondary particles produced as the result of a high-energy particle interacting with dense matter. In medicine, infection happens through particles that activate other biological particles to spread through cascades called contagion. The cascade concept has been used productively in the social sciences—in Cass Sunstein’s (1997) norm cascades, Timur Kuran’s (1998) repetitional cascades and Kathryn Sikkink’s (2011) cascades of criminal enforcement for crimes against humanity. The most influential book of the genre has been Malcolm Gladwell’s (2000) about how social phenomena cascade past ‘the tipping point’. Gladwell argues that ideas and social phenomena spread ‘just like viruses do’ (2000: 7). At first, only a few actors cascade, but, if some of them have the qualities of what Gladwell calls connectors, mavens and salesmen, they can pull others with them until a tipping point is passed. Connectors, mavens and salesmen are not so different from the range of modelling actors we discuss under Proposition 2 in Chapter 3.

³ We do not broaden violence so far as to include the causation of ‘maldevelopment or deprivation’, as the WHO does. This is because ‘maldevelopment and deprivation’ have relevance to independent variables in our analyses.
The cascade metaphor has been employed in a range of ways. For example, in his discussion of ethnic violence, James Rosenau (1990) stressed that the image of turbulence developed by mathematicians and physicists could provide an important basis for understanding the idea of bifurcation and related ideas of complexity, chaos and turbulence in complex systems. He classified the bifurcated systems in contemporary world politics as the multicentric system and the state-centric system. Each of these affects the others in multiple ways, at multiple levels and in ways that make events enormously hard to predict (Rosenau 1990, 2006). At the end of the journey of this book, in Chapter 12, this leads us to the conclusion that cascades of violence are phenomena that benefit from diagnosis through the lens of complexity theory. Rosenau (1990: 299) replaced the idea of events with cascades to describe the event structures that ‘gather momentum, stall, reverse course, and resume anew as their repercussions spread among whole systems and subsystems’. Phenomena such as violence cascade through the agency and imaginaries of human actors and through physical flows—of armies, weapons and refugees. Such cascades of objects can enable cascades of violent action.

Sambanis (2001) found that a country that has neighbouring states at war is more likely to experience a civil war itself, as did Gleditsch (2002, 2007), Salehyan and Gleditsch (2006) and Ward and Gleditsch (2002).4 Alex Braithwaite (2016) and Houweling and Siccamac (1985, 1988) show that interstate militarised conflicts cluster in both space and time to produce hotspots. Braithwaite and Li (2007) also show quantitatively that terrorist incidents cascade and cluster at and from geographical hotspots. Braithwaite and Johnson (2012) further found that, within one country (Iraq), IED attacks were clustered in space and time and these hotspots behaved in a manner similar to that observed in the spread of disease and

4 See also Sambanis’s (2004: 270–1) qualitative analysis of cases supporting the conclusion of cross-border contagion. Hegre et al. (2001), however, fail to find an association between a country suffering a civil war and one with neighbours who have had a civil war. The empirical work at the conclusion of the Peacebuilding Compared data collection not only will allow a retesting of these different empirical results on new data from the twenty-first century, it also will allow limited quantitative analyses of cascading at the subnational level. For example, one of the Sambanis (2004: 270) case studies is of Aceh’s insurgents being influenced by the rise of an insurgency in East Timor. When Indonesian President Suharto decided to invade and annex East Timor, an influence on his imaginary was some years earlier as a general leading an invasion of West Papua, which ultimately triggered events that led to its reunification with Indonesia. These are both examples of imaginaries cascading from one province to another within the same large country. Likewise, we see in Chapter 5 that India at the time of writing has many different Maoist insurgencies—affecting rural areas of half of India’s states. This can only be interpreted as a South Asian cascade, mostly internal to India, in the twenty-first century in which perhaps the only other state in the world to have had a really substantial Maoist insurgency has been neighbouring Nepal.
crime. Terrorism is also exacerbated by hotspots in the sense that the exit of foreign fighters from hotspots is associated with heightened terrorism at home (Braithwaite and Chu 2017). Similarly, the exit of state troops back to the homeland after foreign wars is associated with heightened homicide at home, much of it domestic violence. Ghobarah et al. (2003) show that homicides and suicides increase after nations experience civil wars and that homicide also spikes after war in countries contiguous to the country that has experienced a civil war. Much of this domestic violence and self-violence cascade is perpetrated by the children of fighters as much as, or more than, by the fighters themselves. Wilkinson’s (2004: 44–45) Indian data show that Hindu–Muslim riots and casualties in them are predicted by the incidence of riots in that town in the previous five years. Finally, Chenoweth and Perkoski (2017) find that one of the best predictors of countries experiencing mass killings is the experience of mass killings in their past, and Harff (2017) concludes that past genocide in a society increases the likelihood of cascade to a future genocide.

Alex Braithwaite (2016) interprets his data on international cascades and international clustering of violence from hotspot to hotspot as being about the targeting of state weakness and third parties’ perceptions of state vulnerability. In our South Asian data and in the decisions of Rwanda and Uganda to invade Congo in 1996, discussed in the next chapter, there are certainly moments when targeting a perception of state vulnerability applies. We conclude, however, that a more interscalar interpretation of these cascades has more explanatory power than an international one. We find very local dynamics of fear, hatred and revenge to be important in this. As Stanley Tambiah (1996: 214) interprets the Indian evidence: ‘intermittent ethnic riots form a series, with antecedent riots influencing the unfolding of subsequent ones’. This is also true of our interpretation of the cascading of nonviolence. Here, global imaginaries of nonviolence and freedom from tyranny are important alongside local and national ones. Importantly for our analysis, Alex Braithwaite et al. (2015) show statistically that nonviolence, like violence, is a contagion phenomenon that cascades globally. In the Arab Spring, however, the global cascade of freedom and nonviolence is not the only global imaginary in play. In all the Middle Eastern uprisings, from the 1979 Iranian Revolution to Egypt and Syria in 2011, tyrannical jihadist imaginaries of a caliphate were alive on

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5 Based on our qualitative data, we also posit more specificity about the kinds of weaknesses that are important at different scales. These are the disintegration of empires, the disintegration of national or local monopolies of armed force and the disintegration of local normative orders (anomie).
the streets beside advocacy for nonviolence and freedom. In between them sat the advocacy of the Muslim Brotherhood for Islamised democratic institutions. Beside them stood advocates for local autonomy for Coptic Christians and especially for Kurds (but also for many other minorities). Alongside all of this were Shia and Sunni Muslim divides being coopted by external Shia and Sunni funders. It was usually the imaginary that could draw on superior organisational bases that prevailed over all the others to impose a new domination.

We are wrong to think of the cascade of nonviolent revolutions to overthrow communism in 1989 as totally different, as a simple triumph of freedom. It was the Taliban who ultimately prevailed in the overthrow of communism in Afghanistan. Across Eastern Europe there was a contest between a neoliberal imaginary that favoured shock-therapy privatisation and a social democratic imaginary that urged caution and gradualism in the transition to a mixed economy. The latter, mixed transitional economy part of the social democratic imaginary was paradoxically adopted by China, where communism did not fall at Tiananmen Square. Perhaps as a result, the Chinese economy has since performed at a far superior level than the post-communist economies that went all the way with untempered neoliberalism. Yet China utterly rejected the political freedom aspects of social democracy. To add paradox to paradox, many authoritarian capitalist economies from China and Bangladesh to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) have consistently outperformed (in economic growth) the neoliberal economies this century. Some of the old Soviet Bloc countries, including Russia itself, Poland, Hungary and others, have been attracted to an authoritarian capitalist model. Today, we can think of many of these post-communist societies as having suffered a tyranny of neoliberalism or authoritarian criminalisation of their states—often both—alongside an escalation of violence.6 This might have been avoided by listening to the now marginalised people-power voices for a more tempered liberalism (Krygier 2015; Braithwaite 2017a).

The interpretation of the statistical patterns of cascading violence in this book is not just about the cascading of war from one country to another. It is more about war cascading from hotspots within one country to

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6 The neoliberal shock therapy privatisation, the criminalisation, the authoritarianism and the violence are related because quick and dirty privatisations were corrupted into the hands of mafias and former *nomenklatura* (Communist Party *apparatchiks*). A deep state was then rebuilt, substantially by a former KGB official in Vladimir Putin, who knew how to harness the criminal business elite.
other hotspots in that country and to hotspots across borders inside other countries. One referee pointed out that the cascade metaphor is essentially a word picture, so one must be careful that metaphors ‘do not always or accurately establish a similarity between one domain of experience with another’. The violent harm of war between two armies cascading to self-harm among veterans or suicidal children of veterans is a good example of cascading to a radically different kind of harm. When Che Guevara (2003: 350) wrote ‘create two, three, many Vietnams’, this certainly involves an imaginary of a cascade dynamic. Yet it does not mean Che imagined that other revolutionary struggles would unfold in the same way as Vietnam.

Vietnam is an example that informed the development of our approach: it was a national war in the 1960s and 1970s, cascading to an international, cross-border war in Cambodia. This was followed by Vietnam’s invasion of Cambodia and China’s invasion of Vietnam in 1979. A more useful way of viewing this complex event is that a war in Vietnam cascaded across to hotspots in Cambodia as armed groups fighting in Vietnam were chased across the border into Cambodia. Eventually, the Vietnam War spread to so many hotspots in Cambodia (and Laos) that the United States surged to a tonnage of bombs dropped on Cambodia that surpassed all the bombs of World War II, causing huge refugee flows that in turn cascaded to genocide.

This is a classic example that influenced the development of the 10 propositions that shape this book (discussed below). It is discussed further in the next chapter. Hence, the research process began to formulate our 10 propositions from what we already know about such geopolitically prominent cases as Vietnam. Progressively, we injected more specificity into the propositions during our early years in the field studying South Asian conflicts.

A brief summary of the involvement of various actors in the complex series of wars cascading from Vietnam could be explained through the cascades framework in the following way. Local and national Cambodian political figures under pressure from these events became aligned to differing degrees with Vietnam and the United States. The Khmer Rouge was both anti-Vietnamese and anti-American. Local Cambodian political leaders who were aligned against Vietnam increasingly attacked the large numbers of ethnic Vietnamese who had long lived in Cambodia. Cambodia became increasingly fragmented. It suffered a genocide led by
the Khmer Rouge in which Cambodian ethnic Vietnamese were among those targeted in large numbers. Many fled across borders as refugees, mainly to Vietnam. The next stage of this cascade was Vietnam invading Cambodia to defeat the Khmer Rouge. That was only the beginning of a proliferation of further war cascading across countless Cambodian hotspots, which only began to stabilise with a large UN peacekeeping deployment in 1992.

![Plate 1.1 Mass grave being exhumed at Choeng Ek, Cambodia (date unknown). Source: Choeung Ek Memorial, Cambodia.](image)

Complex cascade lenses

In this book, we observe cascades through a global institutions lens, the lens of empire, a regional South Asian lens, national lenses, lenses at varied levels of localism and more. Shahar Hameiri et al. (2017), like Jamie Peck (2002: 340), argue that labels such as local, national, regional and transnational are not levels of analysis that can be seen as distinct arenas of research in the social sciences. They are also more than sets of binaries (such as local/national) that are subjects of hybridities (MacGinty and Richmond 2015; and see the various contributions in Wallis et al. 2018).
In our method, we agree with Hameiri et al. (2017), Peck (2002) and Wallis et al. (2018) that such ‘levels of analysis’ must be understood in dynamic, relational terms. Contestation of power ‘that may be located at different scales and involved in complex, tactical, multi-scalar alliances, explains the uneven outcomes of international intervention’ (Hameiri and Jones 2017: 54). Failures of peacebuilding can be explained, for example, by theorising peacebuilding as ‘statebuilding’ or as ‘international relations’, by neglect of the interscalar. In this book, cascades of violence are in focus as one of many possible approaches to seeing how interscalar cascades of power reveal some specifics of why interventions that lack an interscalar imagination fail. We do not go so far, however, as to agree with Hameiri et al. in relation to our global, empire, regional, national and local cascade lenses when they say: ‘Rather, they are part of a single social whole, existing not “in mutual isolation but are always interconnected in a broader, often-changing inter-scalar ensemble”’ (Hameiri et al. 2017, quoting Brenner et al. 2003: 16). The idea of an interscalar ensemble is congenial because cascades have an inherently interscalar dynamic (see also Karstedt 2017 on ‘multiple scales’). We do agree, moreover, that looking at an interscalar dynamic as a ‘social whole’ can be a revealing way of seeing cascades. Yet it is only one way.

The politics of scale is not just a spatial phenomenon. Our understanding is advanced by one lens that focuses on what a military high command does and another that focuses on how privates rape privately or on what sergeants do on a small scale; the military action revealed is not always a social whole. Transitional justice scholarship has a rather consistent bias towards seeing military action more as a social whole coordinated by a high command than it is. And national armies do not always have wider spatial scale than non-state armies. Non-state militaries can be tiny and localised, transnational—such as Boko Haram, Islamic State, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) coalitions of the willing—or regional—such as African Union peacekeeping. The Islamic State imaginary can have wider scale than its military conquests. We see best by zooming in and out on many scales and to the interscalar.

We prefer an adaptation of Gareth Morgan’s (1997) lens metaphor to which we frequently return in this book. Our adaptation of Morgan is an adjustable lens that can be attuned to see and hear the local, and a lens that can be widened to national, regional, global or other levels. Adjustability must be even more complex than the extremely wide lens of seeing an ‘interscalar ensemble’ as a ‘social whole’. Our lens must be able to follow
the actions of intermediaries who connect one level to another, following
the dynamics of how connectors make interscalar movement of cascades
happen. This allows the research to see processes of interscalar hybridity
that infuse the global into the local and vice versa. When an anthropologist
focuses their lens on one village or one kin group, they can work in a spirit
of hybridity, by, for example, studying how global human rights norms
percolate down to the village and how village experience bubbles up to
inform and even change the UN human rights regime through the agency
of intermediaries who have a ‘double consciousness’ of the local and the
global (Merry 2006). They study how local actors hybridise by creatively
adapting human rights ideas, and how they find a way of channelling
them through indigenous discourses to reshape social relationships.
Unfortunately, anthropologists cannot see this hybridity very clearly by
focusing their lens only on the village. They must also pitch their tent in
New York and Geneva, as Sally Merry (2006) did, widening the focus of
their lens to global institutions. Only through research at the level of both
lenses, and by adjusting to see the dynamics of how connectors (or ‘model
mongers’; Chapter 3) make the interscalar happen, can one see how the
global can be ‘vernacularised’ into the local and the local into the global.

Admittedly, a global institution such as the UN Security Council is
a committee of 15 people with whom one can sit; the anthropologist can
observe them through a lens adjusted to the short focal length of the room
where they pontificate together. To truly understand the global, however,
one must also understand the other tables at which those 15 individuals
sit in their national capitals, the tables of more nuanced conversation at
which their staff sit in Geneva, and more. There is profound value in
anthropological research that collects data only at the village level; there
is great value in IR research focused only on the work of the Security
Council, as there is in mainstream political science that studies the politics
of states. And there is innovative value in the focus of Hameiri et al. (2017)
on an interscalar ensemble as a social whole.

Our methodological hypothesis is, however, that the richest seeing
is iteratively multifocal. It focuses narrowly on many local sets of
relationships. It then adjusts to a much longer lens to see if there is
a pointillist pattern across that galaxy of locales (as in our transnational
hotspot cascades clustered around nodes such as eastern Congo, Serbia
and Kashmir). The lens can then be adjusted to a national level to study
political decision-making in Washington, DC, for example. After that,
a regional lens such as South Asia or greater India that defines some
shared level of identity, shared historical experience of empire, shared institutional infrastructure (e.g. SAARC) and shared cascades might offer valuable insights, as might a regional imaginary that goes global, such as Maoism. Finally, we aim also for a book that adjusts to the maximum focal length of the interscalar. This caps off a social science method for iterating across variable lenses, from local lenses that allow thick description (as in our description of police station reconciliation committees in north-west Pakistan) to interscalar ensembles in which our view of thickly described data points blurs. Of course, critics of such widely iterated adjustment will say it conduces to flawed and partial oversimplification. By seeing everything, we see nothing. We conceive our own work as partial and radically flawed by inevitable howlers because of the limited breadth and depth of our digging down through time for data. It is radically incomplete, and likely to remain so in 2030, when we hope to shut down Peacebuilding Compared. Still, we think it is a worthy, flawed ambition for a social science that adds cascade complexity to our ways of seeing.

A final matter we want to put right in relation to the vaunting methodological ambition in this book is that we do not see our methodology as superior to that of Hameiri et al. (2017). Our criticism simply arises when they characterise what they do as comprehending an often-changing interscalar ensemble that is part of a single social whole. How singular such holism might be depends on the issue. Methodologically, we actually see them as doing something rather similar to what we do, though they may have done it better. For example, their book has chapters focused on national and provincial levels with titles that include ‘Cambodia’, ‘Solomon Islands’ and ‘Aceh’. We learnt much through the focusing of their lenses iteratively in each of those chapters on a national or a provincial level. This insight included national–provincial interaction that explained much enrolment of the local by the provincial in Aceh (in which provincial elites emerged as potent after the war) and by the national in Cambodia and Solomon Islands (national elites who harnessed domination by democracy, as with Kashmir elites in Chapter 5 of this book). In fact, Hameiri et al. (2017) spend a lot of time focusing on the state level of scale. This is because states turn out in their data to be master rescalers because of their command of the international law idea of sovereignty. When aid donors seek to pass power down to the local, masters of states, such as Cambodia’s Prime Minister, Hun Sen, are effective at rescaling that power back to their control. The Khmer Rouge was a master scale manager when it executed genocide. Hun Sen was a master defector from the Khmer Rouge to global powers. He then
learnt how to rescale their global power to his control, to manage scale by appropriating domination by the very democracy demanded by those global powers. We learn much from Hameiri et al.’s (2017) narrowed focus on specific peacebuilding intervention projects, from the interscalar focus in their conclusion and more. We just think they are in error at the moments in their analysis when they describe their method as ultimately about seeing interscalar social wholes. The thicker descriptions embedded in their text would be a blur if that were mainly what they did.

It must further be said that our seeing would be impoverished if it were only seeing at different levels of scale. Cascades are ever-changing dynamics that have time as well as spatial dynamics, and many other dimensions. Cascades of violence cluster in time as well as space (A. Braithwaite 2016). Gareth Morgan’s (1997) contribution to social science is to pick up multiple lenses of divergent theoretical character so we can see a phenomenon as many things at once. In this book, we look not only through lenses adjusted for different scales, but also through substantively different lenses of diverse theoretical tints (realist critics will see our nonviolence lens in Chapter 11 as rose-coloured!). For example, Proposition 1 involves a deterrence/defiance theory lens, while Proposition 2 involves a diffusion/modelling theory lens.

We see the research of Hameiri et al. (2017) in practice as also iterating between different substantive theoretical lenses. We admire their contribution, and Karstedt’s (2017), because they show us how to iterate between multiple scales and the interscalar. Hameiri et al.’s (2017) focus on interscalar conflict and fragmentation is illuminating. We learnt from their critique of the ‘political economy turn’ in development studies as ‘scale-blind’ in its emphasis on how state politics, political economies and elite ‘political settlements’ mediate the implementation of aid programs. This scale-blindness ‘implicitly accept[s] that the spatial and social scope of their political economy analysis aligns with the territorial borders of states and the societies living within them’ (Hameiri et al. 2017: 238). Hameiri et al. correct a limitation of Morgan’s (1997) work. Morgan (1997) advocated a diversity of lenses for viewing a phenomenon of basically one scale: the organisation.7 We therefore admire the corrective of work from other organisation theorists such as Stewart Clegg (1989) who study

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7 While Morgan (1997) is most definitely an organisation theorist, this sentence nevertheless oversimplifies things, because his work embraces insights about organisations that emerge from the level of individual psychology and from international relations, when he discusses an organisation-theory take on the Cuban Missile Crisis.
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phenomena of more variable scale such as power that can have a national, provincial or organisational character as in rule (or rules that indeed embrace the global through international law), a superstructural character of domination that might be capitalist, more specified dominations that have a gender, race or class character, power that circulates through discourses or imaginaries and circuits of power that have an interscalar character (see Chapter 11). In sum, we see cascade analysis as one form of interscalar analysis that has the particular kinds of dynamic specificities represented by our 10 propositions.

How the cascades concept is developed in the plan of this book

In Chapters 2 and 3, we use the wars from 1993 onwards in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) as another cascade that shaped the development of our 10 hypotheses based on the Peacebuilding Compared fieldwork already completed there. We use the DRC cascade in the next two chapters to flesh out in a little more detail the phenomenon just introduced for Vietnam of armed conflicts that spread from hotspot to hotspot within and across borders in progressively more dangerous interaction with international conflicts. Congo is seen as an attractor of cascades from far and wide in the way Syria also is today and Germany was during the Thirty Years’ War that ended with the Peace of Westphalia. Chapters 3 and 4 seek to explain the broader relevance of the book by explaining more carefully the nature of each of our 10 propositions and how their significance can be seen in many other conflicts beyond South Asia that have already been coded for the Peacebuilding Compared project. This is a long-term project that involved conversations with many different interlocutors in various conflict zones of the world. Part I of the book helps evolve the narrative of the Peacebuilding Compared project. It draws insights from previous publications of the project (Braithwaite et al. 2010a, 2010b, 2010c, 2012). It also draws from D’Costa’s deep involvement with interlocutors within South Asian civil society (D’Costa 2011, 2014, 2016). Part I is entitled ‘Cascades on a broad canvas’.

The approach of this book is to explain how our 10 propositions grew inductively from the South Asian conflict data and from the wider Peacebuilding Compared database at the point it had reached by 2017. When the Peacebuilding Compared dataset is complete, for the most important conflicts from the end of the Cold War to 2030, we will retest
the propositions across all these armed conflicts to draw out circumstances for which the propositions are false and revise them. The first task, however, is to explain cascades theory as an aid to understanding how to create a more just and peaceful world. This we address in Chapters 2–4 by taking a big-picture view of why cascades might help peacemakers to see the history of the past century in a more fertile framework.

After Chapters 3 and 4 take us back to a proposition-by-proposition account of potential plausibility, Part II examines how cascades of violence have spread and halted in India, with a particular focus on Kashmir (Chapter 5); Pakistan and Afghanistan, particularly the Pashtun8 and Baloch regions of those countries (Chapter 6); Bangladesh, particularly the Chittagong Hill Tracts (Chapter 7); Sri Lanka, both its communist and its Tamil insurgencies (Chapter 8); and Nepal, Bhutan, Afghanistan and Myanmar (Chapter 9). While Part I is about ‘cascades on a broad canvas’ that includes the world wars of the twentieth century, Part II is targeted regionally to ‘South Asian cascades’ that actually transcend South Asia since World War II.

We hope it becomes clear why the 10 propositions in Part I were developed in part through working inductively from the data presented in Part II. Part III reviews and revises the current state of play with the development of the propositions in light of the data in Part II. In Chapter 10 and the Appendix, Part III revises the 10 starting propositions after an overview of the level of support for them in our data. Chapter 11 considers how to prevent cascades of violence, how to nurture cascades of resistance to violence and domination and how to promote cascades of nonviolence. Chapter 12 concludes with policy ideas for responding to the complexity of the task of suppressing cascades of violence. It offers a complexity

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8 Writers have used different spellings such as Pashtuns, Pukhtoons, Paktuns and Pathans to describe several hundred distinct tribal groups. The terms Pashtun and Pakhtoon/Pakhtun refer to two separate confederations of tribes primarily living in Afghanistan and Pakistan who speak Pashto and Pakhto, two dialects of an Iranian language. Pashto became one of the official languages of Afghanistan in 1936. Pashto/Pakhto is also widely spoken in Pakistan; Pakhto is spoken predominantly in Peshawar and Pashto, a softer dialect, is spoken further south. The Abdali or Durrani tribes in Kandahar and Heart region, the Ghilzai tribes in the Nangarhar–Paktia region of Afghanistan and the eastern tribes of Pakistan speak the Pakhtun dialect (Rammohan 2010: 5). Other tribes—the Afridi, Khatak, Orakzai, Waziri and Mahsud—were designated as hill tribes by the British and increasingly, for the sake of convenience, were categorised as Pashtuns (Rammohan 2010). Although we have retained our interlocutors’ respective (preferred) spellings of Pukhtoon/Pakhtun when directly cited, in this book we have consistently used the term ‘Pashtuns’ (Allan 2001: 548).
theory take on how to respond in a practical way to the policy challenges of regional and global violence through a preventive diplomacy wiki. This rounds out Part III’s conclusions and implications.

Throughout Part I, we consider counterfactuals about wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria and Libya, south into Africa, the DRC (formerly Zaire), Yugoslavia, Vietnam and World Wars I and II. Were there diplomatic paths not taken that might have interrupted cascade dynamics? Chapter 2 discusses the counterfactual method that is illustrated for the first time in that chapter. The next section considers the other major methodological questions in our work.

Peacebuilding Compared methods

We bring together evidence from multidisciplinary scholarship on peacebuilding, conflict and nonviolence, and the insights of stakeholders such as activists, policymakers, practitioners, leading voices from civil society, members of state and non-state armed groups, intelligence agencies, refugee leaders, human rights and women’s rights advocates, those from marginalised communities and young people. Following a diagnosis of the cascading character of the history of global violence since 1911 in Part I, in Part II, we consider political and social discourses and strategies of violence and nonviolence in South Asia since 1945. We also consider the challenges that states have encountered and created for themselves and look to the challenges that non-networked and well-networked respondents argue are important for our attention in the coming decade.

To explore the theoretical underpinnings of our 10 propositions, we turned to those involved in developing political, social and religious platforms. We asked these stakeholders to identify the key challenges and opportunities for peacebuilding in South Asia. Our sources were mostly individual interviews, some with two or even three people, and small numbers of focus group discussions that are counted as just one interview in the interview counts we report in each chapter. Where we rely on our interview data, sometimes we include quotations from interviews, but more often we use statements that none or some of our interviews supported a particular claim. Our apologies are offered for those moments of our narrative where we have failed to be as explicit as we should be about exactly how we are relying on so many interviews to advance our
interpretations of so many histories of violence. There was also quite a lot of participant observation (for example, of peace negotiations, of peacekeeper training and peacekeeper patrols, of war crimes trials, of life in refugee camps and of diplomatic work in the corridors of the United Nations) and searches of websites, UN Security Council resolutions, draft peace agreements and the scholarly literature. The most important dimension of our methodology for gaining insight and preventing a single view from dominating our interpretation of the data is our method for identifying and documenting multiple and varied voices and silences.

We conducted interviews beyond South Asia with political activists in exile, refugee groups and sometimes exiled members of insurgency groups in Iraq, Iran, Pakistan, the Gulf states, both Congos, Switzerland, Sweden, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, the United States, Australia and via email. We have delivered lectures in universities and think tanks across South Asia and shared our initial findings with experts on the ground. This particular strategy has sharpened our analysis. In each case study country, we have partnered with young researchers and journalists who have accompanied us during our field visits. These researchers, who are acknowledged in our preface, with some exceptions where they did not want such politicised work to be acknowledged, have served not only as our assistants, but also as informants, collaborators and, in more than a dozen instances, as co-authors of papers. At the points in our narrative where we rely on or rerun analyses from those papers, we acknowledge them.

Political and human rights activists with a range of ages and working in a range of organisational contexts were interviewed. They were differently positioned within their local socioeconomic and political spaces and in global politics: some were able to move about freely and others were confined, some were more theoretically oriented and others were more substantively oriented. Many eagerly shared their analysis of the substantive concerns of their communities. Some were from state-accepted groups, while others challenged political norms or were socially outcast. Our interview subjects were disproportionately those whose views have not been publicised.

Some of our interview subjects were internationally known advocates of their communities, some had national reputations and some were unknown beyond their locales. Some had garnered support from national or international sources, others had not and still others eschewed any funding. We did not focus on finding only those who were known to us
before arriving in the field location. We focused instead on identifying those whose critical perspectives we would not have been able to know had we not travelled to these field locations. We followed up with many who did not have time to be interviewed in detail and checked in with them in our later visits or via email.

None of our sources was interpreted as being a collective voice representing others. While offering their own perspectives, they often supplied evidence for why their account could be taken to speak for many and not just themselves. In addition, there were many silent informants (again, who are not included in our interview counts). We often documented this silence in interviews conducted with senior leaders and others present. In one interview in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, for example, one of the interlocutors hardly spoke and always deferred to the senior leader. This seemed to be in deference to the other's title. In some other cases, it seemed to be a result of personal style. In these cases, we have carried out informal conversations with those silent informants, even if only in being escorted out, but often in a more comfortable and intimate setting (during meals, for example).

In South Asia, development discourse has been strongly influenced by the international development community, which includes international organisations (the United Nations, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund), international non-governmental organisations (such as Oxfam, Care, Save the Children), highly sophisticated, professional and large non-governmental organisations (NGOs) within states (for example, the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee) and transnational networks. National and local NGOs wanting to access resources, provided by either their international partners or the state, had to learn how to articulate their concerns in the rhetoric donors understand, often at the expense of their own activities. Grassroots activities with people have also been outsourced to community-based organisations. Many of these international and national organisations play an active role in peacebuilding work. As such, we have visited and interviewed local NGOs and national and international organisations (such as Save the Children in Kashmir, Oxfam in Islamabad, the UN Development Programme in the Chittagong Hill Tracts and Action Aid in Yangon) when appropriate. Indeed, we have interviewed all the types of actors discussed in this paragraph. Throughout this book, we do not merely reflect or represent the views of singular or plural others, but rather join their effort by offering political and analytical insights that we were able to glean from taking
their thoughts together and situating these in a larger picture of cascades of violence in South Asia. Hence our fieldwork notes record political and analytical interpretive memos of the authors alongside a record of what was said.

This book was initially developed as part of the Peacebuilding Compared project and then took on a life of its own. Peacebuilding Compared commenced in 2004 with the aim of running for 20 years—currently conceived as 26 years because of our slow work rate! Peacebuilding Compared seeks to study all the international peacekeeping operations and all the geopolitically significant armed conflicts across the world since the end of the Cold War. Serious fieldwork is being conducted in the region of each of these conflicts and beyond in other relevant locales such as the UN headquarters in New York. Approximately 4,000 conflict stakeholders had been interviewed up to May 2017 in 2,355 interview files during some 50 months of fieldwork. All but 32 of these interviews were summarised from handwritten notes into a fieldwork note database using voice recognition software. There was more than one interviewer for three-quarters of these interviews. Those not entered into the database but left at the level of handwritten notes were mostly cases where admissions of culpability for atrocity crimes were an issue. South Asian cases discussed in Part II of this book accounted for 645 of the interview files, conducted

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9 The overwhelming majority of interview files are records of one interview with one person. Approximately one-third are single interview files with more than one person, with two people in the majority of these cases. Occasionally, for an interview with a newspaper editor, for example, the editor invited a group of senior journalists to help answer questions, or an interview at a police station or military base was with a group of officers. A small number of these interview files actually involved multiple interviews where we would sit down at a police station, military base or UN mission and one person after another would arrive sequentially to have a discussion with us in the course of a day. Some of the interview files are actually a whole day out on patrol with half a dozen peacekeepers chatting with each of them over breakfast or in the car and chatting with those with whom they spoke in the course of their day of peacekeeping. There were six days spent flying off to a peace negotiation, for example, or some specific incident with a group of UN and other peace operation officers in a helicopter. There are interview files that record conversations with multiple insurgents and prison staff recorded during a half-day at a prison or with multiple insurgents recorded during a day spent at their military base. Some of our 2,355 interview files are a record of a day walking around a refugee camp and sitting down for cups of tea for shorter and longer conversations with a variety of people. Other files are records of meetings with groups of activists or student leaders. If three students did most of the talking at one of these focus group discussions, we were inclined to count the group discussion as one interview with three individuals. So while there is precision about the number of 2,355 written interview files, there are some rather arbitrary counting judgments in the estimate of approximately 4,000 people interviewed so far, and that number does not include the large number of people with whom we had briefer conversations.

10 On why two is the optimal number of interviewers for this kind of research, see Braithwaite (1985).
mostly in 16 fieldwork trips to the region during the past decade. Prior to that, Bina D’Costa, as a regionalist born in South Asia, spent many years travelling, studying and interviewing people for other research projects across the region. Each chapter in Part II includes a footnote explaining the interviews done there. Much of the Peacebuilding Compared interview data that were not collected in South Asia were relied on for the analyses of the United Nations, NATO countries, both Congos, Rwanda, Libya, Iraq and other countries with relevance to explaining the development of the cascades propositions in Part I.

While quantitative research will begin to become an important part of the project a decade from now, during its first 13 years, the method has been qualitative. So far, Peacebuilding Compared has been oriented to inductive inference from qualitative data that maximise the diversity of contexts of war and peace. In this book, a great diversity of data points in space and time from peace–war–peace transitions across South Asia are studied. With a project of such breadth, the most important sources are secondary, with hundreds of documents consulted for each armed conflict and cited throughout the text. Primary documents that ranged from constitutions to ceasefire agreements to emails published by Wikileaks were revealed as important by a reading of the existing literature. Those documents led to conclusions about who were strategic actors who should be interviewed during the fieldwork; in turn, those interviews iteratively led to conclusions about new documents to be read and other actors to be interviewed. Many strategic documents of a very local character were shared and photographed during the interviews.

While the interview data are recursively responsive to gaps in the documentary record in this way, certain categories of actors have been interviewed in every Peacebuilding Compared case. Political and military leaders of states and insurgencies are always interviewed, usually at a high level, though we never prioritise incumbents because theirs are inevitably frustratingly short interviews. Retired leaders are better informants in terms of willingness to give long interviews and to be frank. Peacebuilding Compared to date has interviewed dozens of past and present prime ministers and presidents, dozens of insurgency leaders and hundreds of past and present government ministers. Nearly 100 generals have been interviewed. They have been more difficult to access across Peacebuilding Compared, but particularly in South Asia, where only 14 were interviewed.
Consistently across conflicts we have interviewed police commanders, civil servants (including very senior ones such as the civilian head of defence in India and of intelligence in Iraq and other countries), UN leaders, newspaper editors and leading journalists, business leaders, religious leaders, judges/prosecutors, human rights activists, women’s NGOs, peacebuilding and development NGOs and leading analysts of the case. Where they still exist, we always visit a refugee camp (because Proposition 6 is explicitly focused on refugees). On many occasions we have spent the best part of a day at a refugee camp interviewing many people. In the simplified way we have now adopted for counting interviews, the fieldwork files from these visits are counted as one interview. Hence, our fieldwork database is even more dense than the large number of interview informants suggests. We always write to the US and Australian ambassadors seeking an interview and often to European Union or other diplomats strategic to the particular case. The US ambassador agrees barely half the time, though again this was an area where South Asia was difficult, with zero out of seven serving US ambassadors agreeing to an interview. In most countries, however, the US ambassador passed us on to a senior political officer whom we were able to interview.

Every single approach to a Chinese or Russian ambassador for a Peacebuilding Compared interview has been rebuffed, though we did interview one Chinese general and some colonels who were peacekeeping specialists. We compensate for these biases by prioritising documentary sources with opposite biases that give us insight into how Russian or Chinese diplomats think or how the Taliban thinks. This, however, can never satisfactorily correct for that bias, which is profound.

Securing meetings with the Taliban is an interesting example of our research challenge. More than a dozen Taliban were interviewed during three trips to Afghanistan (two with Ali Wardak) up to the level of the former foreign minister of the former Taliban government, plus interviews with strong Taliban political sympathisers in Quetta and Peshawar in Pakistan. This was achieved by three methods: seeking out former senior Taliban who had come in from the cold to be watched in Kabul; meeting with members of regional peace committees of Afghanistan’s High Peace Council and observing regional negotiations by the United Nations with key regional players and Taliban who were discussing the surrender of their weapons and reintegration; and interviewing Taliban in regional prisons. These are all methods we have also used for interviewing insurgents in countries beyond Afghanistan.
The method used for interviewing Taliban in regional prisons was that Ali Wardak and John Braithwaite dropped in on a regional prison governor in a conflict zone, with Ali saying that John was a distinguished criminologist who happened to be in town and would be interested to meet the prison governor. Over a cup of tea with the governor, Ali asked if we could give a gift of food to little children serving sentences with their mothers. Ali had experience of the hardships of prison babies based on his own imprisonment during the time of the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. After agreement on a tour of the prison, John would naively ask if there were any Taliban prisoners. The governor would say yes and agree when further asked if it would be possible to chat with them. This secured an hour chatting with several Taliban, including the most senior leader of the 87 Taliban in one prison. The Peacebuilding Compared qualitative data collection may be distinctive in having had strategic conversations about peacebuilding with both senior White House staff and with the Taliban. After Ali Wardak’s published work with John Braithwaite for Peacebuilding Compared (discussed in Chapter 9) won a prize, current Afghan President Ashraf Ghani wrote to Ali about how he valued the research and advised that his presidential website would recommend that senior people in his government take note of the research. This generated more data. Iran is an important regional player in the Afghan conflict. It has resourced and trained Afghan armed groups and funded Iranian citizens from the Republican Guard and Holy Shrine budgets to infiltrate and fight in Afghanistan, and it has its own Baloch insurgency that cascades into Pakistan’s Balochistan insurgency. In two trips to Iran so far, we were able to obtain interviews with three grand ayatollahs, with a very senior officer of Iran’s High Council for National Security, with two former ambassadors, senior advisors to presidents, members of the Expediency Council, many retired military officers and many insurgents. In a fraught case such as Afghanistan, we can claim to have enjoyed some (perhaps limited) degree of respect for the sincerity of the independence of the research from opposing regional governments, from insurgents and from UN and NATO leaders alike.

More than 700 variables are coded for each conflict, with many coded as ‘contested’. Of course, many things can be ‘consensus’ codes—for example, it is not contested that the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE, the Tamil Tigers) were defeated militarily in 2009. In later quantitative analyses it will be possible to assess if results are indeed less robust when contested codes are used, as opposed to codes that are matters of consensus among analysts. Chapters 10 and 12 discuss
applying the contestability of the codes to a subjective logic approach to data analysis at the end of the project (Jøsang 2016). Peacebuilding Compared relies mostly on the micro and macro research of others to complete these codes, with our own fieldwork concentrated on questions for which previous research adequate for that coding has not been done. Even so, ‘don’t know’ or ‘more research needed’ codes remain common in our data. ‘Too early to call’ codes drive a particularly large number of holes into the data. Previous Peacebuilding Compared books have discussed in more detail these coding methodologies (Braithwaite et al. 2010a, 2010b, 2010c, 2012).

Our ANU ethics approval requires anonymous quotes for a project in conflict areas where informants could potentially be at risk, except when informants specifically say they want to be on the record. Where we quote informants by name, which often happens for political leaders, this is the case.

A book in three parts

The purpose of Part I of the book is to explain where our 10 propositions came from as we contemplated the wider canvas of cascades in Peacebuilding Compared. The purpose of Part II is to get systematic about evaluating the cascades in just one region of the world, South Asia. One point of the future work of Peacebuilding Compared is to get empirically systematic about cascades for the rest of the globe.

Part I of the book, ‘Cascades on a broad canvas’, develops the idea of cascades of violence and their prevention from a consideration of the largest cascades of violence the world has seen during the past century. Only enough of the histories of World War I, World War II, the wars of the Great Lakes region of Africa and of the Middle East across to Afghanistan and Kashmir are described to show that they are huge cascade phenomena. Just enough of their narratives are laid out to reveal how many possible complex points of cascade prevention there were in these wars. We complement insights from our South Asian fieldwork with our fieldwork from other continents and wider scholarship on the history of war and peace across the globe since 1911, to develop inductively 10 propositions about cascades of violence. Chapter 2 enlivens the contemporary relevance of cascades by considering how the framework
might cause us to think differently about geopolitically important conflicts of the present in places such as Iraq, Syria and Libya. It explains in more detail the inductive journey towards the cascades.

The main focus of Part I is on three of the most massive cascades outside South Asia. The first is the largest cascade of conflicts of the past half-century: a cascade of African wars with the DRC as its most central node. The others are the two largest cascades of the past century: Balkan wars cascading to World War I through to late-century Balkan wars; and World War I itself cascading to World War II and cascading to many postwar conflicts and ethnic cleansings in the mid and late 1940s. One of these, the Chinese civil war, was one of the bloodiest wars in human history, as was the Korean War, to which it in turn cascaded.

Part II, ‘South Asian cascades’, is then a rather more fine-grained telling of the narratives of more recent South Asian cascades that can be told by actors in them who are still living. Yet, this telling is still nowhere near as fine-grained as we could manage in a study of a single society. More than a few dozen wars across seven South Asian countries are discussed in Part II and more than a dozen are analysed with some intensity. At times, ours is a pointillist canvas, narrating stories from fieldwork interviews across many hotspots to reveal patterns.

Part III, ‘Refining understanding of cascades’, revises the 10 propositions in light of that pattern of evidence collected by mid-2017 and then considers their policy implications. It considers cascades of nonviolence as an alternative path to cascades of violence. Biblical insights on ‘turning the other cheek’ propose one possible path to nonviolence. Indeed, most of our core insights are ancient and can also be found in Islamic thinking about the importance of mercy and forgiveness, and in Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism, Taoism, Confucianism and the animist belief systems of many stateless societies. Yet, most of these belief systems are not pacifist. Rather, they conceive of ‘a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing’, ‘a time to kill and a time to heal’ and, indeed, ‘a time of war, and a time of peace’ (Ecclesiastes 3). This book can be read as an attempt to specify the beginnings of an explanation of why at most moments the imperative is to heal, to reconcile and to prevent. At the same time, it is an attempt to specify the nature of the exceptional circumstances in which it is right for us to kill in spite of the risk that killing tends to induce more killing. We argue that the first step towards that world of understanding is to abandon the static ways of thinking about deterrence that are the
cause of so much of the wanton, wasted suffering that afflicts the world. The final chapter argues that, in light of the complexity revealed by the cascades studied, developing evidence-based strategies to combat cascades of violence is less important than developing a practical meta-strategy. This means a strategy to responsively order promising strategies. That is the limited theoretical contribution of our final chapter.
This text is taken from Cascades of Violence: War, Crime and Peacebuilding Across South Asia, by John Braithwaite and Bina D’Costa, published 2018 by ANU Press, The Australian National University, Canberra, Australia.