Conclusion: Cascades and complexity

Understanding transformative possibilities in complex systems

This chapter concludes by reconsidering each of our 10 propositions in light of the complexity of social forces. How do we nurture peacebuilding that is a complex adaptive system rather than a complex maladaptive system trapped in its own templates? One reason peacebuilding systems are complex is that leadership from below and above can be shown to accomplish forms of learning that make deterministic understandings of the system no longer true. Indeed, we can define a complex adaptive system as one that learns about its own large number of interacting components. Change in any subsystem can change the circumstances confronting every other part of emergent systems that self-organise and evolve. In biology, we know such systems are “pregnant” with the possibility of breakdown and breakup’ (Thompson 2003: 11). In peacebuilding, complexity is likewise alive with possibilities of self-organising transformation that adept practitioners of the craft learn to do.

The challenge for positive social science is that complex systems interact with so much intricacy and so many nonlinear feedback loops that they cannot be predicted by standard linear equations: so many variables are at work in the system that its overall behaviour can only be understood as an emergent consequence of the holistic sum of all the myriad behaviors embedded within. (Levy 1993: 34)
One contribution of Part II of our book, we hope, is improved holistic understanding—indeed, interscalar understanding—of greater India’s and South Asia’s emergent character as spaces and histories of violence and nonviolence of myriad forms.

This chapter ends with a proposal for an open-source preventive diplomacy wiki as a response to the complexity we reveal in the task of preventing cascades of violence and encouraging cascades of nonviolence.

**Complexity or chaos**

Adapting responses to cascading violence in light of insights of complexity or chaos theory requires peacebuilding policies that frequently fail fast, learn fast and adapt fast. When they fail to do that, they must learn and adapt more slowly. Skills in ambiguation are not so much absent in international relations and criminology, as huddled in opposing epistemological tribes. This tribalism segments the community of scholars who study how violence rises and falls. In conditions of complexity, explanatory concepts must disambiguate sparingly. A sequenced epistemology is proposed: first, examine simple lessons from quantitative evidence-based social science such as the finding that, on average, UN peace operations reduce the recurrence of violence quite a lot. When this proves too simple a conclusion in the face of the unpredictability of emergence, layer probes that enable qualitative research on adaptation. Finally, the focus of evaluation research shifts to meta-analyses of meta-strategies. This asks which are the most effective theories for how to layer iterated responses to policy failure?

This section adapts the Cynefin framework (Kurtz and Snowden 2003; Snowden and Boone 2007; Warne et al. 2004: 47), which is just one approach to complexity and chaos. Cynefin partitions the social world into the known, the knowable (but not known), the complex and the chaotic. We simplify by collapsing contexts for understanding violence into the known, the knowable and the complex. The complex and the chaotic are collapsed not because the theoretical differences between the two are minor. Rather, they are combined because our theoretical prescriptions for responding to the unknowability of chaos are the same as those for responding to the unknowability of complexity.

Even if Snowden and Boone’s (2007) Cynefin strategy differences were convincing in application to violence, the ability of peace researchers to distinguish complexity from chaos on the ground can be questioned.
One reason for this is our hypothesis that, as complexity and chaos theories develop, we will find that social systems are rarely deterministic chaotic systems, and are much more often complex systems. For the moment, that itself is unknowable. Because it is unknowable, an intervention theory that covers both possibilities is more serviceable. A difference of note here is that complex systems are not deterministic, while chaos theory is the study of elaborate, difficult to understand systems that are deterministic. The determinism of chaos theory is only seemingly chaotic. In an ordinary language usage of the word complex, chaos theory is complex because very minor changes to initial conditions can radically change the outcome of the system. This is the flap of the butterfly wing in Libya that causes a typhoon in Haiti.

What chaotic and complex systems have in common is that they are fragile and hard to comprehend. Yes, they are fragile for different reasons. For chaos theory, fragility arises from that extreme sensitivity to minor differences in initial conditions. For complexity theory, fragility arises from the indeterminate way cascades work. Sometimes dynamic networks cascade into network-wide domino effects; on other occasions, modest shocks do not cascade—the system wobbles a bit and pulls itself back together. The ambition for peace operations, conceived in this framework, is to help them become complex adaptive systems that pull peace back together in this way. Starting with Kashmir and the early Congolese peace operations, however, we have lamented in this book that they are often complex maladaptive systems for managing violence. Theoretically, the idea of complex adaptive systems for the multilevel governance of peace has much in common with Bob Jessop’s (2017) notion of reflexive self-governance and meta-governance (governance of governance) as fuzzy but strategic. Jessop (2017: 33) conceives this as developing a ‘repertoire of modes of co-ordination so that’ governance and meta-governance ‘can respond to signs of failure’.

Emergence distinguishes complex from chaotic systems. Emergence means the impact of a shock is inherently unpredictable. Macrosociological change shares this emergence feature of complexity theory. Macro changes occur that we cannot causally trace back to any particular event or agent. Whether uncertainty arises from the practical unknowability of unmeasurable tiny variations in initial conditions, or from emergence, our prescription is for peacebuilders (be they the United Nations or rural villagers) to be ready with a theory of how to layer probes into the system one after the other. Probing peace researchers of complexity do not know
which probe might have an impact. They monitor the consequences of the probe and then adapt the probes that have an impact in a way that is responsive to the nature of the feedback. Consider this example of a complex situation. Soldiers are trapped in a World War II foxhole behind enemy lines. Bullets crisscross their refuge seemingly from every direction. Analysis paralysis is fatal in this situation because, if the soldiers wait it out, the enemy will eventually overwhelm and kill them.

They discuss where they would position their firepower were they the enemy, their suppositions about the enemy’s movements, to diagnose options for a breakout to friendly lines. They decide first to send a soldier in this direction; if he moves for 10 seconds without drawing fire, they will all follow. If he is killed instantly, they will wait for five minutes then try to break out in a different direction. Or they might have more than two layered probes of how to strike out in multiple diversionary directions. They might at first furtively crawl out. If that gets them close enough to a machine gun, they change strategy to running to hurl a grenade and break through. Once they have broken through to the area that lies between the enemy and their own forces, they have moved themselves into a knowable world, a world where the directions of enemy fire and of friendly fire are both more knowable.

Because analysis paralysis is fatal for soldiers in conditions of unknowability, the Australian Defence Force teaches chaos and complexity theory to soldiers as junior as its ‘strategic corporals’ via the Cynefin framework. This teaches them that there are ‘knowns’ in warfare: if a situation is categorised as an attack by a tank, it is known that even high-calibre bullets will bounce off. In less complex, less networked times, more was known about what makes for success in warfare. Two centuries ago, soldiering was more about standard operating procedures such as drilling soldiers to hold a straight line under fire (the ‘known’ quadrant of the Cynefin framework where soldiers can categorise and act). This is no longer true in a world where adversaries can network in a varied web of options against you and might or might not have drones deployed that allow them to know more about you than you know about them. More warfare is fought in the realms of the unknown or complex. If the facts are unknown but knowable, at least techniques such as scenario planning are possible. In the realms of the complex or chaotic, only probing into the incomprehensible may be possible. Soldiers probe to see what happens until they can make some sense of the situation, gradually drawing the context back into the realm of the knowable or the known.
Normal social science and complexity: Towards a responsive intervention theory

Normal social science assumes that the patterning of violence is knowable. It also tends to privilege the probes of one kind of actor, the state, as the most relevant kind for controlling violence. To transform social science into something more useful, we must radically loosen both the knowability and the public policy presumptions. That said, the responsive intervention theory we advance here has as its first layer an evidence-based strategy that presumes knowability. Yet we do presume that because worlds of cascading violence are mostly not knowable, the evidence-based strategy will mostly fail. Cascades to unlikely catastrophes such as World War I illustrate unknowability in this book. Complexity implies seeing outliers as sometimes more important than averages, tails more important than Gaussian bell-curve dogmas for a world where evolution occurs in jerks. We must then have a policy design (which is more plural than just a state policy design) for how to layer further probes into the unknowable.

‘Best practicitis’ (Ramalingam 2013: 33) and evidence-based policy can be public policy curses. They indoctrinate private and public policymakers to persist with evidence-based policy when it is demonstrably failing in new contexts. They can work when local contexts are well understood (as Duncan Green explains in How Change Happens, 2017: Part IV). Even that is too simple because it is unknown whether an evidence-based practice will work when the context is known to be different from the one in which it was tested. Westendorf’s (2015) qualitative comparison of Why Peace Processes Fail finds that a technocratic approach is the main culprit because, at heart, peace processes are political and they fail without responsiveness to local politics; a politically and socially attuned approach is more likely to succeed than technocratic best practice. Our submission is for responsiveness to context that begins by trying to make standard operating procedures or evidence-based best practice guidelines work only as a first layer of strategy. They can work in areas that are low in complexity, like peace operation logistics, building schools and payroll management. There are tried and true methods for detecting when employees have been overpaid or underpaid for their hours worked. There is also good evidence, for example, that if police are deployed to hotspots in response to computer mapping of crime, crime can be reduced at the hotspot and prevented from cascading from the hotspot (Braga et al. 2014). The criminological evidence provides little guidance on what police should
do, however, when they are deployed to those hotspots. Our colleague Clifford Shearing offers peacekeepers the counsel of master practitioners of policing to ‘act like you are on holidays’ if they wish to calm difficult situations (Shearing and Ericson 1991). That is probably good advice. Yet police and peacekeepers can only acquire wisdom about how to layer that demeanour with switches to firm or severe demeanours through feedback experiences from probes with those demeanours.

Boundaries between the known, the knowable and the complex cannot be taken as hard. The complex spaces of policing will have a minority of spaces that are known (such as logistics). Indeed, it can be best to start by fixing what is known because these minority contexts of the known are usually in play in violence control—where checklists, templates and standard operating procedures allow us to categorise and act successfully. There is no sense in failure to cash in on knowability where the known is robust. Why stumble around with probes in those worlds where a good checklist would get us on track?

There is little doubt that, compared with peace studies, medicine has made larger strides in moving the knowable into the realm of the known. This has helped human beings live much longer. Of course, individual patients may be complex, but less so than social systems of millions of human beings and the institutions emergent from their interaction. Medicine has achieved success by iteration between randomised controlled trials and clinical method. When we experience cancer at close quarters in our families, we learn that doctors may prescribe an intervention backed by randomised controlled trials that works in slowing a malignancy. Then one day the doctor announces that a tumour has doubled. The complex system surrounding the cancer has passed some unknown threshold beyond which the clinician believes this therapy no longer works. She then suggests a new layer of therapy in which she has less confidence than the therapy of first choice. The family then participates in the difficult clinical judgment as to whether a quicker but more peaceful death might be better, or whether to try to probe with more speculative third or fourth therapies that work infrequently or are not yet properly evaluated.

A good clinician improves the quality of these judgments with problems more tractable than cancer, such as infections, by trying one theory after another until the infection goes away. The clinician never has a scientific warrant for knowing that the infection disappeared because of her intervention. The fact that the infection stopped immediately after the intervention is a kind of evidence that her theory was right, but it is poor-
quality evidence. What we do know is that by being well-trained detectives within complex systems, by being a doctor who is a good clinician rather than a clairvoyant, and being detectives who run down checklists based on some degree of evidence, we cure more infections on average. Theory provides reflective practitioners with generative metaphors. Conversations among clinicians through clinical rounds and other means provide new lenses, new ways of seeing or framing the problem (Morgan 1997). The existence of one symptom leads the doctor to do detective work checking other symptoms associated with a certain syndrome. They look for side-effects. In the body/environment system, they watch for and seek to understand feedback loops that can render the cure worse than the disease or that can take the patient up to a new level of wellbeing. We have all experienced how good clinicians do this kind of detective work to diagnose the often complexly interacting root causes of our health.

Plural lenses push us to ask questions about the similarities and differences between the clinical problem and the metaphorical scenario of the theory. The good clinician asks about (family) history: context and background become important for the diagnosis. The good clinician is a detective who asks a lot of journalist’s questions—what, who, how, when, where, why—to get the time line of the story clear. The good clinician ‘thinks in a stream of time’ (Neustadt and May 1986) to develop a contextual, integrated, joined-up, multiple-mechanism strategy to fix the problem. But because this beneficent new equilibrium in the system will eventually break down, regular check-ups watch for this. The excellent clinician is also regenerative, seeking to use each bout of illness not merely to restore the status quo, but also as an opportunity to move the patient to a higher level of wellbeing. Complexity enables excellent clinicians to prioritise the pursuit of opportunities as well as the management of risk. This is also true of good regulators of violence who seize opportunities to create the good society out of conditions of complexity.

Good clinicians of health or violence control are neither determinedly deductive theorists nor determinedly inductive. They are skilled at shuttling backwards and forwards between deduction and induction (Scheff 1990).1 Scanning improves when that abduction also occurs

1 Strictly, as Philip Pettit commented in a personal communication, abduction means ‘inference to the best explanation’. He quoted the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: ‘the best way to distinguish between induction and abduction is this: both are ampliative, meaning that the conclusion goes beyond what is (logically) contained in the premises (which is why they are non-necessary inferences), but in abduction there is an implicit or explicit appeal to explanatory considerations, whereas in induction there is not.’
between explanatory theory and normative theory, between values and what will work in realising them (Pettit and Braithwaite 2000). Complexity science has taught us that many systems adapt over time, without a global equilibrium, perhaps with multiple equilibriums. Evolution happens by switching equilibriums, generating perpetual novelty. That is why we should seek a doctor to treat our disease who is both knowledgeable about the known and clinically gifted in how to probe and adapt within the uncertainties of complexity. Randomised controlled trials allow us to be more credibly evidence based. Their problem is that they allow us to look at just one or a few causes at a time and do not help us understand the dynamics of how these causal factors push system effects across thresholds. Their findings offer limited guidance when we are dealing with complexes of many interacting causes (Sachs 2005).

For all these limitations, the responsive theory of peacebuilding proposed here starts first with trying what is known from evidence-based social science. Responsive peacebuilding probes cautiously at first with strategies that are evidence based. It monitors feedback to glean qualitative information about why a strategy like holding an election fails when it does fail in a particular context. That may even inform the design of a subsequent probe into the unknown with a strategy that evidence-based peacebuilding shows on average to be a failure.

Because many domains of practice are quite well known, evidence-based standard operating procedures are invaluable as first cuts at problem solving. We well know from the history of business empires, however, that standard procedures like Henry Ford’s production line can generate great wealth for long periods of history until what is required for manufacturing excellence becomes too complex for those standard operating procedures. Corporate graveyards are full of firms that stuck too long with old evidence-based templates. As capitalism and its governance have become more radically dynamic and complex, the speed has quickened for the obsolescence of yesterday’s evidence-based practice. Likewise with peacebuilding, we are rather good at fighting the last war.

That said, the danger of assuming complexity and rejecting knowability up front is that we miss opportunities for violence control within the realms of the known and the knowable. When it is known that police

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2 This approach is also discussed in the working paper by Campbell et al. (2016), from which parts of this chapter are drawn.
departments improve effectiveness by setting up the logistics of a crime-mapping capability and then deploy to hotspots, that can be a useful starting point. A starting point is all it is because the police assigned to a hotspot might be racists who abuse the ethnic other and use excessive force in arrests and thereby cause a civil war to break out at a place such as the Bougainville copper mine hotspot (Braithwaite et al. 2010b), at the very place where policing was most critical, at the place where the rape of a nurse, which was another major spark in this conflict, also occurred.

State strategic planning starts with the correct insight that if the state does not do synoptic strategic planning to solve certain big social problems then maybe no one will. It also starts with the normally correct insight that the state has most legitimacy for convening a wide-ranging and plural policy conversation about what are the highest priorities for their society. Then it proceeds to the apt insight that, if it does not measure progress in achieving those priorities, attention will drift to other less important things that are being measured. Peter Drucker is frequently falsely accused of expressing this as ‘you can’t manage what you can’t measure’. So states feel the imperative to plan, prioritise and concentrate measurement resources on those priorities. Then they must also prepare for all manner of failures of that process as a result of complexity, including complexity induced by agents of the state themselves when they game the measurement process by, for example, ‘creaming’ easy cases.

Tony Blair was a political leader who saw all those imperatives of political leadership clearly and embraced them more passionately than other leaders who mostly ‘muddle through’ (Lindblom 1959). Yet, he was also an example of a failed political leader because he did not see those steps as just starting points in a process of good government. He did not layer plural probes and monitor and adjust in a way that was responsive to complexity, especially in Iraq. A more established documentation of this problem was Robert McNamara, whiz-kid of US Air Force Statistical Control in World War II, who was hired by Henry Ford for his strategic planning and later became Ford’s chief executive officer. McNamara as US Secretary of Defense applied his Fordist defence strategy to the Vietnam War: ‘We first determine what our foreign policy is to be, formulate a military strategy to carry out that policy, then build the military forces to conduct that strategy’ (Ramalingam 2013: 45). Former US defence chief and secretary of state Colin Powell recounts how McNamara would arrive in Vietnam declaring that ‘[e]very quantitative measurement … shows that we are winning the war’ (Ramalingam 2013: 46). McNamara's
measures were famously imperfect in grasping what was most important about the complex evolution of the war. As an old man, McNamara recanted his rationalist strategic planning, acquiring an exaggerated view of the impossibility of coming to grips with ‘the fog of war’. His failure, like Blair’s, was not in being passionate about priority setting, measurement and strategic planning; it was in being myopic about them, failing to probe the complexity that strategic planning simplified into a ‘conspiracy of illusion’.

Layering strategies in the face of complexity

Evidence-based social science shows how much can be achieved by further strengthening what is already strong, such as strengthening a functioning education system. The language of Harvard’s Problem Driven Iterative Adaptation model—step, learn, adapt, take another step—has virtues (Andrews et al. 2015). When the fruits of intervention are disappointing, the responsive peacebuilder does two things. The first is qualitative process evaluation research on why the intervention failed. The second is to probe with new layers of strategies that are as evidence based as they can be. The second and third layers of strategy are almost certain to be less evidence based than our first priority. New targets for measurement are also selected at that point.

Unfortunately, evidence-based guidance on what to do in real-world policy dilemmas is usually thin and misleading. It will often be the case that the best evidence we have on which strategy to layer next will be grounded in feedback on what went wrong in our first layer of strategy. Layering assumes that, in a complex world, we must step, learn, adapt and take another step. Each layered strategy is a safety net covering the failure of the strategy before it. We design redundant diversity into our layers of strategy so we might cover the weaknesses of one strategy with the strengths of another.

Critics of this approach to business regulation, called responsive regulation, say it expects too much of street-level regulators, police or strategic corporals to learn how to fail, learn and adapt to failure. One reply is that this is how ordinary people learn to be good gardeners or good parents (Braithwaite 2011). Biologists have a word for describing the process of how solutions emerge from failure, of how to reject the majority of adaptations that fail and adapt the tiny few that make things
better. It is achieved without an organisational genius in charge and is called evolution (Harford 2011). Former Australian prime minister Paul Keating rated Deng Xiaoping the most brilliant political leader of the twentieth century.3 Yet Deng was no analytic whiz-kid like Donald McNamara or even Tony Blair. His most famous saying was ‘cross the river by feeling the stones’. Deng meant feel your way forward in an uncertain world you are not smart enough to understand; stay grounded as you probe incrementally. Our key task as peacebuilders is to help peace operations acquire an improved capacity to adapt as systems—that means nurturing variation and selection, just as in evolution. It means ensuring that templates do not kill off variation and selection.

There are various theories about how to order the layering of strategies. Economic theory counsels attempting the cheapest strategies first in an iterated search to maximise cost-effectiveness. Of course, policy dialogue can result in cost being just one of the considerations in a conversation about layering strategy. The approach suggested here puts more emphasis on first trying evidence-based theories from the realm of the known. Successive layers then become progressively less evidence-based. Even as this is executed, evidence-based theories provide an array of generative metaphors to guide disparate, redundant attempts to improve things. Republican political theory (Pettit 1997) suggests that we should attempt less dominating, more procedurally fair strategies before we attempt more punitive and dominating strategies such as war or locking alleged criminals in prisons. By resorting to more deterrent, less respectful forms of social control after more dialogic forms have first been tried, coercive last resorts come to be seen as more legitimate. When regulation is seen as more legitimate and more procedurally fair, compliance is more likely (Tyler 1990; Tyler and Huo 2001) and the dangers of anomie can be tamed.

Ambiguate and adapt to failure in the face of complexity

As each layer of strategy fails, process evaluation suggests adaptations. These are discussed in conjunction with layers of a regulatory pyramid discussed in advance as safety nets to catch failures at lower layers of

3 Paul Keating said this in a conversation with John Braithwaite and has said the same publicly.
strategy. Generally, however, good peacebuilders make lateral moves first to adapt a strategy that is failing in the face of complexity (Braithwaite 2008: 97–100). An extra ingredient may be added or a counterproductive piece excised from the strategy. Andrews et al. (2015) emphasise the importance of strengthening the authorising environment to ‘push problem driven positive deviance’. Conservative UN bureaucracies need reform to authorise positive deviance that adapts in response to failure. Widening networks of engagement for solving the problem is the most generically useful strategy of adaptation.

Ambiguation of objectives and strategies is imperative in a complex world. In a known world, ambiguity is bad. Positive science requires clear definition of concepts to be tested with precision about where they explain and where they do not. The known world of this normal science is one we can categorise. When a situation fits the clearly defined category, science tells us what policymakers can do with what effects. It can reveal what best practice is and which policy template or standard operating procedure will work.

In the world of complexity, this ‘flight from ambiguity’ (Levine 1988) is dangerous. As we are tossed hither and thither on the winds of complex social climates, it can be best to adapt our definition of what a sail is so we can deviate and adapt with new kinds of sails that catch winds of social change in innovative ways. Premature closure is a pathology of the way liberal peace templates have failed to progress. Most social theory is banal in its first iterations; peacebuilding theories tend to stay banal because peacebuilders are weak at savouring and tweaking the ambiguities of theories to develop them into something less banal. Theorists who view their contributions as mostly provisional and mostly wrong are excoriated for constantly shifting the goalposts by graduate students interested in testing a theory. Responsiveness to complexity requires iterative shifting of goalposts. Through the process of adaptation, we learn that it is impossible to kick goals with most static theories of intervention. But, if we iteratively adjust the goalposts, it becomes possible to kick increasingly valuable goals. Normative theory (ordered sets of propositions about the way the world ought to be) can invite redefinition of explanatory theory (ordered sets of propositions about the way the world is). Normative-explanatory adjustment becomes part of the iterated goalpost-shifting response to complexity (Pettit and Braithwaite 2000).
Productive social science has both moments of ambiguation that play with the utility of new ways of conceptualising theoretical concepts and moments of disambiguation when the community of scholars decides to settle on a conceptualisation, which, for the moment, seems most fertile. Then scholars collect systematic comparable data on the efficacy of the theory conceptualised in that way. The careerism of scholars who dislike the thought that the data collection for their PhD was based on a now obsolete conceptualisation drives social science theory development to periods of excessive disambiguation. Static, banal theories with concrete goalposts that fail to give birth to fertile policy innovations survive far too long.

To improve the responsiveness to complexity of peace research, we must work harder at techniques for improving ambiguation. Organisation theorist Gareth Morgan’s (1997) *Images of Organization* has a sweeping strategy for ambiguating how we see organisations. Morgan views organisational action simultaneously through multiple organisation theory lenses. One of the great social science books, Graham Allison’s (1971) *Essence of Decision*, accomplishes brilliant insight from seeing through three different lenses how Kennedy and Khrushchev saved the world from catastrophe at the time of the Cuban Missile Crisis.

**Assess meta-strategies for layering strategies**

Responsive peacebuilding is an example of a meta-strategy. It is a strategy about how to layer strategies. There have been some encouraging evaluations of responsive regulation in domains ranging from securities regulation to tax enforcement (Braithwaite 2014, 2016a). Responsive regulation comes in variants that involve pyramids of enforcement strategies (such as Figure 12.1) and pyramids of networked escalation where more and more network partners are engaged with the regulation challenge at different layers of the pyramid.
The social sciences are replete with examples of meta-strategies. Motivational interviewing is a kind of iterative meta-strategy: it gives rise to many different change strategies that are chosen by the counselling client rather than a counsellor; it is a flexible, contextual and responsive practice that unfolds differently in every case depending on how the client frames what motivates them as an individual. Meta-analyses of 119 studies, half of them randomised controlled trials, have shown motivational interviewing is effective as a meta-strategy for selecting what individuals do about health objectives such as cleaning their teeth properly, losing weight or conquering an addiction (Burke et al. 2003; Lundahl et al. 2010, 2013). Likewise, problem-oriented policing is a kind of meta-strategy for street-level selection of diverse problems for police to tackle and how to tackle them. It, too, has been a subject of encouraging meta-analyses, showing that problem-oriented policing reduces crime (Weisburd et al. 2010). Randomised controlled trials show that ‘positive deviance’ in development practice—for example, searching for deviant
rural village practices of positive nutrition and encouraging modelling of those practices by others in the village—works better in comparison with village education programs on nutrition best practice that often fail (e.g. Bradley et al. 2009). Positive deviance, again, is something that can work even though it is unknown and highly variable because it is ‘deviant’ (Green 2016). Partly, it works by the power of model mongering and localism; partly, it works because it appeals to tastes adapted to unique contexts. It energises because someone in the community has identified the solution. So it focuses on their assets and knowledge rather than their deficits.

When a responsive regulator addresses a problem with a layered sequence of responses, or when a problem-oriented police organisation attempts one strategy after another at a hotspot until it pushes down the crime rate, or a clinician tries one treatment after another to fight a cancer; if the crime or the cancer stops, we have no idea what stopped it. What we did was too complex to permit that kind of scientific knowability. It may have been a lagged effect of something lower in our pyramid of responses that we wrongly thought had failed. It may be the last layer of our response before the problem is solved, as we tend to presume. Quite likely, it will actually be a complex interaction between what we did in our last layer of intervention and certain aspects of all the previous layers. It may even be a simple linear cumulative (additive) accomplishment of all the layers together. Responsive peacebuilding means that policymakers have a meta-strategy that is committed to probing with one strategy after another, starting with evidence-based strategies and moving to progressively less evidence-based, but more contextually attuned, strategies as each layer seems to fail. Then it sticks with that process until the problem goes away. The empirical prediction about such a meta-strategy is that meta-analyses will show it to succeed, without revealing why it succeeds. All we get to know from that iterated process is that we stuck with the problem until it went away. We can read the meta-analyses that suggest that problem-oriented policing works, that motivational interviewing works at the end of its iterated reframings of motivation, that positive deviance strategies for improving village nutrition work, that a multidimensional mix of strategies works in controlling corporate crime (Schell-Busey et al. 2016) and that multidimensional UN peacebuilding works as converging on a paradoxical insight. This is that, in a world of complexity, it is more possible to discover the meta-strategies that work best than it is to move single strategies from the realm of the knowable to the realm of the
known. For example, the meta-strategy of ‘search for positive deviance’ may be more useful than learning what are the particular forms of positive deviance that worked in particular villages. To use another example, it is easier to know that a vague, heterogeneous concept such as problem-oriented policing or motivational interviewing works than it is to know that it works because it fixes the street-lighting at hotspots or discovers some specific motivation for losing weight. And this is a methodologically impressive paradoxical finding because it is harder to muster the statistical power to show the efficacy of heterogeneous than homogeneous interventions.

A cascades imaginary for complexity

At the end of Chapter 11, and indeed throughout the book, we have seen that a cascades imaginary requires nuance and responsiveness to complexity. For example, we saw in Chapter 10 that there is little that is linear about cascade effects. Long periods of stability followed by sudden tipping points into seeming chaos recur repeatedly in this book. Yet, can we present readers with a theory of tipping points? No. All we are smart enough to say is that quantitative analyses using only linear methods are certain to mislead. The discussion of linear multiple regression studies of relationships between inequality/poverty and war and crime illustrated this in quite a detailed way at the end of Chapter 11. Qualitatively, it is extremely clear that linear assumptions mislead when we see societies such as Nepal peacefully knuckle under to extreme inequality for centuries. Then, when violent resistance to it erupts, it erupts only in a few places. Most locales with extreme inequality continue to be peaceful, leading many normal social scientists to wrongly conclude that inequality is not a cause of war. Only limited linear explanation of a relationship between inequality and resistance is on offer. Yet, tellingly, the Nepalese eruption that was driven by inequality spread most rapidly to the locales with the greatest local-level inequality of a particular kind. And qualitatively there is little doubt from our interview data that a profound sense of grievance over inequality motivated these Maoist uprisings.4

4 Certainly, we interviewed Maoist party leaders in Kathmandu whose behaviour is open to the interpretation that they harnessed grievance about inequality to their greed, but there was no possibility of this interpretation making sense for the many Maoist commanders and male foot soldiers who started the war and for the many women we spoke to who were pushed by systematic rape to pick up their men’s guns after they fell.
If inequality and perceived injustice persist in the longue durée, the day comes when a spark ignites them. Because reducing inequality is a good thing to do, activists are often model mongers waiting for the right moment to destabilise an unjust equilibrium. Inequality reduction improves even more important challenges than preventing war, such as improving public health (Friel and Marmot 2011). Because justice as non-domination is normatively good in itself, prudent peacebuilders commit to social democratic struggle for structural shifts in inequality, as opposed to neoliberal politics that tolerates or embraces inequality. But more than that is required. When a particular grievance of Nepalese peasants against landlords results in war, after centuries of failure to reduce inequality against the resistance of those who control the wealth, rapid reaction for inequality reduction in that place is needed from the international community. First, peacekeepers might be needed to stop the war from spreading and to prevent poverty from getting worse as a result of war. Second, rapid-impact projects—which alleviate the hunger of peasants at these hotspots, provide schools for their children and fund community development to build village livelihoods—are needed. This can be followed by prioritising the inequalities that are the focus of violent grievance for longer-term reforms to education inequality, health inequality, land reform and total abolition of the caste system as structural foundations of rural oppression. The international community did see the imperative to support the postwar Maoist Government from 2006 to achieve these things. Sadly, and as usual in the implementation of such ambitions, implementation was imperfect and unsustained. As usual, powerful cronies, and the ‘partyocracy’ that displaced monarchy and feudalism, resumed the project of bleeding the country to enrich themselves. Such failure is, however, always a matter of degree; partial failure is better than total failure.

What we are saying here is that the flawed quantitative literature on the relationship between inequality and violence is sufficient to show in combination with such qualitative diagnoses that constant vigilance for rapid reaction to particular inequalities in particular places, for learning fast from failures, is needed: fail, learn, adapt in inequality reduction at hotspots. This is needed in combination with longer-term structural change to attenuate inequality as a dormant, structural risk factor. War as a response to inequality in this sense is like fascism as a response to economic hardship between the World Wars, or the global rise of far-right political leaders today such as Donald Trump, Marine Le Pen,
Geert Wilders or Britain’s new Conservatives who led Brexit. Neo-authoritarianism as a response to crisis was a weak relationship for a long time before it passed a tipping point to cascade far-right politics. It was evident in the hotspot of John Braithwaite’s marginalised post-industrial hometown of Ipswich, Queensland, much earlier when Australia’s most successful far-right politician, Pauline Hanson, first came to power in 1996. Better solutions to specific local grievances such as fears about immigration, which we discuss under Proposition 6, are needed to foil fascism in combination with the long-term focus of non-right parties on inequality reduction, including reduced inequalities between metropoles such as London (or Brisbane, in the case of Pauline Hanson) and struggling peripheries of their societies.

All this means that there is no need to be paralysed because the big risks to societies cannot be read off from the size of coefficients on long lists of variables plugged into simple linear regression analyses. There is no need to be paralysed because the authors of this volume failed when they set out to move from a list of propositions generated inductively from data on violence to a diagram that would show interrelationships among those variables. As it turned out in our analysis, everything had moments of being very related to almost everything else, and to many other things. Feedback loops abounded. A parsimonious theory seemed just too severely at odds with the complexity we were documenting. We are left with our humble list of 10 recurrent patterns, although, in this chapter, we argue that a parsimonious meta-strategy of how to reduce violence is more feasible than a theory of violence. Our failure to develop a simple theory is no reason for analysis paralysis. Who knows, perhaps a parsimonious theory will be constructed from the dataset when it is complete in 2030? More importantly, there is no need for paralysis until then because peacebuilding can become a complex adaptive system. Critics rightly assert it is currently a simple-minded maladaptive system ensnared by overly parsimonious frameworks such as liberal peace theory and theories of rebuilding failed states (e.g. Paris 2004). It fails very frequently in the longer run. As argued in Part I, Autesserre (2010, 2014, 2017) is insightful in showing that peacebuilding is also insufficiently responsive to local complexity. For all those flaws of oversimplification, this book has concluded that, on average, UN peace operations have contributed a great deal to creating a more peaceful world (Call 2012; Doyle and Sambanis 2000; Fortna 2008; Fortna and Howard 2008: 288–94; Gilligan and Sergenti 2008; Nilsson 2006; Quinn et al. 2007; Riordan 2013; Sambanis 2008; Walter
2002), as has mediation of peace agreements (Human Security Research Group 2014: 174–5; Karstedt 2017; Regan et al. 2009). Moreover, as Lise Howard (2008) has shown, the failure rate can be further reduced for peace operations that learn and adapt after failure. In that kind of responsive peacebuilding in the face of complexity, we will now argue that our revised list of 10 propositions is helpful in guiding adaptation.

In the next section, we show that, for each of our propositions, there are many layers of complex response available, so, when one approach to peacebuilding fails, there are many other options to attempt a layered approach to responsive prevention of violence.

Connecting the 10 propositions to adaptation to complexity

**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.

Defiance is common, even for small and legitimate escalations of coercion. Yet complexity demands special vigilance in monitoring those cases of defiance that spread like a brushfire. As soon as defiance begins to cascade, political leaders normally should seek to calm the cascade by sitting down to listen to grievances in reconciliation meetings. A minister for national security must reflect on the fact that a police officer who follows her orders to remove protestors from a certain place is not going to tell her if one of the protestors was sexually assaulted by the police. There are so many possible complex causes of reactive violence like this. They are often unknowable to political leaders, at least in the moment of crisis.

For all social problems, be they domestic crime or a national security threat, the more banal general implication of our insights is a disposition of extreme reluctance and caution in escalating coercion. All competent political leaders try and try again to solve problems non-coercively. The great ones try even more times with ever greater patience and reconciliatory guile; they are the leaders who can summon special creativity in widening contract zones to create peaceful win–win resolutions. ‘The most urgent priority is patience’, as a Catalan saying goes. Great leaders pause and consider complexity—in particular, they consider what a simple coercive
intervention to stop something could escalate to. They are leaders like Deng Xiaoping who can survive and transcend something as violent as China’s Cultural Revolution in the 1960s through ‘crossing the river by feeling the stones’.

The paradox of a layered pyramid of responses to war prevention and crime prevention is that, by keeping severe deterrence in reserve until many kinds of preventive diplomacy have been attempted, we actually sharpen the Sword of Damocles, rather than blunt it through overuse (Braithwaite 2002; 2018).

**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.

Even when greed rather than grievance is the root cause of violence, those who are greedy enough for power to mobilise mass violence never achieve this in our South Asian data without mobilising a sense of legitimate grievance among those who are asked to risk their lives in the fight. The key to averting violence here is for good people to support those who are determined to articulate the grievance and get it fixed without selling the state to ambitious tyrants who use them and their grievance. Education of nonviolent activists in the art of model mongering is our insight here about managing complexity. Nonviolent activists should have a suite of reform projects in their top drawer, not just one or two. When a political crisis occurs, they must be better prepared than violent predators. They must have an aptly responsive reform project ready to bring to the frontburner and bring to the boil. If this fails to draw enough nonviolent defiance on to the street, if the number of protestors does not pass the tipping point to mass mobilisation, if the police then crack down on them easily, they move this reform campaign to the backburner, awaiting a more ripe moment. If our group sees another nonviolent opposition mobilise more successfully with an anti-domination reform project that they have moved from their backburner to their frontburner, our group should consider joining them on the street to push opposition beyond the tipping point of mass mobilisation. Our group might move the other group’s more resonant project to our frontburner. This is ‘crossing the river by feeling the stones’ for community groups. The model monger for nonviolent transformation to resist domination does not understand the complexity of which appeals to mobilise the crowd in history will cascade
past tipping points. Hence the model monger always has many reform projects on many backburners awaiting the ripe moment for the crowd in history.

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

A conclusion of this book has been that an advantage hawks often have over doves is that the simplicity of their appeal means they can mobilise political support for it quickly during a crisis. In Chapter 2, we saw this with the bitter tragedy that drew our forebears into World War I. Complexity theorists have a more complex political message to sell. They also have a task of mobilisation more complex than the massing of armies to send hawks’ preferred message. Doves must ask who has the ‘Awareness, Motivation and Pathways’ (AMP) to prevent war (Honig et al. 2015). Chapter 2 argues that, in 1914, the two most powerful nations, Britain and Germany, had awareness of the peril, had the realist motivation of less to gain and more to lose by war than lesser powers that were cascading the world to war and they could have forged a path—British–German détente—if only they had had the diplomatic imagination to do so. We have also argued that the UN Security Council today makes it more possible to slow the hawks than was the case in 1914.

Moreover, Track II diplomacy today often brings doves from many countries around tables of second-track diplomacy that open up possibilities for persuading the world that doves have forged paths that might save the world from cascade to catastrophe. The Track II participants are normally people who have good connections to one or more of the principals in a conflict; they engage in dialogue rather than negotiations. Track II diplomacy is a key institution for generating new and creative responses to complexity and then making them available to Track I foreign ministers and presidents. The final section of this chapter explores some options for further improving second tables of preventive diplomacy in a world where hawks are likely to continue to dominate at the first table of international politics where the leaders of great powers sit.

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5 Systematic research on the effectiveness of Track II diplomacy has been quite limited. Böhmelt (2010) found for 295 international disputes that Track I diplomacy, with its superior resourcing and capacity to actually negotiate deals, is more effective than Track II. Böhmelt also found, however, that in processes where Track II interacts with Track I, so that Track II helps with ‘outside the box’ solutions, Track I becomes even more effective.

6 Here, we are adapting Putnam’s (1988) ‘two-level game’ of international politics.
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.

A lesson these authors have learnt from Peacebuilding Compared is that John Braithwaite was probably wrong to argue in earlier times for the new state of Timor-Leste not to have an army (because no army it could build would ever protect it from powerful neighbours such as Indonesia and Australia). Timor-Leste, Braithwaite wrongly argued, could do more to secure peace by investing in development than by investing in weapons. Viewed through a complexity theory lens, this has proved too simple an argument for nonviolence in the analysis of this book. The subsequent history of Timor-Leste, and other post-conflict societies like it, has thrown up a great diversity of internal violent threats that have required a monopoly of legitimate armed force sufficient to deter their take-off. In a complex post-conflict environment, there are many people with ‘awareness’ of the opportunities available through violent mobilisation, with ‘motivations’ of greed or grievance, or both or more, so ‘paths’ for them to arm themselves must be closed as soon as they start. The AMP of armed groups can sometimes be shut down only by repairing disintegrated capacities of a single legitimate armed force to pacify a space.

The need to have a well-armed security sector at the peak of a post-conflict responsive peacebuilding pyramid does not challenge the ideal of visibly having it, but never having to use it, because forms of peacebuilding lower in the pyramid work so well in combination. There are also implications here for the training aspect of security sector reform. Militaries in post-conflict societies should receive training in the lessons of complexity learnt under Propositions 1 and 3 above. Yes, they have the hammer they must have, but they can learn the art of reluctance to use it to hammer every nail they see, learning instead how to sit in the circle to reconcile grievances in local spaces that are safe only for armed soldiers to enter.

Proposition 5(a): Democracy can be a driver of domination and violence. Electoral competition can widen cleavages and create niches for violent groups to be enrolled by political parties to intimidate voters and opponents.

The theory that institutionalising democracy is a good thing is another example of an analysis that proved too simple. Peacebuilders who enter post-conflict societies with templates for building democracy proved dangerous people in our data. Wise democracy builders concentrate at first
on building critical foundations of democracy, such as an independent and competent judiciary, gradually building one strong branch after another in separations of powers that temper centralised power (Krygier 2015). Generally, it will be prudent to monitor progress and setbacks in this task, waiting for the right time to build the top floor of elections supervised by an independent election commission on foundations that have been a long labour of extended post-conflict transitional administrations that draw legitimacy from the United Nations and from inclusive dialogue with the peoples of the society.

**Proposition 6:** Refugee and 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.

A multilayered strategy of many responses to the refugee problem is needed. Each of these layers of response will fail much of the time. The first layer is massive investment by the international community in the UNHCR, the International Organization of Migration (IOM) and NGOs that respond to the needs of refugees and migrants. The kinds of refugee and migrant response situations that Europe faces in an unusually big way at the time of writing are cheaper to deal with by massive investments in refugee services in the countries to which they first flee. Refugees and IDPs who are found there, who start with no means or desire to travel further from their homes, are probably more than 80 per cent of refugees and IDPs and more than 90 per cent of those in most desperate need (Betts and Collier 2017). One objective of the international community can be to stem the flow from those places by better meeting those desperate needs. It is desirable to stem the outflow of the most highly educated professionals from war-torn societies by persuading them that the international community is investing in the peacebuilding needed to end the conflict so safe return becomes the refugee imaginary. When they are stuck in refugee camps while waiting just across the border from their homeland or on a journey of transit to the West, the aim is to provide their children with greater levels of excellent education, health care and food than they were receiving at home. This is so more people choose to remain poised with dignity for return home at war’s end. Refugee camps must also, of course, be made more temporary. Just over half the world’s
refugees are trapped today in long-term, pathetically under-resourced refugee camps (Betts and Collier 2017: 70). Refugee camps are inevitable, but they need not inevitably be ‘nodes of hopelessness and resentment for those they trap’ (Proposition 6).

The complexity of this task is in seeing just where a massively increased pot of international money for refugees should be quickly deployed to care for and create livelihoods for refugees close to home. Which are the refugee sites that host governments would quickly close because of domestic political opposition? Which are those that would be sustained because, for example, local contractors who benefit from providing services to refugees persuade their government that the job opportunities they are creating in a region of high unemployment actually does some good for the host country? Which are those that should and would be sustained because local businesses suffer labour shortages in that particular region of the country to do the kind of work that the refugees are keen and able to supply? Which are those that would be sustained because the host country genuinely cares for the suffering of the refugees or because it wants to help the international community end a war across its border that is bad for its own security and economy? Which are the refugee sites that will actually prove more attractive to refugees than taking their chances in a flimsy boat on the Mediterranean? Refugee planners need to fail, learn and adapt by finding that this camp is one that refugees flee from (for example, a dangerous transit camp in Libya) and this is one they flee to (a locale in Libya that has caring management, superior security, job opportunities and good medical care), shifting strategic funding to the latter. As we know, desperate refugees are forced to remain in some of the most horrific camps or detention centres without any choice of leaving them. We do not suggest we stop working in these camps, but we do believe strategic and careful funding and harnessing of hope are the best responses in dire conditions.

7 Nodes of labour shortage that refugees can fill also exist in the West. For example, a Deloitte report found a win–win result from 140 refugees who were privately sponsored to fill 70 newly created jobs in the economy of the remote town of Nhill in Australia, which has a population of only 2,300. Nearly all of these jobs were in the poultry industry and had been unable to attract Australian workers. The refugees from Myanmar have re-energised the formerly struggling town, culturally and economically, adding $41.5 million in value to its tiny economy (Medhora 2015).
Plate 12.1 ‘The Beast’ (*La Bestia*) carries half a million immigrants from Central America to the US border every year.
Source: Keith Dannemiller, 2014.

Our Peacebuilding Compared fieldwork in El Salvador found that NGOs that work with refugees are desperately underfunded. Funding them is, of course, in every way a more fecund investment in growing security and development than building ever more expensive walls at the Mexico–United States border. For the largest refugee group fleeing to the United States today—Salvadorans fleeing postwar gang violence that is worse than the violence of their war—high-quality refugee transit camps are needed in Mexico. When young Salvadorans suffer some of the awful things they experience at the hands of human trafficking organisations increasingly controlled by the very kinds of violent gangs they are escaping in El Salvador, these high-quality refugee camps can be safe havens to which refugee NGOs can take them. There they could be given safety, quality food, education and health care, free transport back home if that is the option that they have learnt from bitter experience they would actually prefer, access to US immigration officials who could give them quick determinations in Mexico on whether they would be granted refugee status, as many of them should (and, if so, transporting them safely, without charge and with resettlement assistance in the United States). Those in neither of these categories could be assisted to return to safe circumstances in El Salvador, assisted with housing and vocational training in safe parts of the country where some of the large pot of
international investment in refugee problem-solving might be invested at the source of the problem. Criminologists know how to cue development assistance to build safe communities in safe zones of a country that is racked by widespread violence. Livelihoods can be created in these peace zones even surrounded as they are by hotspots of violence. Churches are supporting local NGOs to do this kind of work with IDPs in El Salvador. Providing strategic funding to them is critical.

Similar initiatives are needed in southern Libya for desperate people who have been trafficked from further south. The need for new oases of livelihood development in the Sahel, the poorest region of Africa, as in El Salvador, is imperative regardless of the refugee challenge. There could be no higher priority for investment in building such oases of community development of peaceful livelihoods than refugees fleeing violence. There are no universals about how to do this well; it is a locally variegated challenge. The task is complex and local in the texture of what drives people to flee in boats as refugees. In Sri Lanka (Chapter 8), for example, human rights groups need more support to demand protection for Tamil villages that are subject to military violence and rape because they were on the wrong side of the civil war a decade ago. Since the fall of the Rajapaksa regime, this has begun to happen, but human rights NGOs are still excessively creatures of the cities, failing to document and protect in the remote villages where the worst military vilification persists.

When creating safe spaces in safe zones of opportunity in war-torn countries fails, when creating high-quality refugee camps that create new educational and employment opportunities for returnees in transit countries such as Mexico fails, the world must step up to the challenge of refugee resettlement. It is not doing so. The paradox of Proposition 6 is that Western fear of terrorism incubates more terrorism in refugee camps in countries like Pakistan (Chapters 6 and 9). William Maley (2016: Ch. 4) has documented how fear of terrorism motivates Western countries to spurn refugees from the two countries with the largest, most desperate need for resettlement—Syria and Afghanistan—and to favour the comparatively less desperate and tiny Bhutanese refugee population. Bhutanese refugees in Nepal are certainly deserving (Chapter 9), but it is ridiculous and reckless that fewer Syrians (7,021) or Afghans (3,331) than Bhutanese (8,395) were resettled in 2014. The reason, according to Maley (2016) and Susan Banki (2008: 49), is a search for refugee populations like the Bhutanese that allow Western governments to fill their refugee quotas ‘without turning to those populations viewed as potentially dangerous’
(Banki 2008: 49)—those from the Middle East and Afghanistan. Eighty per cent of more than 1 million refugees who crossed into Europe by sea in 2015 were from just three countries: Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan (Maley 2016: Ch. 1). Systematically, the international community has walked away from the biggest part of its preventive challenge, from the very refugee camps most likely to drive terrorist recruitment according to the pattern identified in Proposition 6.

Much more can be done by undercover operatives approaching human traffickers pretending to be refugees, offering exploitative traffickers payment recorded by a hidden camera and then locking them up. But Maley’s point is that the human trafficker problem is structurally one of the market (a black market) solving a problem of state failure to resettle the most needy refugees. If we fix that structural problem first, we might destroy the business model of traffickers and thereby reduce the supply-driven pressure from marketing by human traffickers to desperate people. Then, in time, we can get on with the more complex business of reducing demand for their services by rebuilding safety, town by town, in places such as Syria and Iraq so most refugees will choose to return to their homes from the camps.

It is not that any of this is so difficult to do. It is that the complexity of the politics of doing it is to date beyond our wit. The final and most important of the many layers of prevention of the growth in refugee flows is, of course, the main topic of this book: preventive diplomacy and peacebuilding that stem cascades of violence before they ever take off to the point where violence is further cascaded by refugee flows.

**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.

Among our propositions, this one is a rarity in that we can look to contemporary Western democracies for clear guidance on what to do. There are great limitations to US, British and German democracy, yet these are not anomic societies. The rule of norms is as important to keeping them stable as the rule of law. Recent US history has seen two of its most extremist presidents, George W. Bush and Donald Trump, assume power in circumstances that half the population had reason to feel were the result of an unfair or illegitimate election. Yet when the Supreme Court declined
to invalidate these election declarations, both losing candidates and both outgoing presidents called on the people with eloquent sincerity to support the man they reviled. In more anomic societies, where democratic norms are less consolidated, defenders of democracy must be more alert to emergent threats for guns to replace votes in deciding such successions.

Chapter 11 mentioned how in Ghana the National Peace Committee pre-emptively headed off this threat when they saw it coming, speaking informally with the presidential candidates and then calling on them publicly to declare that they would abide by the declared election result. They did and no civil war ensued (Odendaal 2012). Chapter 11 also showed how local peace committees can be another layer of response alert to local threats to the normative order. An example was South African steering of the routes for opposing funeral marches in opposite directions to avert threats to norms respecting the sanctity of funerals. Nipping unpredictable local cascades of anomie in the bud is best attempted first with the local knowledge of wise heads on the ground at the community level.

The teaching of civics as part of the education system is another important layer of response in imbuing commitment to the rule of law. Reintegrative shaming of norm infractions, as opposed to stigmatisation that can create oppositional subcultures of resistance to the normative order, is important for defending a normative order (Ahmed et al. 2001). One good way to institutionalise this is through restorative practices that can iteratively fail, reconvene with new participants and new resources, fail again and then reconvene until they succeed. Restorative justice is philosophically committed to averting stigmatisation, to promoting respect and reintegration and to preventing shame from being used as a weapon of domination. Rape must be shamed; rape victims must not. Rapists must not be stigmatised but led to AMP: awareness of patriarchy, motivation to change and a path to change through reintegration. The particular example of rape and normlessness sets us up for Proposition 9 of the complex challenges of crime–war cascades. It introduces an understanding of how closely related these challenges are.

**Proposition 8(a):** Cascades of violence recursively cascade militarisation, domination and humiliation. Militarisation, domination and humiliation recursively risk further cascades of violence.

The world’s powerful and respected militaries are those most strategically placed to prevent cascades of militarisation. A leading example of how not to do this was the School of the Americas, established by the United
States during the Cold War, initially in Panama (relocated to Fort Benning, Georgia, when it was kicked out of Panama), to train tens of thousands of Latin American soldiers to terrorise their societies through a radically militarised approach to crushing the left. As SOA Watch, among others, documented, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and US army manuals used in this training justified terrorising civilians, advocating ‘executions, torture, blackmail and other forms of coercion’ (Priest 1996: 1). In a perverse way, this terrible history, combined with the more recent experience of Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay, could give the US military the street cred with authoritarian armies to reform itself to become a leader in inculcating opposition to torture, respect for human rights and refusal to humiliate prisoners and enemies. This opportunity is profound because all militaries value exchanges with and learning about the tactics and weapons systems of the world’s most powerful militaries. An approach that was responsive to the complexity of cascades of militarisation could make training units available in the world’s most powerful militaries. These units could have special sensitivities to ethical military training for referrals from security sector reform groups in peace operations. In a case such as Libya, perhaps a less powerful military but one more respected in Libya would be best for this role, such as Jordan’s.

Earlier in this chapter (and in Chapter 11), we discussed responding to the complexity of how and where cascades of domination and humiliation unfold in the consideration of local dominations and humiliations of lower-caste peasants by upper-caste landlords in Nepal. We saw in that discussion that prioritising educational, employment and land reforms in the times and places where these sparks of domination and humiliation unexpectedly first flare is important to the complex art of peacebuilding.

**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.

We have argued that crime prevention is war prevention. This is certainly an argument for structurally sound and universal crime prevention policies. Yet 99.99 per cent of crimes do not lead to war. This is a complex nonlinear relationship. The crimes that are sparks usually have a violent and vivid character in which the alleged offender(s) are seen as representatives of the political other. The rape of Muslim women by the police in Kashmir (Chapter 5), the shooting of children in demonstrations in Kashmir and the political assassination of three pre-eminent Gandhis in India illustrate
a phenomenon seen—with risks of cascades to violence—in many Peacebuilding Compared cases. In Chapter 5, we saw how wise nonviolent heads used these horrible events, with variable success, to reinforce values of nonviolent rather than violent struggle against domination. Gandhi’s assassination in 1948 and president Ramos-Horta’s grave wounding in Timor-Leste in 2008 were examples of historical moments when wise leaders used the tragedy to turn the society sharply towards nonviolence. Decisive action against police alleged to have raped demonstrators is obviously important. Decisive denunciation of assassinations of the kind Serbian political society failed to deliver for the murder of Archduke Ferdinand in 1914 is also obviously important to halting cascades ignited by criminal sparks. We also saw an important layer of prevention in police station reconciliation committees in north-western Pakistan preventing blood feuds from cascading in unpredictable ways into local wars in areas where the risks of local cascades of violence are unusually extreme and geopolitically risky.

In a wider sense, all crime prevention is armed conflict prevention on our account—as is all domination prevention, predation prevention and humiliation prevention because crimes that cause wars are interpreted as vivid and utterly illegitimate exemplars of a recurrent pattern of domination, predation or humiliation. The complexity of which of millions of police assaults on black people will lead to riots and sniper fire across many US or French or British cities is as hard to predict as which rapes in a developing country will spark a civil war. We see recurrent elements of these cascades often enough: the original crime is immediately given a meaning in the rhetoric of recurrent political oppression (hence, the preventive relevance of making crime less recurrent and oppression less recurrent); this particular crime instantly mobilises anger on the streets by friends and relatives of the victim; others join; a police officer overreacts and uses excessive force in unsuccessful efforts to restore order quickly; word of both the crime and the excessive use of police force cascades as activists mobilise to publicise this evidence of a surge of oppression that demands resistance; more people cascade on to the streets of many places; nonviolent activists are unable to control those elements of these crowds who explode into violent resistance; representatives of the perceived other group (the police or the racial or religious other) are murdered. Then police violence cascades back at the protestors. Not only can we not predict which of the resultant blood feuds will cascade to civil war; we cannot predict any of the stages of such cascades, starting with which of countless assaults or rapes or police shootings will be interpreted widely
as an act of political oppression. Yet we can understand the cumulative consequences of each of the earlier occasions when citizens lumped assaults with a shrug that signified to them that they live in the kind of society where oppression of their group happens all the time. A high rate of violent crime and a sense of anomie create the foundations for a future spark that ignites a wildfire.

Cascades of war to crime involve quite different challenges. In a case such as El Salvador, we saw under Proposition 6 that decent treatment of refugees fleeing to the United States held the key to preventing the war-to-crime cascade that left El Salvador with by far the highest homicide rate in the world both immediately after its civil war and still at the beginning of 2017. In the case of US veterans of the wars in Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan returning home, some were quite widely stigmatised and desperately needed the unconditional embrace of their loved ones, sometimes for comfort from the cold shoulder of partners who divorced them. The war machines of states overinvest in desensitising soldiers to violence and underinvest in veteran aftercare. Investment in social workers who sit in the restorative circle of family support for returning veterans can harness those families to the project of being the first responders for the complex task of detecting and smothering sparks that lead from war to crime or from war to self-harm. If specialist veterans’ courts for criminal defendants have a restorative character in the way they connect veterans to specialised helping human services that include the warm embrace of a veteran community that is both the key source of their post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and the solution to it, they can also be an effective response (Baldwin and Rukus 2015; Hartley and Baldwin 2016). Hitler might have benefited from restorative circles of support after he recovered from the bitterness of defeat and the trauma of gas that blinded him in a regiment of 3,600 men, of whom only 611 survived (Solleder 1932).

Veterans’ courts are just one possibility. John Braithwaite remembers how important the warm embrace of the Ex-Prisoners of War Association was to his father, who was one of six who survived from 3,000 victims of a war crime, the Sandakan Death Marches and prison camp in World War II. He remembers how important it was to his mother, who also lost her first husband to the Death March. Most interestingly, he remembers how moved his grandfather was when, at the Ex-Prisoners of War Association picnic,

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8 This counts the Japanese deaths in counter Death Marches enforced by Australian troops against Japanese prisoners of war. See Dick Braithwaite’s history of Sandakan and of his family on this (R. Braithwaite 2016).
John was awarded a scholarship for his education; old Joe Braithwaite was moved by the fact that veterans could self-organise to embrace their own in social support. Joe fought opposite Hitler in the trenches near Ypres. Like Hitler, he was gassed, carrying a horrible lifelong cough, and, like Hitler, most of the rest of his regiment did not survive. Veteran-organised care for traumatised veterans cascaded care and love across the generations of John Braithwaite’s family. All victims of war deserve no less.

**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).

The way to prevent the genocide that was to come in Cambodia was to prevent the escalation of war in Vietnam more than a decade earlier and to follow that with peacebuilding and development assistance in the struggling communities where the Khmer Rouge rose to power in Cambodia. We also argued in Chapter 2 that the way to prevent the genocides in Rwanda and Srebrenica was for the United Nations to reinforce the peacekeepers who wanted to hold their ground to protect civilians there. Then, if those reinforcements were insufficient or did not work, to try something else until the genocide was stopped. The way to prevent the Rwandan army counter-genocide against Hutu refugees in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in 1996 was to move their refugee camps back from where they were seen as threatening Rwanda and to place UN peacekeepers between those camps and the Rwandan army. While it was right for the United Nations to meet its responsibility to protect the cowering citizens of Benghazi in 2011, it was wrong for the United Nations to allow this to push on to a war of regime change and then to cut and run, refusing to put UN peacekeepers in harm’s way after anomie set in following the rape and murder of Gaddafi. NATO was wrong to invade Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003 in circumstances from which it was destined to cut and run.

The cascades we have just described were all complex and no one was wise enough to predict the complexity of how they would cascade. Political leaders can, however, be tougher on their societies in asking the cut-and-run question up front, and can decide on a disposition to be less willing to unsheathe their sword in the first place as an outcome of that conversation with the society. These are conversations about unknowable
complexity. The point is to look that complexity in the eye before the event rather than after it. It is to humble the arrogance of power that seeks to use its hammer on many imagined nails.

Carpentry is a subtle craft, not one of brute force. The carpenter who makes a chair does not follow a known recipe of how much sawing, hammering, planing, sanding and gluing to do. Rather, the gifted chair-builder looks at the grain of the timber as it appears in the process of the chair’s emergence, going with the grain, reinforcing the beauty and strength of the timber as it emerges. Securing peace is likewise not amenable to recipes and templates; it is a craft of complexity, particularly of watching and listening for unpredictable ignition points. It is also a craft of participatory multilevel meta-governance by and of states, markets and civil society (Jessop 2017). And it is a craft of watching for surges to replace militarised politics with the politics of nonviolence, as happened in such unpredictable ways in recent years in Sri Lanka, Nepal and with such extremes of unpredicted disappointment in Myanmar (Chapters 8 and 9).

Open-source preventive diplomacy

It is a worthwhile ambition to plug away for another 14 years of data collection to reassess after 2030 whether we see our 10 cascade propositions continue to account for patterns of global violence. Yet the understanding of complexity advanced in this conclusion means that the propositions would remain no more than patterns, heuristics that prompt us to discover trial-and-error solutions to emergent risks of cascades of violence. So, what might be a way to put the research in this book to work now in preventing wars that might otherwise occur between now and the 2030s?

We think the best here-and-now improvement our work might contribute to world order would be improving preventive diplomacy (Evans 1993). We advance an open-source approach to that challenge as one way to go in a complex world prone to the kind of cascades revealed in this book. A starting point is to consider how and why our understanding of international affairs has failed us in the past. Robert Jervis’s (2010) Why Intelligence Fails is instructive. He diagnoses why US intelligence

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9 We are indebted here to Malcolm Sparrow’s (2011) metaphor in *The Regulatory Craft*. Business regulation, woodwork and the regulation of war are very different kinds of activities but each is evidence-based in ways that make it more a craft than a science.
agencies failed to warn of the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979, for example. Jervis was in the privileged position of being a CIA consultant with wide access to their intelligence on Iran (and other cases of intelligence failure). Jervis begins with the reality check that the CIA had only two political analysts for a country as geopolitically important and diverse as Iran and two economic analysts (who were working almost exclusively on Organisation for Petroleum Exporting Countries issues). Other Washington intelligence agencies had no Iran experts in 1979:

Like many people who did not know the government from the inside, I had assumed extensive coverage of every country. In fact this was out of reach, and remains so … I was also surprised that the CIA in particular and the government in general did not engage in more thorough and detailed research.

…

Until the crisis, intelligence on Iran did not receive much of an audience. This also surprised me, although it should not have. Top officials are incredibly busy, and even thirty years ago, when they probably read more than is the case now, intelligence about a country that did not require immediate decisions could not attract many readers. This not only lowered the analysts’ morale but meant that their reports did not get the kind of questioning and critical scrutiny that could have helped keep them on their toes.

…

I had expected, again naively, that even if policymakers did not read long intelligence papers, the members of the intelligence community would constitute a sort of intellectual community, with people probing, commenting on, and criticizing one another’s work. In fact, this was not the case, and contacts among the people working on Iran were relatively infrequent. (Jervis 2010: 21–2)

To make all of this worse, Jervis found that the CIA had a vertical orientation rather than a horizontal approach to learning. In particular, CIA analysts expected a chilly reception if they reached out to academics. Their ethos meant they felt uncomfortable even talking with people without clearances about questions that puzzled them. This added up to a culture of evidence gathering without peer review. The culture of short briefing notes that could be fitted on a page or two meant that footnotes that cited sources for assertions (and sources that refuted them) that might be checked by peers came late to the US intelligence community.
One example of an upshot of all this was that no one ‘understood the role of religion or [Ayatollah] Khomeini … and did not see the beginnings of what we would now call radical or fundamentalist Islam’ (Jervis 2010: 25).

A widespread problem was that intelligence agencies could get away with the basic methodological error of searching on the dependent variable—for example, searching for when something resulted in war without searching with equal diligence for cases where that same phenomenon resulted in peace.

One of the very unhealthy sayings of Australian academics about quick and dirty research is that it could be ‘good enough for government work’. This can mean inattentiveness to citing sources and unaccountability to peer review. But it can also mean the timidity of style and aversion to bold analysis that Jervis has not been alone in discerning in government writing. This is the biggest difference between university research and policy analysis by state officials. University researchers are rewarded for being ‘out there’ with bold and interesting analyses. If they are wrong in them, they are mostly simply ignored; if their ideas are widely cited as insightful, their careers flourish. For government policy analysts, in contrast, their incentives are to use cautious language and stay with the pack. If they go out on a limb with their analysis, bureaucratic rivals who have an opposing analysis might inflict damage on their careers when they are proven wrong. Consider the intelligence community’s ‘slam dunk’ conclusion that Saddam Hussein was lying about having ended his production of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) in 2003, when even president Bush expressed surprise at how little evidence the CIA could share with him:

> Most strikingly, no one proposed a view close to the one we now know to be true. Indeed, as the president’s WMD Commission put it in its post-mortem, ‘Failing to conclude that Saddam had ended his banned weapons program is one thing—not even considering it as a possibility is another.’ (Jervis 2010: 128)

In light of Jervis’s insights, it might be argued that university academics have a comparative advantage for developing ideas of preventive diplomacy that respond to complexity and challenges of distinguishing the knowable but unknown from the unknowable. Even for the most geopolitically insignificant of countries, there are dozens of good scholars around the world who are genuine experts on that country—of course, concentrated particularly in the universities of that country itself, but also in think tanks beyond universities, such as the International Crisis Group, and in media...
organisations. The community of scholars for any country is bristling with bold ideas concerning the risks that country faces and poses. It may be that a high proportion of those provocative ideas are wrong or trivial in practice. Structurally, however, the community of university scholars is horizontally rather than vertically organised and has an open culture of contestation of provocative ideas. When it comes to seizing preventive diplomacy initiatives, political leaders must be helped regularly to be bolder. Jervis (2010: 166), intriguingly, quotes former US secretary of state Dean Acheson saying to presidential scholar Richard Neustadt: ‘I know your theory [that presidents need to hear conflicting views]. You think Presidents should be warned. You’re wrong. Presidents should be given confidence.’ Perhaps they need both warning and confidence in good measure.

The scholarly community is not afflicted with the kind of siloing between Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and CIA intelligence that contributed to the failure to prevent the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the United States (Jervis 2010: 185). So, it should be possible to harness the international scholarly community to compensate with preventive diplomacy ideas that counter the five key weaknesses we identify in intelligence agencies (with thanks to Jervis for stimulating them). The intelligence weaknesses are:

1. poor early warning capability
2. siloing
3. timidly clinging to the middle of the road
4. weak peer review
5. a sloppy culture of accountability for sources and research standards.

If we could manage to achieve this, it would not be the only domain where humankind has learnt that a move from closed bureaucracies to open contestation of ideas in universities is the better way to innovate in problem-solving.10

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10 There were many decades in the middle of the twentieth century when it was reasonable to think that private corporations such as pharmaceutical companies were innovating in the most important breakthroughs for treating diseases; today, it is clear that universities are the source of the most important ideas for preventing the biggest threats to our health (Drahos with Braithwaite 2002). Jervis (2010: 179) himself cites the examples of internal diagnoses of the US National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Challenger disaster compared with those of university researcher Diane Vaughan (1997) and the Catholic child sexual abuse scandals as examples of failures of closed bureaucracies, even the most technically advanced ones, to come to grips with root causes and consequent preventive possibilities.
The preventive diplomacy wiki proposal

Others undoubtedly might suggest better ways of mobilising universities to preventive diplomacy challenges. Here is our suggestion to stimulate debate. A leading university could establish a Preventive Diplomacy Wiki. Researchers from anywhere in any language could propose a preventive diplomacy idea that should be seized. The proposal would explain why seizing it would be a good preventive response to uncertain risks of violence cascades. State-of-the-art electronic translation from one language to any other might be used—a technology expected to improve rapidly—and then human minds could wiki nuance into translated texts if the idea was important. Normal citation of sources and empirical evidence would be expected on the wiki. As soon as the preventive diplomacy strategy was posted, it would be open to other scholars to insert footnotes that contest its evidence and conclusions. These contestations could/should be signed. While commentators would be encouraged to give as much information about their identity as possible, it might be better to allow a Russian intelligence officer who wants to contest something to do so anonymously, rather than to give them no choice but to create a fictitious identity for the purpose. It would actually be important to encourage intelligence agencies to assert that certain claims were false according to evidence available to them, the nature and source of which they might be unwilling to disclose. Such information can be valuable and can be misleading, as we have learned in researching this book. The crucial thing is to have a method of analysis, such as subjective logic (Jøsang 2016), that weighs the trustworthiness of a particular assertion by a particular anonymous or semi-anonymous source.11 Evidence that is clearly detailed by identified and respected sources who engage in systematic fact-checking would, of course, be given more weight by readers of the wiki.

Each year a panel of distinguished scholars and retired diplomats would meet to decide the 10 best preventive diplomacy ideas for that year. They would be announced and honoured with publicity and modest monetary prizes. The Preventive Diplomacy Wiki might then send each of these proposals to separate panels of distinguished experts on the country/

11 Michael Cookson made the comment here that ‘Veriluma’s original patent holders, were preoccupied with the intelligence failures (based on blind belief and misplaced certainty) that led to the 2003 Iraq war. This was their motivation for creating an assessment process that would make it possible for leaders to make objective decisions informed by probable outcomes in conditions of uncertainty (i.e. with limited or suspect information).’
region concerned. This expert panel could produce whatever kind of evaluation report on the preventive ideas they chose. They could work as a team to code a matrix of the probability of the claims made about each cascade risk and the confidence in each of those probabilities, both in fuzzy verbal categories (see Table 12.1). Such analysis of contested facts could be entered into subjective logic software such as Intelfuze developed by Veriluma (Pash 2016; Pope et al. 2006; Shaw 2016) to estimate which are the biggest risks and how promising are the different elements of the preventive diplomacy proposal, in the judgment of these experts, for treating those risks.

Subjective logic software was developed by researchers at the Distributed Systems Technology Centre, a University of Queensland Cooperative Research Centre that engaged participation from many Australian universities and research institutions and leadership from many minds (cited in Jøsang 2016), including Simon Pope (now with Microsoft), Audun Jøsang (formerly of Alcatel, now Professor of Informatics at the University of Oslo) and David McAnally (a mathematician from the University of Queensland and University of Melbourne). Together, this large team developed the algorithms and concepts that are already being used by at least two national intelligence agencies. Subjective logic does not assume linear relationships between variables; it allows some variables to be coded quantitatively and in an uncontested way and other variables to be coded in a granular and contested way and some important conjectures to be noted qualitatively, but coded ‘don’t know’. Put another way, these software developers are advancing methods for dealing with radically mixed data of variable knowability and with many holes. It is therefore one possible systematic approach to a vast amount of information in conditions of cascading complexity.

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12 Alan Hajek commented on a draft of this chapter that perhaps fuzzy probabilities could also be appropriate—for example, intervals.
13 See also: www.veriluma.com (accessed 4 March 2017). The original patent cites the earlier software, ShEBA (Structured Evidence-Based Analysis of Hypotheses).
14 Linearity or nonlinearity of effects is managed ‘subjectively’ inside the heads of analysts. For example, based on whatever evidence about the nature of the relationship between inflation and war is known to the analyst, the analyst might judge that rising inflation in a particular country will only very slightly increase the risks of war; but, after a tipping point where it cascades to hyperinflation, it will greatly increase risks of war.
Table 12.1 Likelihood and confidence in fuzzy categories.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Likelihood categories:</th>
<th>Absolutely not</th>
<th>Very unlikely</th>
<th>Unlikely</th>
<th>Somewhat unlikely</th>
<th>Chances about even</th>
<th>Somewhat likely</th>
<th>Likely</th>
<th>Very likely</th>
<th>Absolutely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Confidence categories</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No confidence</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>9E</td>
<td>8E</td>
<td>7E</td>
<td>6E</td>
<td>5E</td>
<td>4E</td>
<td>3E</td>
<td>2E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low confidence</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>9D</td>
<td>8D</td>
<td>7D</td>
<td>6D</td>
<td>5D</td>
<td>4D</td>
<td>3D</td>
<td>2D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some confidence</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>9C</td>
<td>8C</td>
<td>7C</td>
<td>6C</td>
<td>5C</td>
<td>4C</td>
<td>3C</td>
<td>2C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High confidence</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>9B</td>
<td>8B</td>
<td>7B</td>
<td>6B</td>
<td>5B</td>
<td>4B</td>
<td>3B</td>
<td>2B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total confidence</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>9A</td>
<td>8A</td>
<td>7A</td>
<td>6A</td>
<td>5A</td>
<td>4A</td>
<td>3A</td>
<td>2A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Jøsang (2016: 49).
Again, subjective logic is just one of many options for responding to complexity and subjecting each of the most worthwhile proposals on a preventive diplomacy wiki to more detailed and rigorous analysis. There is undoubtedly much wisdom also to be drawn from decades of experience with refining details of the Delphi method, for example, since it was first developed for the Pentagon by the Rand Corporation in the 1950s and 1960s. DelphiCloud has given much thought to the problems of overconfidence and groupthink, adapting in an evidence-based way by giving people an opportunity to express opinions privately without pressure from a group, but following that with discussion sessions where participants trade evidence and share analyses. In aggregating to a collective view, DelphiCloud gives more weight to the analyses of people whose assessments have proved robust in the past on that kind of question.

The 10 best proposals each year and the analyses of them by expert panels could be published in an annual review of preventive diplomacy, which could be provided free of charge to all institutions involved in Track II diplomacy. The problem with the social science academy that this proposal seeks to remedy is that our incentives are to publish either empirical findings or social theory. The remedy advanced here is to make it also academically prestigious (prize-winning, income-generating, citation-generating) to come up with one of the best preventive diplomacy ideas based on one’s detailed knowledge of a particular country. The other thing that appeals to us about it is that, as we have seen with the prevention of disease (Dukes et al. 2014), universities taking back leadership in applied research excellence from closed bureaucracies could put it on a more ethical footing. While it is open to an intelligence agency like the CIA to propose to its political leaders that its best idea is to deploy drones on missions of extrajudicial assassination in countries against which the United States has not declared war, or to establish an institution like the School of the Americas in Panama, such proposals could not possibly win prizes on an open-source preventive diplomacy wiki led by university professors.

This would be because the test for excellence would not be advancing any single national interest. The test would be war prevention. If the analysis of this book is right, many of the best ideas would actively prevent cascades of militarisation rather than promote new forms of militarisation.
(in the way drone warfare has). The wiki would come up with ideas on
how to apply regulatory theory to making the nuclear non-proliferation
regime more effective. It could never laud military interventions to smash
Weapons of Mass Destruction. It could develop many creative new layers
of strategies to enrich meta-strategies that grapple with complexity.