

Call for Chapters for RESOLVE Network Edited Volume

Title: Researching Violent Extremism: Context, Ethics, and Methodologies

The RESOLVE Network Secretariat invites contributions from academics, researchers, practitioners, and policymakers on ethical, methodological, and security challenges and experiences in conducting research aimed at preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE).

Edited Volume - Call for Chapters

The RESOLVE Network Secretariat is soliciting a call for chapters to populate an edited volume focused on designing, conducting, analyzing, and presenting research on violent extremism (VE). The primary goal of the volume is to distill to the extent possible a set of methodological principles and ethical best practices for use in researching dynamics related to violent extremism and resiliency to violent extremism, specifically focused on research that can inform P/CVE policy and practice.

Content from the edited volume will supplement and inform content created for a RESOLVE Network research training curriculum (see below for further detail). Both the edited volume and the curriculum will address the following research experiences both globally and from a Western Balkans perspective:¹

- *Implications for research given the evolution of P/CVE policy and practice;*
- *Contextual considerations and definitions of violent extremism in research, policy, and practice (from the Western Balkans in particular, although contributions from all contexts are welcome)*
- *Qualitative and quantitative methodologies and methodological considerations and experiences (including limitations and implications for analysis and data validity);*
- *Conceptual frameworks, data gathering techniques (for use in understanding attitudes, behaviors, communal/network dynamics, and government policies), analyses, integration and syntheses of data;*
- *Ethical considerations and guidelines for P/CVE research;*
- *Security concerns and issues in conducting research on violent extremism (for researchers, the communities with which they interact, and the presentation of data); and*

¹ In addition to chapters detailing experiences and issues associated with conducting research for P/CVE on a broad and global scale, the edited volume will include an annexed section addressing experiences and issues associated with conducting research on violent extremism in the Western Balkans.

- *Personal experiences conducting and designing research projects that speak to any or all of the above topics.*

Context

The need to craft proactive approaches to prevent and counter violent extremism (P/CVE) continues to grow as the global threat of violent extremism (VE) evolves. Methodologically-rigorous local research on rapidly evolving on-the-ground dynamics and trends is fundamental to gathering and analyzing the information needed to inform interventions.

Policymakers and practitioners benefit from a steadily expanding body of P/CVE studies. However, the need for a standardized, rigorous, do-no-harm approach to conducting research on violent extremism for P/CVE policy and practice remains. Specifically, guidance on the unique methodological, ethical, and security-related considerations that impact VE-focused research, both broadly and in specific geographic regions is limited. Clear and instructive guidance and resources are needed for use in conceptualizing, conducting, interpreting, operationalizing, and comparing VE research in a safe and rigorous manner for programmatic and policy-focused P/CVE goals. Researchers' personal experiences conducting VE studies offer insight instructive in standardizing and creating a more coherent, rigorous, and ethical field of study and practice.

Project Background and Purpose

The RESOLVE Network's research training and curriculum initiative seeks to build the capacity of local researchers, develop higher standards, and promote ethical processes for conducting research on VE. The training and curriculum will be drafted by and informed by the experience of experts from academia, policymaking, and practitioners. It will specifically address how to conceptualize, conduct, analyze, and present research to inform and assess P/CVE policymaking and practice, both broadly and in specific geographic regions. The project is two-pronged in nature, including:

- Developing and implementing a curriculum and training-of-trainers (ToT) module, and
- The construction of an edited volume of works based on researcher experience to supplement the curriculum and training.

The core module will provide instruction and insight on experiences and issues associated with conducting research for P/CVE on a broad and global scale. In addition, the training curriculum and edited volume will incorporate regional overlays outlining considerations specific to research in particular geographic region. The regional overlay in the first edition of the training and edited volume (2018-19) will focus on researching VE in the Western Balkans.

These combined efforts will contribute to building the researcher capacity and the development of standardized guidelines for research informing P/CVE policy and practice. In addition, through building out regional overlays, these efforts will provide additional insight on regional differences and similarities impacting research on VE for P/CVE researchers, policymakers, and practitioners.

Content Requirements

- *The RESOLVE Network Secretariat is looking for chapters for an edited volume of work that provides examples and insights from and for P/CVE researchers based on the previous expert*

experiences complete with guides for policymakers, practitioners, and researchers interested in the research process.

- *Chapters should speak to specific experiences conceptualizing, conducting, and using research for P/CVE policy and practice.*
- *Chapters submitted should address the topics outlined above. For further information on accepted topics and edited volume sections, see the **Edited Volume Sections and Topics of Interest** section below.*
- *Chapters submitted should, to the extent possible, provide instructional insight on the topic given real examples and analysis from personal experience.*
- *Submissions from research conducted on any VE-related theme or in any geographic context are welcome.*
- *Contributions from researchers, policymakers, and practitioners who have worked alone or in collaboration are welcome.*
- *Given the additional Western Balkans-focused portion of this edited volume, submissions from the Western Balkans context on any or all themes suggested below are encouraged.*
- *Submissions should adhere to the submission guidelines provided at the end of this document.*
- *Submissions speaking to any or multiple topics listed above that detail personal reflections on key VE research conducted previously by the author(s) are welcome.*
- *Case study/reflection submissions are encouraged to reference the following:*
 - *Motivations for and purpose of research*
 - *How did you craft and carry out the research?*
 - *Why did you make the choices that you made?*
 - *What problems did you face and how did you overcome them or what lessons did you learn from them?*
 - *What mistakes did you make and what advice would you give to other researchers conducting similar studies?*

Deadlines

- 1) **February 1, 2019:** Submission of topic, 200-300-word abstract, draft outline, and 100-word biography of author(s)
- 2) **April 1, 2019:** Submission of first draft of chapters for those invited by RESOLVE to author a chapter
- 3) **May 20, 2019:** Reviewer feedback on chapter contributions
- 4) **June 20, 2019:** Submission of final draft

Submission Information

Submissions should be sent to: research@resolvenet.org with the following subject line: **RESOLVE Edited Volume Abstract – [Topic] – [Author(s) Name(s)]**

- Please include the **topic** and **biography of the author(s)** in the body of the email.
- The **200-300 word abstract** and **general outline** should be submitted in a **Word or PDF file attachment** that also contains the **name of the author(s)**.

Edited Volume Sections and Topics of Interest

Broad Topic: Violent Extremism and Efforts to Address It

Definitions of violent extremism vary widely based on context, politics, and time. What do we know about different definitions, manifestations, and interventions used to address them and what implications does that have for research in the field? What implications does that have for cross-comparative analyses?

- *Implications for research given the evolution of P/CVE policy and practice*
- *Contextual considerations and definitions of violent extremism in research, policy, and practice*
- *Contextual considerations and definitions of violent extremism in research, policy, and practice in the Western Balkans specifically*
- *What policymakers/practitioners need/look for in research to inform interventions*

Research on Violent Extremism: Methods and Tools

Hyper-local research findings and contextual information is needed to inform and evaluate P/CVE policy and practice. However, it is often difficult to parse out what information is needed for policy and practice. An additional difficulty is knowing exactly how to elicit that information given the highly sensitive, often securitized, politicized, and amorphous nature of P/CVE studies, policy, and practice. Through conceptual frameworks and personal case studies and insights, this section will seek to address the following questions:

- How do we know what to study/research if there is no uniform understanding of violent extremism?
- What research formulations are most suited for specific research goals – i.e. testing hypotheses versus grounded theory?
- What tools and methodologies (both qualitative and quantitative) are best suited to measuring attitudes, behaviors, communal/social dynamics, and government policies related to violent extremism?
- What methodologies and data collection tools are most helpful in getting sensitive, accurate information and reducing social desirability and other respondent biases?
- How can researchers cross-verify collected data?
- How do researchers develop the right research questions?
- How do researchers operationalize research questions into feasible research projects?
- How do resource, time, and other constraints affect these types of research projects?
- How can researchers compare findings from research in different contexts?
- What are the caveats and limitations of certain methodologies and how should those be represented in the research?
- How can the P/CVE community of practice and researchers build adaptive research projects given likelihood that dynamics might change rapidly on the ground during the research process?
- How do researchers craft a sampling strategy representative of the desired populations?
- What are the best ways to limit researcher bias in the analysis and presentation of findings?
- What are best practices in collecting and coding data, writing up findings, etc.?

Examples of personal experiences crafting and implementing research projects/using methodologies in conducting research/adapting to changing environments/lessons learned and best practices are encouraged.

General outline for edited volume sections and chapters:

Research 101: Why research?

- Experiences conceptualizing and designing research projects on VE to inform and/or evaluate P/CVE programs and policy, including:
 - Developing context- and objective-appropriate research questions and units of measurement
 - Identifying the correct locations and communities in which to conduct research
- Experiences using research to design and implement P/CVE programs and policy, including:
 - Examples of when research directly informed policy and practice, how, and what was useful about the research in informing the design
 - Examples of the type of information that policymakers and practitioners need to inform policy and practice (can be hypothetical or aspirational)
- **Methodologies for Understanding VE: *Measuring Attitudes, Behaviors, Institutions/Policies, and Communal/Group Dynamics***
(Submissions can address all or some of the content listed below)
 - *Useful conceptual frameworks for selecting a methodology to use for research on violent extremism (i.e. selecting the right methodology for what you are attempting to measure/assess, the context in which you are measuring it, and the funding and timeline for your research)*
 - *Qualitative and quantitative methodologies and methodological considerations, including:*
 - *Best practices and innovations in qualitative methodologies*
 - *Submissions describing and detailing examples from previous qualitative research,*
 - *Rationale/considerations for using qualitative methods,*
 - *Innovations in qualitative research (either already applied or those that could be applied),*
 - *how to collect and analyze data,*
 - *limits of qualitative methods, etc.*
 - *Best practices and innovations in quantitative methodologies*
 - *Submissions describing and detailing examples from previous quantitative research,*
 - *innovations in quantitative research (either already applied or those that could be applied),*
 - *rational/considerations for using quantitative methods,*
 - *how to collect and analyze data,*
 - *limits of quantitative methods, etc.*
 - *Online data gathering methods*
 - *Submissions describing and detailing examples from previous online research,*

- *innovations in online research (either already applied or those that could be applied),*
 - *rational/considerations for using online data gathering,*
 - *how to collect and analyze data,*
 - *limits of online research, etc.*
- *Using mixed-methods*
 - *Benefits of using mixed-methods*
 - *How to incorporate mixed-methods in research and research design*
 - *Triangulation and cross-validation*
- **Field research and interview techniques**
 - Research in the field
 - Who to interview and finding interviewees
 - Sampling strategies and transparency
 - Interviews: structured, semi-structured, open
 - Processing interview data / coding
 - Ethics / use of data

Safety and Ethics in Research on Violent Extremism

To craft and implement effective P/CVE programs, policymakers and practitioners need to understand ongoing and changing dynamics in communities that are or could be impacted by violent extremist actors. However, research on dynamics associated with and/or communities affected by violent extremism comes with certain security and ethical risks and implications. This section will seek to provide a guidance on dealing with ethical and security challenges for researchers and the communities in which they are conducting research.

General outline for edited volume sections and chapters:

- ***Ethical considerations and guidelines for P/CVE projects and research***
 - *Gathering data (i.e. dealing with trauma, victimization, extractive research, etc.)*
 - *Ethics and interacting with/gathering data from local communities*
 - *Ethics online*
 - *Examples from personal experience*
 - *Trauma to researchers*
 - *Analyzing data*
 - *Noting limitations and caveats*
 - *Interpreting data correctly*
 - *Cross verification and validation of analyses*
 - *Publishing data*
 - *Ethical issues to consider when writing findings:*
 - *Protecting populations and personally-identifiable information*
 - *Thinking through implications and making recommendations*
 - *Protecting authors/researchers*
- ***Security concerns and safety in research (contributions based on personal experiences or delineating general best practices welcome)***
 - *Safeguarding collected data*

- *Ensuring personal (researcher) security*
- *Ensuring the anonymity of populations interacted with and making decisions about how much information to disclose*

Western Balkans Specific

Amidst the evolving global threat of violent extremism, the Western Balkans faces substantial challenges to social cohesion and stability. Narratives of religious, far-right, and nationalist militancy resonate with vulnerable populations in Western Balkan countries where a history of ethnic, religious, and civil strife has created a vulnerability to terrorist recruitment. Individuals that traveled to fight alongside violent extremist organizations abroad are returning to their home countries for reasons ranging from the territorial losses of extremist groups in countries abroad to disillusionment and detainment by security forces. Home-grown extremist threats continue to gain traction and grow. Further research is needed to understand how these dynamics are evolving and how to effectively craft interventions that address conflict and violence in the region. Insights from previous research efforts and experience can benefit future research intended to derive nuanced, contextual, and policy- and practice-relevant findings so that policymakers can craft and implement proactive and effective interventions.

General outline for edited volume sections and chapters:

- **Violent Extremism and P/CVE in the Western Balkans**
- **Methodological Considerations and Approaches – methodological considerations**
 - Qualitative Examples
 - Quantitative Examples
 - Personal Experiences with Methodological Issues
- **Ethical and Security Considerations in the Western Balkans**
 - What are the ethical and security considerations that must be considered by those conducting research on violent extremism in the Balkans?
 - Case studies and personal accounts doing research in the Western Balkans are welcome.