

United by Violence, Divide by Cause?

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This book is concerned with the diversity of violence in South Asia, South-east Asia and Western Europe. It looks into the various forms of ideological backgrounds, structural conditions, relations and aims non-state actors involved in violence display in these regions and certain countries. Thereby, this book presents a similar diversity of theoretical and disciplinary approaches towards the explanation of the same phenomenon: violence. The rationale of this collection of approaches and case studies is to identify communalities on the one hand, and to counter simple, unidimensional explanations of why non-state actors resort to violence, on the other.

In the following, a short introduction into the puzzle underlying this endeavour is given. This is done on the example of the attacks on Christian churches and luxury hotels in Sri Lanka in April 2019. These attacks, which shocked not only the tiny island state south of India, but the world, due to its brutality, scope and suddenness, have inspired this book and the necessity to compare. After the introduction, the puzzle, aim, structure and background to this book are presented and the relevant concepts discussed.

Sri Lanka, 21 April 2019

On 21 April 2019, the news about a series of explosions in Sri Lanka's capital Colombo as well as in other cities of the island spread throughout the world. The targets of the attacks were Christian churches and luxury hotels. When the news reached Europe, dozens of people were dead, even more were injured.

When I heard the news in the radio, the attackers as well as their motives were yet unknown. Who could be behind the attacks?

Since the end of the Sri Lankan civil war between the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and the Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) in 2009, the overt tensions between members of the Buddhist majority and the religious minorities increased. In 2012, for example, prominent Buddhist

monks have campaigned against Christian churches and Hindu temples, alleging them to be built on sacred Buddhist temple land, demanding their removal. Threats have been made against priests unwilling to give in to the demands. Although the modern history of Sri Lanka has frequently seen strained relations between Christians and Buddhists, among others due to the role Christian missionaries had played during the different phases of the island's colonisation and due to the political contention between Buddhist and Christian political elites after independence, the amplified engagement of US-sponsored evangelicals has fuelled conflict. During the raging civil war, several Buddhist groups and movements had emerged, whose political agenda included, among others, the prevention of what they called "unethical conversions" linked mainly to these evangelical groups (Deegalle 2006:244). Different bills against "unethical conversions", particularly by Christian groups, were introduced to parliamentary debate, but all were rejected (Matthews 2007:465). Since 2012, various members of these Buddhist movements and groups have formed new organisations, ever more resorting to radical means of protest, ranging from 'public awareness campaigns', symbolic violence like the throwing of pork meat on mosques, to physical attacks on religious houses and sometimes even members of other faiths (Waha 2018). The most notorious organisation thereby is – or due its proclaimed dissolving after the general elections 2020 maybe soon was¹ – the Bodu Bala Sena (BBS). This Buddhist monk-led organisation has developed into the most influential and capable contender of the notion of a multi-religious Sri Lankan society (Waha 2018). Its comparatively vast networks, links and resources suggested the BBS to be the only Buddhist organisation in the country with the potential capacities to launch a greater attack. Although radical Buddhist organisations are frequently presented as terrorists or, as the BBS's cooperation partner in Myanmar, Ashin Virathu as the Buddhist face of terror,² these April 2019 attacks appeared far too lethal and outrageous for the BBS to apply. And yet one could wonder: Had the BBS escalated now further?

The search through Sri Lanka's more violent organisations – and that it required a rather elaborate organisational structure for such a well-orchestrated campaign appeared likely – lead to the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP). The JVP's political engagement had alternated between violent revolution, its preparation, and electoral participation as political party since its emergence in the 1960s. Its ideology combined elements of Marxism

1 The Daily Mirror, 20 November 2019.

2 Time, 01 July 2013.

with of a peculiar selection of parts of Sinhalese-Buddhist nationalism. Since 1968, the JVP trained students, members and members-to-be in its five lectures about what the leadership considered the downsides of capitalism, India's expansionism, true independence from British rule, the leftist movement as well as the correct path the Sri Lankan revolution should take (Gunaratna 1995:61). The JVP's major aim was the establishment of socialism in the country and the end of expansionism, imperialism and the attainment of what was claimed to be true independence. In 1971, with Rohana Wijeweera, the JVP's major leading figure, in prison, the organisation attempted the violent revolution to free its leader from imprisonment and the country from capitalism, imperialism and colonialism. While the JVP was able to take control over some rural areas and to establish state-like structures, the hoped-for mass uprising failed to happen (Samaranayake 2008:301). Despite the itself brutal defeat of the JVP in the same year, JVP's brutality and violence had incentivised the government to change the constitution, altering the country significantly, among others by turning it into a socialist republic and by providing Buddhism with the "foremost place".³ In 1989, the JVP again tried to violently overthrow the government. Coordinated attacks on state institutions and police stations as well as on political opponents and politicians were characteristic for the JVP (Moore 1993). Similarly, the JVP strategically targeted and robbed wealthy civilians in their homes.⁴ The JVP's indifference to differences in Christians – an ignorance shared by many radical Buddhists – and in 'Western people' as well as their enemy figure of wealthy people would have fit the selection of targets in the April 2019 attack: Christian churches and luxury hotels. While the JVP has returned to non-violent electoral politics already in the 1990s, just a few years after their brutal defeat in 1990, doubts remained in the Sri Lankan society about the JVP's final rejection of violence.⁵ And indeed, an interview with a JVP-representative in June 2016 suggested that once the electoral support for the JVP would diminish

3 See the Sri Lankan constitution of 1972. This paragraph providing a special place for Buddhist by and in the state was kept when a new constitution was introduced in 1978. This constitution is valid until today as is the provision of Buddhism's special position.

4 Based on an unstructured interview conducted in Colombo in June 2016 with a person, who experienced such incidents in the neighbourhood and who described the fear and terror which followed from these experiences and news about them.

5 In 2001, C. A. Chandraprema wrote in one of Sri Lanka's leading newspapers, *The Island*, "The JVP today openly refers to the LTTE as terrorists while glossing over their own past. Not for a moment am I arguing that one should continue to harp on the JVP's past for all eternity. But what is a cause for concern is that while the

or once the government became more restrictive on them, the JVP might consider the return to violent revolution as an option to achieve political and social aims. Had the time come for the JVP to return to revolutionary struggle?

Heading the list of violent organisations in Sri Lanka, however, is surely the LTTE. The Tigers were one of the most elaborate terrorist organisations not only in Sri Lanka or South Asia, but in the world. The organisation had its roots in the growing political contention between Tamil and Sinhalese political elites about power in the 1970s. Its founder and – until his death in 2009 – undisputed leader was Velupillai Prabhakaran, who transformed his erstwhile youths gang into an elaborate and highly efficient organisation (Swamy 2003, Swamy 2010). The LTTE claimed to fight for a separate Tamil state, Tamil Eelam, in the northern and eastern parts of Sri Lanka. The capacity of the organisation enabled the LTTE not only to frequently defeat and severely challenge the Sri Lankan Army, but also to drive out the Indian Peacekeeping Force (IPKF) sent by the Indian government, which had formerly been supportive of Tamil militancy in Sri Lanka and the LTTE (Gunaratna 1994). Even more, the LTTE brutally took out most of their political opponents within the Tamil community itself, ranging from the moderate Tamil politicians to the other militant Tamil organisations, which, just like the LTTE, had formed in the 1970s to fight for a separate state. Violence against the own community and opponents continued even as the LTTE had gained control of several parts of Sri Lanka and had established a functioning de-facto state. Through its networks all over Asia, Europe and Northern America, the LTTE received funds and political support (Chalk 2008), often willingly given but sometimes violently enforced, too. With suicide attacks and its military capacity on land, sea and air, the LTTE terrorised and killed its adversaries in large numbers. Victims include the former Indian Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi, who was killed by a female suicide bomber – a Black Tigress – in 1991 (Pape 2006). Increasingly, too, their attacks became indifferent, as the Tigers turned away from selectively targeting members of police and military, and instead targeting ordinary citizens, particularly Muslims and Sin-

JVP continues to deny what happened in 1987-89, they exalt Wijeweera and the other mass murderers of the JVP's political bureau as martyrs. Candles are lit and songs are sung in their memory. This is as disconcerting for those who remember the JVP's terror campaign of 1987-89 as the sight of a neo-Nazi ceremony would be to an European of the older generation. So long as the JVP continues to regard their past leaders as martyrs, we should always regard the JVP as murderers". The Island, 23 November 2001.

halese-Buddhists. In 1990, for example, the LTTE has killed or driven out the whole Muslim population from the northern parts of the island and continued to harass the religious minority in the eastern parts of Sri Lanka until the organisation's defeat at the hands of the Sri Lankan Army in 2009 (Wickramasinghe 2014:302; McGilvray and Raheem 2011:413). Well-coordinated large-scale attacks on Buddhist religious institutions, on banks in Colombo and even on the international airport have killed and wounded hundreds of civilians. Most of the LTTE's leading figures and many cadres, yet, were killed in the final battles with the Sri Lankan Army in 2009. Since then, the LTTE is considered extinguished. However, those, who listen carefully to certain Tamil circles in Paris, Germany and Switzerland, might anticipate that against the many claims that the LTTE died with the leaders in 2009, the LTTE is ill, but alive. There appears to be growing evidence that the Tigers reconstitute. Was the April 2019 attack the LTTE's come-back?

While neither the BBS, the JVP, nor the LTTE appeared likely to be behind the attacks – if the BBS had at all seen a strategic use in such attacks, the BBS rather had targeted Muslims; if the JVP had returned to violence, strategic attacks on police and military would have preceded, if at all churches would have been targeted; and had the LTTE attacked, it least likely would have been Christian churches as many Christians are Tamils on the one hand, and less likely hotels frequented by Europeans and Americans, as the LTTE would prevent the needed political support from these countries, on which the LTTE has drawn earlier.⁶ When the news arrived that suicide bombers had been used, BBS and JVP were finally out as suspects. While a Buddhist monk related to the BBS had burned himself to death in protest of certain minorities' disrespect for Buddhism in Sri Lanka, suicide bombing went far beyond any Buddhist repertoire (Waha 2018:481-518). While the LTTE had become a master of suicide bombings, the selection of targets still appeared not to fit.

The final suspect on the list was not as notorious as the others. Although by looking at transnational organisations of the kind, the selection of targets and repertoire would have fit, however, it was unclear whether one could *dare* the hypothesis. While Sri Lankan newspapers had frequently reported about incidents – such as the hacking to death of a Sufi, the

6 For LTTE's international links, "providing a sympathetic hearing, and in some cases (Norway, Switzerland) providing funding and support" see Burke and Mulakala (2011:158) and for an analysis of the LTTE's international network see Chalk (2008:98f.).

beweaponing of radical groups, or the attacks on Buddhist shrines and statues – many scholars and Sri Lankan politicians had either not taken up the issue of Muslim radicalisation, or rejected claims by those, who referred to such a development, as Sinhalese-Buddhist nationalist.

And yet, when thinking about the April 2019 violence, the increasingly radicalising Muslim community came to mind. Not only had a good number of members of the Sunni Muslim community changed visibly, from a hardly optically distinguishable religious minority to a clearly distinguishable and ‘arabised’ community, but also had their political behaviour. The political change accompanied a trend of altering political and social loyalties. This started with the constitutional reform in 1978, which had incentivised the formation of an own solely-Muslim political party (Wickramasinghe 2014:166). Work-migration cycles to Middle Eastern countries and the invited funds from Muslim majoritarian countries to Sri Lanka’s Muslim majoritarian areas, which were followed by support in religious education, infrastructure and preaching, added to the transformation of the community (Waha 2018). The application of violence, however, followed the influx of aid organisations, most notably funded by Saudi Arabia, after the tsunami in 2004. In these years, groups like the Sri Lanka Jamthi Islam, Thableeq Jamath and different splinters of the Thauweed Jamath (Colombo based) as well as Knox, Ossama and the Jetty group (eastern Trincomalee district) formed.⁷ Groups like these are suspected to be behind the defacing of Buddha statues as well as the destruction of Buddhist and Sufi shrines.⁸ Increasingly they also targeted people, particularly the Sufi community. Some Sufis were driven away from their homes and others killed.⁹ Particularly after the end of the civil war, furthermore, mutual provocations between members of the Muslim and other religious communities strained the communal relations. Hindus and Buddhists looked with suspicion at the changes within the Muslim community. Groups like the Bodu Bala Sena took their suspicion – and their rejection – to the streets. Frequently, radical Muslim groups, particularly the Sri Lanka Thauweed Jamath (SLTJ), clashed with members and supporters of the BBS. While some of the clashes remained widely verbal, like the threats exchanged in 2016 in the course of the adaption of the Muslim Marriage Law to human

7 Colombo Telegraph, 03 April 2013.

8 Already in 2001, an organisation had formed to ‘create awareness’ for the growing Muslim ‘terrorism’ (Waha 2018:273).

9 Asian Tribune, 01 September 2007.

rights standards,¹⁰ others resulted in mass violence, destruction and deaths (Waha 2018:335,463). Despite reports about the escalation with particularly Buddhists, and to a far lower level Hindus, there was no escalation process between Christians and Muslims, which would suggest the selection of the target. And yet, already in the years before the attack, it appeared likely that such groups would perpetrate greater violence if elsewhere a conflict increased a ‘pan-Islamic threat perception’.¹¹ Could the attack in Christchurch have served as such? But still, it seemed that despite the known beweaponing of radical Muslim groups in the eastern part of Sri Lanka to fight the LTTE, these groups lacked the capacity – if not the financial resources, yet, at least the knowledge – to conduct such a large-scale and well-coordinated attack of the kind perpetrated in April 2019. Had one of the radical groups nevertheless attacked?

The question of who was behind the suicide attacks was answered soon after my scenario mind game. It indeed had been a splinter of the Thauweed Jamath, the National Thauweed Jamath (NTJ), which had coordinated, planned and conducted the attack. Later it was found that the local Sri Lankan group had sworn allegiance to the Islamic State (IS).¹² The group, however, has not consisted of trained foreign IS fighters, sent to Sri Lanka to perpetrate the attack. The members of the group were Sri Lankan Muslims, some from one wealthy middle-class family.¹³ They were claimed to have adopted certain radical ideas and to thus have perpetrated violence.

The Puzzle of this Book

The short perusal and mind game of potential perpetrators of the April 2019 attack in Sri Lanka had raised a question and linked to a puzzle, which emerged from the literature and public debate about incidents of this kind. While all of the four treated organisations and groups above have diverse ideological, cultural and religious backgrounds, they are united by the behaviour they apply: violence. While the literature on their emergence finds diverse reasons for each group to apply violence – either linked to their status in the society, to experiences of discrimination or to a

10 The SLTJ rejected such changes particularly because of the need to raise the minimum age for marriage of Muslim girls.

11 See the outlook given in 2017/2018 (Waha 2018:536).

12 United States Department of State, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (2019).

13 BBC, 11 May 2019.

majority's minority complex¹⁴ – they all are non-state actors who share the intentional use of physical force in order harm, damage, destroy or kill.¹⁵ Looking beyond the borders of the island state and into the wider region of South Asia, one finds that even more non-state actors – individuals, groups and organisations – resorted to violence in the public sphere as form of behaviour. Even more, looking beyond South Asia, one finds that such forms of behaviour are present all over the world.¹⁶ Diverse backgrounds of the perpetrators are recognised. Just looking at violent attacks in the public sphere in Germany, one finds a similar diversity of ideological backgrounds as in the tiny island state on the other side of the world. The violence against police and destruction of property in the course of the anti-G20 protests in Hamburg in July 2017 is attributed to left-wing extremism; the attack on a synagogue in Halle in October 2019 is attributed to right-wing extremism; the attack on a Sikh temple in Essen in April 2016 is attributed to 'homegrown' Islamism; the attack on the Christmas market in Berlin in December 2016 is attributed to the IS; the self-immolations of two Kurdish women in Mannheim in March 1994 are attributed to transnational Kurdish separatism.

Despite the variety of violent non-state actors all over the world frequently the public and at times academic discourse following a specific incident or attack concentrate on specific local explanations. But can a global phenomenon be only explained in local contexts? This appears to be counterintuitive and one has to wonder: Is there more that these diverse groups share than the behaviour? What are the similarities of violent perpetrators and their way towards violence? What can we learn and generalise from a comparison?

14 See, among others, Tambiah (1992) or Hoole (2001).

15 A basic definition of violence here is the following. Violence is defined as the use of physical force in order harm, damage, destroy or kill. See Waha (2018:73) for a discussion of the definition of violence.

16 For Southeast Asia see Croissant (2006), for South Asia see Gayer (2009), for Western Europe see Weinberg and Richard (2004), for left-wing terrorism see Kraushaar (2006), for a historical perspective see Laqueur and Hoffman (2016), for religious violence see Juergensmeyer (2017).

Radicalisation and the Aim of this Book

The question of why individuals and groups develop or join violent movements or implement violence¹⁷ as preferred way of behaviour is not new. One of the most prominent and influential theories thereby is the Relative Deprivation Theory, prominently shaped by Gurr's *Why Men Rebel* (1970). Violence in the relative deprivation approach is regarded as the result of frustration, deriving from a difference between people's expectations of what they are rightfully *entitled* to and their *actual* conditions, particularly in comparison to others. This resulting frustration has to be released, e.g. in form of aggression against the group considered responsible for the frustration. In contrast to this theoretical approach stands the Rational Choice Theory. The rational choice approach argues that violence is a form of social behaviour. Social behaviour in turn is claimed the result of individual choices and decision making processes. "When they are faced with a situation that demands a choice, individuals weigh costs and benefits of each alternative and make a choice that, in their opinion, is the best for them, or, to use the jargon of rational choice theory, increases their expected utility" (Mitra 1999:29). In this understanding, violence is used as a means to an end in a situation where violence appears to be the best behaviour alternative to get what an agent wants.

With the September 11 attack on the World Trade Centre in New York in 2001, the research on (political) violence and terrorism began to change. Silke (2004) has documented the changing trends of terrorism research, which had emerged since the 1970s and 1980s. The expansion of Islamist violence into the West, where perpetrators of violence were not fighters from far-away countries, but members of the Western societies, had put into focus the question of why individuals join violent campaigns and terrorist organisations.¹⁸ In this context, the idea was promoted that indoctrination by terrorist organisations and social exclusion of migrants in Euro-

17 Differentiate the violence in the public and political realms from violence in the domestic sphere as well as from violence by non-state actors from violence by state agents, like police or military.

18 In the early terrorism research, already, a focus was put on the individual. Attempts were made to identify a terrorist profile with regard to mental conditions of individuals joining a terrorist cause. As Borum (2011:14) puts it, "Early efforts tended predominantly to focus on the individual level, assuming that the aberrant behavior so prominently associated with the dramatic consequences of terrorism must reflect some mental or personality abnormality. This line of thinking prompted some clinical explanations for terrorism and a multitude of attempts to identify a unique terrorist profile. Forty years of terrorism research, however, has

pean societies, leading to a search for identity, were making individuals vulnerable to mobilisation and were driving individuals into such violent behaviour (see e.g. Silber and Bhatt 2007).¹⁹ While widely used and influential, this understanding, however, is problematic. Not only as it lacks the required empirical basis, but also as it considers “radicalization to be something *done to* a person. While this allows a policy response framed in terms of protection, it comes with two principal costs. The first is that we fail to understand or even explore the kinds of agency at work in experiences of radicalization” (McDonald 2018:10). The second is that it “isolates the person, imagining them as alone in front of a computer consuming radicalized messages, and removed from the social relationships and world they inhabit and shape. But [...] radicalization is a social process, full of exchanges, communications and shared emotions” (McDonald 2018:10-11).

Between the poles of Relative Deprivation Theory and Rational Choice Theory, which includes the poles of uncontrollable release of emotional stress and pressure and the cold blooded strategic use of violence for personal and/or political gains, many explanations in the academic literature, but also in the political discourse, can be sorted in. Thereby, the role of ideas, ideologies or religions is interpreted differently in the range of explanations. Despite the differences in approaches and explanations, many researchers can agree that violence does not come out of the nowhere or from one second to the other, but rather is the result of a development. Some scholars, for example, have used the concept of escalation (see Zartman 2008) to explain these developments. But particularly the concept of “radicalisation” has gained prominence in public discourses and policy recommending research.

There are manifold definitions of radicalisation, and for various reasons “radicalisation” as a concept is problematic. While most definitions may agree that radicalisation is a process (see Borum 2011), starting point and end point of this process are highly contested. Even more, even if one could agree that the process resulted – as the name ‘*radicalisation*’ suggests – in radicalism, the lacking agreement of what radicalism is, too, does not bring the required clarity.

It is not only ambiguous to what radicalism actually refers to – ideas, behaviour, ideas and behaviour – but also whether radicalism is approached

firmly debunked the notion that only ‘crazy’ people engage in terrorism and has yet to reveal a meaningful, stable, terrorist profile. Fortunately, with very few exceptions, most contemporary social scientists studying terrorism have moved past these early, naïve assumptions”.

19 See McDonald (2018) for a discussion.

analytically or normatively. A normative approach to radicalism comes with its own problems, not only for science but also for society. In liberal-democratic societies, as Gaspar et al. (2008) point out, non-violent radicalism can even be conducive. In their call for a shift from a normative towards an analytic approach to radicalisation, they define radicalisation as the “increasing questioning of the legitimacy of a normative order and/or the increasing readiness to fight the institutional structures of this order”, claiming that this definition of radicalisation allowed for the inclusion of all three understandings of radicalisation – ‘radicalisation into violence, radicalisation within violence, and radicalisation without violence’ (see Gaspar et al. 2018).

The puzzle of this book relates to the question of why and how violence emerges. As such, the book is less concerned with radicalisation without violence, but rather with radicalisation into violence. Much research – particularly the one intended to serve political purposes of prevention – has similarly focused on Radicalisation into Violent Extremism (RVE). As such, radicalisation often is conflated with the way into extremism and/or terrorism. Defining extremism and terrorism, in turn, comes with its own issues. “Extreme”, among others, is inherently relational, as it “refers to deviations from the norm” (Borum 2011:9). What extreme is, thus, varies with what the norm is. For a comparison of extreme phenomena, this relativity poses an issue – while in some societies it might be doomed extreme for a non-state actor to physically attack another person in public, in others violence in the public might be the norm. Similar issues have arisen in terrorism research. Analysing the field until the early 2000s, Silke already identified the issue of how to define terrorism and the subsequent question of appropriate research methods; and beyond that pointed towards the (also political) consequences of not defining terrorism, while continuing to work with it as a concept (Silke 2004:3ff.).

The question of how to define radicalisation as central research concept, thus, is not only a question of scientific quality. It has implications for the measures taken to prevent it. Despite the lack of a definition and despite further problems with operationalising radicalisation and subsequent issues with measuring radicalisation, radicalisation remains a term widely and prominently used – both in public discussions as well as policies and policy advises. Even worse, just like terrorism, radicalisation has been subject to political exploitation. As such, the discourse on non-state actors’ violence often becomes politicised, explanations thus narrowed to one factor and framed to serve the political needs of the ‘analysts’ and/or their funders.

To provide the basis for countering such narrowing and framing is the intention behind this publication. The aim of the book is, on the one hand, to show the variety of cases and phenomena, ranging from left to right, from secular to religious and from Asia to Europe; and on the other hand, to show the diversity of explanations and approaches – and the tensions between them – to insert a scientific input to public discourse which enables to break the often narrow, unidimensional focus.

The complexity of defining the concept of radicalisation does not reduce with the transcending of disciplinary boundaries as it is the case in this book. As the aim of this book is to provide insights into different explanations provided by scholars from various disciplines, the definition of the concept as basis for all chapters is not conducive for this endeavour. Thus, “radicalisation” in the title is the tag, the keyword to engage in the public discourse rather than the basic analytical concept. And yet, while approaches and explanations may vary, the dependent variable common to all contributions is *violence* and the explanandum the way towards non-state actors’ application of violence in the public sphere.

As such, while radicalisation here might be the roof under which the different scholars come together, the question underlying this book project is the question of why non-state agents resort to violence.

This ambitious aim may raise ambitious expectations. Therefore, it appears important to clearly state at the beginning, what the book will not do. This book is nothing but a first step towards broader and more systematic comparisons of cases, phenomena and regions. This book neither provides an *exhaustive* overview over phenomena and regions, nor a complete overview of theoretical, or methodological approaches, let alone of all disciplines’ treatment of the topic. It does not provide final solutions or explanations, nor a new theoretical framework. What it provides, however, is an empirical counterargument to simple explanations of why violence emerges – and as such the basis for informed political choice.

Structure of and Background to the Book

The book at hand is the written documentation of an expert conference and subsequent workshop held by the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung’s Regional Programme Political Dialogue Asia in Singapore in January 2020. A group of most distinguished professors at different stages in their career have come together to present their work and to treat the puzzle raised above. They presented their research on diverse cases of violence in Asia and Europe, analysing it from different angles, perspectives and with the

methods of diverse disciplines, ranging from political science to sociology and anthropology.

The multiplicity of cases stood in the focus of the panel organisation as well as the approaches used by the scholars to explain them. Putting together scholars from different disciplines, perspectives and methodological approaches was supposed to create a tension as, more often than not, the positions presented challenged one another. The first part of the book captures these diverse approaches and explanatory tensions. During the conference, these tensions initiated highly productive discussions, which required every participant to defend the means and approaches of the own discipline as in such an interdisciplinary context there is little ‘common knowledge’ on which one can draw back on. While this interdisciplinary setting uncovered the issues of the ‘scientific babel’, the lack of a shared language, it has raised fruitful discussions and a more differentiated understanding of the issue at hand. The second part of the book seeks to present some of the results of the comparison of cases conducted in the workshop and the basis for policy recommendations drawn from it.

Following the structure of the event, in the first chapters, the different cases and diverse approaches explaining them will be given.

In the first chapter, the tension between emotion and rationality, structure and agency as well as individual and collective motivations for violence will be provided by the contributions of Kevin McDonald, Subrata K. Mitra and Aurel Croissant.

Kevin McDonald will provide insights into two phenomena, jihadist and far-right extremism in Europe, and analyses individuals’ experiences of radicalisation in his chapter “Jihadist and Far-Right Extremism: Subjectivity, Embodiment and Imaginaries of Violence”.

Subrata K. Mitra will discuss radical politics in democratic states, providing examples from India, in his chapter “Frenzied Crowds, Radical Politics and Consolidation of Democracy: The Indian Puzzle”.

Aurel Croissant will treat the interrelation between terrorism and democracy in Southeast Asia, analysing Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines and Myanmar, in his chapter “Radicalisation, Terrorism and Democratisation in Southeast Asia”.

In the second chapter, the tension between regional particulars and global and local interactions will be treated by the contributions of Rohan Gunaratna, D. Suba Chandran and Greg Barton.

Rohan Gunaratna will provide insights into the global threats posed IS, al Qaeda and Extreme Right Wing (XRW) and their contention in his chapter “Contention, Escalation and Cycles of Vengeance: Reflection on the Global Threat Landscape”.

Greg Barton will focus on transnational networks and local radicalisation in Indonesia and provide an outlook into the wider region in his chapter “The Historical Context and Regional Social Network Dynamics of Radicalisation and Recruitment of Islamic State Foreign Terrorist Fighters in Indonesia and its Southeast Asian Neighbours”.

D. Suba Chandran will give an overview over diverse ideological drivers of political violence, providing examples of left-wing violence and political violence against women in South Asia, in his chapter “Radicalisation in South Asia: Left, Right and Secular”.

In the third chapter, the complexity of links between the local and the global become apparent by the different approaches presented by Khuram Iqbal and Serina Abdul Rahman.

Khuram Iqbal will categorise the diverse streams, which fuel violence in Pakistan, in his chapter “Trends in Contemporary Terrorism in Pakistan”.

Finally, Serina Abdul Rahman will give profound insights into female agency in support for jihad in Malaysia in her chapter “Malaysian Women and Islamic Radicalisation in the Home”.

In the second part of the book, some of the results of the comparison of cases made during the workshop will be presented. Recommendations for political decision makers in tackling the issue at hand are discussed and the value of this endeavour – and its limitations – pointed out.

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