HEIFER INTERNATIONAL/USAID YAAJENDE

EXPLORING THE CONNECTIONS BETWEEN POVERTY, LACK OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY, AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

TABLE OF CONTENTS

"We look at some of the trouble spots in the world, and while poverty doesn't cause terrorism, destitution and abject poverty can create the kinds of conditions that drive people to despair. And we know, sadly, that despair is a condition that all too easily is exploited by dangerous influences." – Mark Green, USAID Administrator (Green, 2017)

1. WHAT ROLE (IF ANY) DO ECONOMIC DRIVERS PLAY IN VIOLENT EXTREMISM?

The role that economic factors, such as poverty and lack of economic opportunities, play in enabling violent extremist groups to recruit from among local populations is often downplayed by the countering violent extremism (CVE) community. There are some good reasons for this. First, only a small portion of populations that experience these underlying conditions (i.e. poverty) turn to violence and join extremist groups. Moreover, extremist groups have emerged from radically different political and socio-economic environments – so much so that one would be hard pressed to identify a shared set of underlying conditions. Over-emphasizing these conditions also runs the risk of downplaying critical pull factors such as the appeal of particular leaders, ideology, the emotional and spiritual benefits of group membership, and identity as a resistance icon or martyr. Similarly, a focus on these underlying conditions may result in an underestimation of individual psychological factors along with the role of human agency and the degree to which those who voluntarily join extremist groups do so by choice. It is also telling that leaders of violent extremist movements make little reference to underlying conditions such as poverty and lack of economic opportunities, focusing instead on identity, existential threats, corruption, cultural domination, and hate. Finally, addressing underlying conditions such as poverty and lack of economic opportunities requires sustained, large-scale investments that may ultimately still fail to dissuade a small sub-set of individuals who either slip through the cracks or are inclined to violence for other reasons (Denoeux & Carter, 2009).

These important cautions notwithstanding, the emergence of violent extremist (VE) groups in sub-Saharan Africa - and the extent to which these groups are thriving in the Sahel in particular - are once again stimulating debate on the role abject poverty and an extreme lack of economic opportunities play in creating conditions that violent extremist organizations (VEOs) can (and have) exploited for recruitment from among local populations. Recent interviews with ex-combatants from throughout sub-Saharan Africa by UNDP (Ojielo et al., 2017) and others further illuminate the role these conditions can (and do) play amid a myriad of push, pull, and individual-level psychological factors that ultimately lead individuals to join VEOs. This isn't to suggest that these underlying conditions provide a universal explanation for VE globally, as the limited available evidence on violent extremism reviewed below suggests the answer to this is neither obvious nor clear cut. Rather, it raises the very context specific question of whether these conditions in their extreme form, on the periphery of the periphery in sub-Saharan Africa, play a more prominent role in enabling VEOs to recruit from among local populations.

> The emergence of violent extremist (VE) groups in sub-Saharan Africa - and the extent to which these groups are thriving in the Sahel in particular - are once again stimulating debate on the role abject poverty and an extreme lack of economic opportunities play in creating conditions that violent extremist organizations (VEOs) can (and have) exploited for recruitment from among local populations.

This report begins by examining the existing empirical evidence regarding the relationship of economic factors and VE, with a particular focus on sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). An overview will be provided of the global empirical evidence and SSA specific evidence on the economic drivers of VE, as well as the limitations of this evidence and key takeaways. The report will then provide a conceptual model and theoretical overview of

radicalization to situate the role of poverty and lack of economic opportunities in relation to the variety of influences that potentially play a role in the recruitment process. An illustrative example of steps potentially leading a SSA youth to join a VEO are then examined in light of the evidence, conceptual model and theoretical overview. Finally, the role of resilience in relation to CVE programming along with practical policy and programmatic recommendations will be provided.

It is important to emphasize that the impetus and rationale for this report is not to redirect CVE programming, which, for the reasons outlined above, does not seek to address underlying conditions, including poverty and a lack of economic opportunities. Rather, the report aims to outline the evidence and a set of practical recommendations for how resilience programming that already seeks to address these underlying conditions in marginalized areas of the Horn of Africa and Sahel can contribute to and be further leveraged in support of countering violent extremism objectives. Resilience seeks to address these conditions as they are also the underlying causes of recurrent humanitarian crises in these regions. This includes resilience investments in areas targeted by CVE programming, as well as buffer areas.

2. EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE REVIEW – ECONOMIC FACTORS AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM

CVE is not yet blessed with the wealth of substantive empirical evidence that other relevant fields such as criminology and social psychology are. The emergent field of CVE has drawn in many practitioners with a passion for peace-building in light of the troubled world we currently live in. Sometimes this passion can lead to strong convictions about what are, or are not drivers of VE. The relationship between poverty and violent extremism has been one area of much debate within the development, diplomatic and defense communities, as well as the academic community for some time now. This debate is largely based on the divergent and potentially confounding dearth of empirical evidence that exists in relation to VE to date. In fact, a study in 2006 found that only 3% of articles from peer-reviewed sources appeared to be based on some form of empirical analysis (Schuurman & Eijkman, 2013). Below, the global and SSA specific evidence to date will be examined.

GLOBAL EVIDENCE

Many who contend there is no correlation between economic factors (i.e. poverty, lack of economic opportunities) and VE are referencing earlier empirical research on this topic by multiple authors (Abadie, 2005; Butler, N.A.; Gassebner & Luechinger, 2011; Goldstein, 2005; Krueger & Laitin, 2008; Krueger & Maleckova, 2003; Piazza, 2006; Sageman, 2004). The most notable authors spearheading this point of view are the counter-terrorism expert, Marc Sageman and the economist Alan Krueger (Krueger & Laitin, 2008; Sageman, 2004). From the other perspective, multiple authors have also found evidence that economic factors *are* correlated to violent extremism (Blomberg & Hess, 2005; Blomberg & Hess, 2004; Bravo & Dias, 2006; Burgoon, 2006; Enders & Hoover, 2012; Enders, Hoover, & Sandler, 2016; Freytag, Kruger, & Meierrieks, 2010; Kiendrebeogo & Ianchovichina, 2016; Li & Schaub, 2004). The strongest evidence to date of a global correlation between poverty and VE is from recent research by the economist Walter Enders (Enders & Hoover, 2012; Enders, Hoover, & Sandler, 2016).

Upon a close examination and review of the various and divergent findings around VE and economic factors globally some conclusions can be drawn both about the limitations of the empirical research and what the essential takeaways are from these divergent studies.

LIMITATIONS OF THE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

Research relating to economic drivers and violent extremism generally falls into one of three categories: 1) cross-country analysis, 2) country case studies, and 3) studies of Al-Qaeda membership.

Cross-country analysis studies conducted generally looked for a correlation between GDP per capita and the number of "terrorist incidents" in the country. The most popular dataset used is the Global Terrorism Database ("Global", 2016). The general limitations of the research reviewed are listed below:

1. **SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA DRAMATICALLY UNDERREPRESENTED IN DATASETS & MODERN WAVE OF VE NOT CAPTURED** – The vast majority of the studies used datasets ranging from ~1970 through ~2002/2003. The so-called "new generation" of global Salafi-Jihadi terrorists began in 2003, so is not captured by most cross-country analyses done. The emergence of VE in SSA, which began to grow around 2006 (with al-Shabaab), is also not captured by the analyses.

2. **AGGREGATED DATA CONFLATES DIFFERENT TYPES OF "TERRORIST" INCIDENTS AND MOTIVATIONS** – Since the cross-country analyses aggregate terrorist incidents over large time periods and across countries many very different types of terrorist activities become conflated in an effort to draw generic conclusions about "drivers of terrorism". As an example, one of the most frequently referenced cross-country studies to support the claim that poverty isn't correlated to terrorism was done by the economist Alan Krueger (Krueger & Maleckova, 2003). In his study 42% of the global terrorist incidents he examined were from India and Columbia alone. In the Columbia data there was a substantial amount of drug-trafficking related incidents and 90% of the incidents from India were connected to the insurgency in Jammu and Kashmir against Indian claims to sovereignty. Also, his time period for analysis was 1997-2002, so SSA related VE incidents were not included in the study. Sixty-five different countries were conflated in the entire global dataset analyzed.

> **Many cross-country studies used transnational data which only reflects about 10-15% of all actual terrorist incidents, the rest and vast majority being domestic attacks.**

3. **GENERAL DATA BIAS TOWARDS TRANSNATIONAL INCIDENTS** – Many cross-country studies used transnational data which only reflects about 10-15% of actual terrorist incidents, the rest and vast majority being domestic attacks (Krueger & Laitin, 2008). Transnational terrorists tend to be more ideologically motivated and come from relatively better socio-economic backgrounds than domestic terrorists. The only studies that did disaggregated analyses of domestic and transnational incidents were done by economist Walter Enders, both of which found a strong, non-linear correlation between terrorism incidents and poverty (Enders & Hoover, 2012; Enders et al., 2016).

4. **DATA OFTEN BIASED TOWARDS LEADERSHIP AND "SUCCESSFUL" ATTACKS COVERED BY MASS MEDIA** – The data utilized by the studies came from publicly available sources and open-source media, which often only covers the most significant and successful attacks. This leads to the so-called "successful terrorist bias", where major attacks and their perpetrators are disproportionally represented vs. the less successful (majority) rank-and-file who tend poorer and less educated than their more successful counterparts.

> **A potential violent extremist need not be poor him/herself to be frustrated, angry, and morally outraged by the poverty of those considered part of his/her collective identity or ingroup**

5. **THE POWERFUL MOBILIZING CAPACITY OF COLLECTIVE GRIEVANCES NOT GENERALLY CONSIDERED** – Some research has referred to this as the "robin hood effect" (Krueger & Laitin, 2008; Krueger & Maleckova, 2003). The essential idea is that a potential violent extremist need not be poor him/herself to be frustrated, angry, and morally outraged by the poverty of those considered part of his/her collective identity group or ingroup. It is by this mechanism that vicarious poverty and marginalization can be a strong factor contributing to radicalization. Many extremists have expressed their extreme moral outrage over the conditions of their brother Palestinians or Iraqis living thousands of miles away from them. What connects them is their sense

of collective identity as Muslims, as part of the umma (Muslim identity group). This sense of collective identity leads to a sense of collection strain around collective grievances. Group-based feelings of injustice have been shown to reliably predict collective action (King & Taylor, 2011). This topic is discussed in more detail later in this report in relation to the radicalization process.

6. **NATIONAL GDP MEASURES MASK REALITY OF ECONOMIC BACKGROUNDS OF TERRORISTS** – Since cross-country studies generally use national GDP per capita as a proxy measure rather than the actual incomes of the terrorists who commit the in-country attacks, this leads to a higher-income data bias as most terrorists tend to be recruited from the poorest regions of a country (periphery of the periphery), particularly in SSA.

The main limitation with the *country case studies* is that their findings are limited to the country context and time period in which the study occurred. The findings cannot be indiscriminately generalized to other contexts. For example, terrorist incidents in Columbia in the 1970's may be driven by a totally different mix of motivations and factors than terrorist incidents in northern Mali today. Thus, findings from a country study of Columbian terrorist incidents in the 1970's that show no correlation between poverty and terrorism should not be broadly applied to other contexts.

The few empirical studies of Al-Qaeda members and their socio-economic backgrounds have a strong bias towards transnational attacks and prominent jihadist leaders. This leads to an inherit "successful terrorist bias" when attempting to apply these findings to the majority rank-and-file who are planning and working day to day in the field. The most famous study (Sageman, 2004) of this kind was done by the prominent counter-terrorism expert, Marc Sageman. He custom selected al-Qaeda terrorists from various public media reports and other publicly available documents, examined their backgrounds and concluded that a majority of the terrorists came from middle to upper class backgrounds and that sixty-three percent even attended college. Many who content today that poverty and education are not related to terrorism often cite this informal study by Sageman. The validity and broader applicability of his conclusions are dubious, which Sageman himself admits. He states, "There is evidence that those on whom enough information exists are not a representative sample of the rest. This inevitably slants the study in specific directions…and affects the validity of some of my conclusions." (Sageman, 2004)

EMPIRICAL TAKEAWAY 1 – A STRONG CORRELATION BETWEEN POVERTY AND VE IS ESTABLISHED

New research has found a clear *non-linear* relationship between poverty and VE globally. Findings from recent empirical studies done by the economist Walter Enders has confirmed this. Enders also appears to be the first researcher to disaggregate his analysis of terrorist incidents between transnational and domestic attack types. This non-linear nature of the relationship between poverty and terrorism essentially means that there is a large spike in domestic attacks in extremely poor countries but once these countries graduate to a certain degree out of poverty a new, second and smaller spike emerges representing an increase in transnational attacks which then also goes on to decline dramatically after a new threshold is passed in terms of development. This "graduation model" of VE risk has also been intimated by previous research (Freytag et al., 2010).

According to Enders, "The relationship between terrorism and income level is clearly nonlinear. Terrorist incidents are clustered in the relatively low-income countries whereas the high-income countries have almost no terrorism." (Enders & Hoover, 2012) Enders' findings conclude that *poverty has a very strong influence on domestic terrorism and a small, but significant, effect on transnational terrorism*. The study also found that countries with high levels of income inequality (as measured by the Gini coefficient) tend to have higher levels of terrorism. Higher unemployment rates were also positively related to terrorism. According to Enders, "one reason that the literature failed to uncover a clear and robust income-terrorism relationship was because its aggregation of terrorist incidents and periods introduced too many confounding and opposing influences. Also, the nonlinearity

of the terrorism-income relationship could not be readily uncovered by linear or quadratic estimation techniques, in contrast to the extant literature." (Enders & Hoover, 2012; Enders et al., 2016)

EMPIRICAL TAKEAWAY 2 - TERRORISM SHIFTS POORER OVER TIME IN THE NEWEST "WAVES" OF VE

Examining the research on terrorism incidents over-time, "waves" of different types of terrorism can be uncovered. Looking at the socio-economic backgrounds of terrorists or their countries of origin it appears that pre-1993 was a period dominated by leftist terrorism that was less related to poverty. After 1993 a new period of religious extremism emerged where terrorists tended to be poorer than during the leftist period (Enders et al., 2016). The U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003 ushered in a newer wave of terrorism that was even poorer and less educated than the founding religious extremists of the previous period (Denouex & Carter, 2009). This report argues that post 2010 has established the emergence of the newest wave of terrorism into geographies of abject poverty, extreme lack of economic opportunity, an increased affinity to criminality, and dominant in fragile states. The emergence of Boko Haram (BH) in the Lake Chad Basin region is illustrative of this latest wave of terrorism.

> **2010 has established the emergence of the newest wave of terrorism into geographies of abject poverty, extreme lack of economic opportunity, an increased affinity to criminality, and dominant in fragile states.**

OTHER RELEVANT STRUCTURAL DETERMINANTS OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM UNCOVERED

Although this empirical review is largely focused on economic factors and their relationship to VE, many other structural factors were also gleaned during this evidence review that are related to VE and may be germane to the audience of this report. It is important to note here that there isn't total agreement in the literature but the majority of studies found a positive correlation between VE and the following factors:

1. **THE "MIDDLING" PROCESS OF DEMOCRATIZATION AND THE EMERGENCE OF CIVIL LIBERTIES** – Research has shown that countries in the process of moving from an authoritarian state towards democracy tend to be correlated with VE. Once a full and strong democratic system has taken root in a sustainable manner in a country, VE declines (Abadie, 2005; Blomberg & Hess, 2005; Butler, N.A.; Rice, Graff, & Pascual, 2010; Zhao & Cao, 2010). Many studies have found a correlation between VE and the lack of political freedom. In particular, during periods when countries are beginning to benefit from basic political freedoms that they weren't afforded under authoritarian rule (Abadie, 2005; Blomberg & Hess, 2005; Goldstein, 2005; Krueger & Laitin, 2008; Krueger & Maleckova, 2003; Piazza, 2006).

2. **"LOSERS" OF ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL GLOBALIZATION** – Research has shown that globalization has brought economic boons to some countries (i.e. "winners") and others that have been "losers" in the process. Countries that have not benefited from the commensurate promise of economic benefits from globalization (as compared to other countries) have been correlated with VE. Cultural globalization has also contributed to the rise of VE (Nassar-Eddine, Garnham, Agostino, & Caluya, 2011; Sandbrook & Romano, 2004).

3. **RAPID URBANIZATION** – Research has found a correlation between urbanization and violent extremism (Gassebner & Luechinger, 2011). This is likely on account of the frustrated expectations of migrants and increasing anomie (i.e. normlessness), which will be discussed in more detail in the next section.

4. **UNEMPLOYMENT** – Unemployment levels have been found to be associated with VE (Enders & Hoover, 2012; Goldstein, 2005; Kiendrebeogo & Ianchovichina, 2016). Further evidence (see next section) from the SSA context stresses the underlying issue of underemployment which is more revealing than correlations to unemployment estimates alone.

5. **WEALTH INEQUALITY** – A large wealth gap between the rich and poor in a country has been shown in some studies to be correlated to violent extremism (Agnew, 2001; Burgoon, 2006; Butler, N.A.; Enders & Hoover, 2012; Zhao & Cao, 2010). This is most often measured through the Gini coefficient.

6. **HUMAN RIGHT VIOLATIONS** – Human right violations and particularly victimization of self or close others by state security forces has been clearly correlated with VE (Butler, N.A.; Wareham, 2005). Many extremists have cited abuses committed by counter-terrorism forces as the trigger event that pushed their decision to finally join a VE group (Ojielo et al., 2017).

7. **LACK OF SOCIAL WELFARE PROGRAMS** – Provision of social welfare programs that attempt to reduce economic marginalization of communities in need have been positively correlated to a reduction in violent extremism (Burgoon, 2006).

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICAN EVIDENCE

As clearly laid out in the previous section, VE incident data from SSA was mostly left out of the cross-country analyses that were done. This was not intentional but was on account of the limited time periods analyzed by the studies that generally didn't go beyond 2003, thus too premature to capture the emergence of VE in SSA after 2006. The emergence of VE in SSA began around 2006 (with al-Shabaab) and then more strongly after 2010 (with Boko Haram) and finally in 2011/12 (with al-Qaeda in Mali) ("Global", 2016). Since 2012 there has been a growing diversification and criminalization of VE groups and their relationships in the Sahel along with the more recent growing influence from ISIS-West Africa, particularly in the Lake Chad Basin region. Fortunately, there have been some more recent empirical studies done that reveal clear insights about the relationship of economic and other factors to VE within the context of SSA. These will be elaborated in this section.

ECONOMIC SOURCES OF FRUSTRATION AND STRAIN IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Upon a comprehensive review of the empirical studies done in the SSA context to date, it becomes clear that the lack of economic opportunities and mobility, poverty, perceptions of economic marginalization, unemployment/underemployment and frustrated aspirations have all contributed to the rise of VE in SSA. Below are listed the empirical findings that correlate various economic factors to VE in SSA.

1. **HIGHEST INCIDENCE OF VE IN POOREST REGIONS OF POOREST COUNTRIES** – According to the CIA World Factbook ("CIA", 2016), 21 of the bottom 25 poorest countries in the world, based on GDP per capita (PPP), are in SSA. The fact that extreme poverty is associated with VE has ensured that SSA has become a magnet for VE groups. Not only is VE a present and growing threat in SSA but it has been found to be more associated within the poorest regions within these poor countries, areas sometimes referred to as the "periphery of the periphery", marginalized areas, or vulnerable zones in the literature (Ojielo et al., 2017; Olojo, 2013). As an example, poverty rates in the northeast region of Nigeria (where BH attacks are most prevalent) are some of the highest compared to others regions within Nigeria. The northeast also has the lowest educational outcomes (Olojo, 2013). The same relative high levels of underdevelopment and extreme poverty are seen for northern Mali where al-Qaeda in the Islamic Magreb (AQIM) emerged, the Diffa region of Niger (Boko Haram), the Far North of Cameroon (Boko Haram), the Sahel region in the north of Burkina Faso (AQIM), and the northeastern region of Kenya (al-Shabaab).

> **Employment was the single most frequently cited immediate need faced by youth at the time they joined a VE group. It was also found that 55% of extremists who joined VE groups reported high levels of frustration with their economic conditions.**

2. **HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT AND, MORE IMPORTANTLY, HIGH UNDEREMPLOYMENT** – A recent empirical study of violent extremists in Africa released by UNDP (Ojielo et al., 2017) found that employment was the single most frequently cited immediate need faced by youth at the time they joined a VE group. It was also found that 55% of extremists who joined VE groups reported high levels of frustration with their economic conditions. Other studies have also confirmed a positive correlation between unemployment and VE in the SSA context (Proctor, 2015; Theroux-Benoni et al., 2016; Villa-Vicencio, Buchanan-Clarke, & Humphrey, 2016). Remarkably, one study found the strongest correlation between

unemployment and extremist views within the SSA region as compared to other regions globally (Kiendrebeogo & Ianchovichina, 2016). In SSA extremely high underemployment (i.e. not having enough paid work or not having work that makes full use of one's skills and abilities) is the hidden crisis that can at times get glossed over by moderately high unemployment figures. This issue is well highlighted in a study of youth who joined al-Shabaab that found that only 33 percent of the al-Shabaab respondents were employed before joining. More importantly, those who were employed were all in extremely low paying, low-income jobs (i.e. fishing, petrol attendants, driver, etc.) – thus they were underemployed and unable to emerge from abject poverty (Botha, 2014).

3. **FRUSTRATED YOUTH ASPIRATIONS** – Youth in SSA have been exposed to the forces of globalization and all of the seductions that come with it through cultural globalization through television, tourism and rapid internet penetration. This exposure has led many destitute youths to dream beyond their environment and means. Urbanization and migration of provincial rural youth to African cities in search of opportunity has led to more direct exposure to global trends and some of the material goods and dreams they may have only seen on television (Bacon et al., 2011). Extreme poverty and wealth often live side by side in urban centers in SSA. The ensuing rapid social change brought on by the forces of globalization has also led to the weakening of traditional social controls while societies struggle to adapt new norms. Without the aspirational scaffolding that social controls can provide, youth aspirations are freed - limited only by the imagination. Unfortunately, these higher aspirations are confronted by the cold realities of poverty, nepotism, corruption, and a lack of demand for the skills these youths may offer to society. A recent study (King & Taylor, 2011) of youth growing up in the slums of Nairobi found that despite their impoverished conditions 75% of the youth had high aspirations. Having a "good job" was rated by most youth as a key goal, partly as a means to help their parents in old age and also to acquire a home. The study found that youth attempting to maintain their high aspirations may try to achieve them through the legal means of education or by immersion in their religion, whereas many others will resort to delinquency and criminality to free themselves from the shackles of destitution. Some youth were also found to lower their original aspirations over time to align to the difficult realities (i.e. expectations) of their environment and opt for more realistic, albeit, less ambitious goals. The study found that the wider the aspirations-expectations disjunction the higher the likelihood for delinquency. High youth aspirations coupled with the lack of economic opportunities are understood to be a key opportunistic reason youth may join VE groups offering monetary incentives or other rewards (Botha, 2014; Buchanan-Clarke & Lekalake, 2016; David, Asuelime, & Onapajo, 2015; Hinds, 2013; Ojielo et al., 2017; "Policy", 2016; Sixtus, 2017; Theroux-Benoni et al., 2016).

> **The ensuing rapid social change brought on by the forces of globalization has also led to the weakening of traditional social controls while societies struggle to adapt new norms.**

4. **EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES NOT COMMENSURATE WITH EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES** – In terms of development indicators, educational outcomes along with some health outcomes have provided fodder for some of Africa's greatest success stories. Sadly, youth frustrations have often been raised by these improving educational outcomes by ushering in expectations of decent work without access to the commensurate employment opportunities. This has led to more frustration and anger driving many youths to despair and the potential decision to join a VE group as a means of anti-social coping and defiance to an unfair world. One study in Somalia (Proctor, 2015) noted a poignant comment by an official from Puntland region who stated, "Vocational training without real employment opportunities is like giving someone a glass to drink, but there's no water."

5. **MARGINALIZATION AROUND ETHNIC/RELIGIOUS FAULT LINES** – In SSA, geographic areas with the highest underdevelopment, impoverishment and marginalization have generally been in geographies with the highest relative proportion of Muslim population and often a larger relative proportion of particular ethnic groups (e.g. Tuareg, Fulani, Kanuri, etc.). A perception of targeted marginalization can emerge that may solidify ingroup and outgroup perceptions, increasing the polarization that can lead to violence. If marginalization is perceived as deliberate, targeted, and unjust, it can lead many to believe in conspiracy theories of intentional marginalization which are exploited in extremist narratives. Research has also shown that strain that is high in magnitude, chronic, perceived as deliberate and unjust, and perceived as originating from a more powerful other, can lead to high levels of anger, feelings of defiant pride and an emotional need

for retaliation often through violence and revenge against the perceived offender or offending group (i.e. outgroup) (Agnew, 2010; Agnew, 2001; Sherman, 1993; Helfgott, 2013). In marginalized areas of SSA the offending group will often be perceived as the state and sometimes the state in collusion with "the West". These feelings of anger, defiance and moral outrage have been shown to increase an individual's likelihood to find meaning and resonance in VE narratives that integrate these local grievances, compelling them to join these VE movements as an outlet for their rage against an unfair system (Wiktorowicz, 2004; Helfgott, 2013).

6. **POVERTY BREEDS CONFLICT AND CONFLICT BREEDS VE** – A plethora of past research has found an empirical correlation with poverty and conflict more generally. Newer research has found that conflict creates the enabling conditions for the emergence of VE since conflict is positively correlated to VE (Gassebner & Luechinger, 2011; "Policy", 2016). A 2001 report (Luckham, Ahmad, Muggah, & White, 2001) from the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) listed 28 sub-Saharan African countries that have been embroiled in some form of warfare/conflict since 1980. Knowing that poverty is positively correlated with conflict and that conflict is positively correlated with VE, another mechanism is thus unveiled whereby poverty in SSA is acting as a driver, through the mediator of conflict, for VE growth in the region.

OTHER CRITICAL SOURCES OF FRUSTRATION AND STRAIN IN SSA

There are also many sources of frustration and grievance amongst marginalized populations in SSA that are not purely economic (many straddle multiple domains) but are also important to consider in terms of their potential programmatic and policy implications. This is not intended to be a comprehensive list of grievances but rather an illustrative list of some key sources of frustration and grievance cited as part of this empirical review.

1. **PERCEPTIONS OF INJUSTICE** – Injustice is quite a large catch-all phrase that doesn't necessarily reveal much without some unpacking, particularly regarding which types of injustices are generally being referred to in a particular context. In fact, many of the economic and other sources of frustrations listed in this report are examples of various types of injustice. In SSA, those living in marginalized zones in particular often have a general sense that life is unfair and that the system they are living under is broken and unjust (Proctor, 2015). This generalized sense of injustice can lesson an individual's stake in conformity through weakened societal bonds (Nivette, Eisner, & Ribeaud, 2017). These bonds are weakened because they no longer trust or have faith in the system. It is important to emphasize here that perceptions of injustice can be economic or non-economic, often straddling both domains. Commonly cited sources of perceived injustice in SSA are: endemic nepotism, police corruption and harassment, insecure land/property rights, discrimination (by social class, ethnic group, sex, or religion), human rights violations and political repression, a deeply corrupted political system, state level nepotism and its unfair distribution of resources, and a corrupt and ineffective criminal justice system.

2. **DESPAIR** – A sense of hopelessness and cynicism with society is rampant today amongst African youth, particularly those in marginalized zones. Youth often see no legal, normative means to success and happiness. Many youth, out of utter desperation and despair, choose anti-social coping pathways, such as: prostitution, crime, drugs, or VE. This despair is cultivated by chronic frustration from the countless times youth have been let down by a dysfunctional society and social structure that cannot provide the most basic support and opportunities needed to survive and succeed. A recent Mercy Corps study (Proctor, 2015) found that hopelessness and a general belief that there is no fairness in terms of those who find a job and those who don't is driving many of the grievances around marginalization and injustice. A newly released UNDP study (Ojielo et al., 2017) of African youth who joined VE groups found that "hope and excitement" were the most common emotions youth felt at the time of joining a VE group. Other studies of youth in Cameroon and Kenya have cited hopelessness as a key reason many youths joined VE groups (Sixtus, 2017; Villa-Vicencio, Buchanan-Clarke, & Humphrey, 2016). It's clear that youth desperately need a new, uplifting

> **…Despair is cultivated by chronic frustration from the countless times youth have been let down by a dysfunctional society and social structure that cannot provide the most basic support and opportunities needed to survive and succeed.**

alternative narrative they can get behind, buttressed by real economic opportunities, giving them a robust sense of hope and positive purpose in order to direct they lives away from the dark allure of VE.

3. **ANOMIE (I.E. NORMLESSNESS)** – Since the time of the groundbreaking work of the eminent father of sociology, Émile Durkheim, in the late 1800's there has been extensive research around his concept of societal anomie (i.e. normlessness) and its dynamics ("Durkheim's", 2008). Research has shown that societies undergoing rapid social change encounter a breakdown of traditional social structures and social controls which in turn leads to a loss of the scaffolding societal norms and values can provide, especially for youth brimming with uncertainty about their future (Wiktorowicz, 2004; Zhao & Cao, 2010). On account of the rapid social changes brought about by the forces of economic and cultural globalization, democratization, rapid urbanization, and accelerated internet penetration, SSA has been going through a radical process of social change (Sandbrook & Romano, 2004). One symptom of this change process is the increasingly polarized generational divide between youth and elders in SSA today. Right and wrong are no longer clearly defined for youth exposed to so many new values and ways of thinking and living, particularly when youth often don't have the solid protective foundation and moral compass that a quality education (both home-based and academic) can instill. The loosening of societal social structures also leads to a breakdown of trust, social capital, and social cohesion as the sense of certainty and security that norms provide dissipates. This leads to higher and more diversified youth aspirations as they are freed from traditional norms and exposed to new trends and worldviews ("Durkheim's", 2008). High aspirations in a society with unclear norms and insufficient provision of the necessary normative means to succeed often leads to frustration, uncertainty, meaninglessness, despair, and lack of purpose for youth in SSA. This leaves them vulnerable to manipulation by external influences, whether positive or negative – including VE groups and their narratives offering meaning, identity, purpose and absolute certainty in a normless, confusing, and frustrating world (Hogg, 2000; Hogg, Meehan, & Farquharson, 2010; Hogg, Sherman, Dierselhuis, Maitner, & Moffitt, 2007; McGregor, 2016; McGregor, Zanna, Holmes, & Spencer, 2001).

> **Right and wrong are no longer clearly defined for youth exposed to so many new values and ways of thinking and living, particularly when youth often don't have the solid protective foundation and moral compass that a quality education (both home-based and academic) can instill.**

4. **ENDEMIC CORRUPTION AND NEPOTISM** – As mentioned under the preceding perceptions of injustice section, many youths in SSA see rampant corruption and nepotism as key challenges facing Africa today (Ojielo et al., 2017; Proctor, 2015; Villa-Vicencio et al., 2016). When youth do not trust the system of governance they live under to be fair, just and equitable, this can lead to legal cynicism (i.e. attitudes that deny the binding nature of laws and sanction behaving in ways that are "outside" of law and social norms) and a weakened stake in conformity to their society. Legal cynicism has been found to be correlated with delinquency and criminal behavior (Gungea, Jaunky, Ramesh, 2017; Nivette, Eisner, & Ribeaud, 2017). Perhaps more importantly, this cynicism in one's system of governance can lead to a cognitive opening attracting an individual to new, more radical systems of governance (i.e. Sha'ria, the Caliphate) marketing justice and solutions to their life's problems (Wiktorowicz, 2004). Within the individual and sometimes even for a community, it often becomes a competing value proposition between what is offered to them by the state/normative society vs. the violent extremists' and their stark vision of the world (Theroux-Benoni, 2016). It is critical to note here than social science research has found that strengthening internal moral beliefs (particularly as they relate to relevant legal sanctions) may be more effective to anti-corruption efforts than increasing external transparency efforts and legal sanctions (Schoepfer & Piquero, 2006). This finding may help understand why so many Malians never truly believed in the "suit and tie democracy" (i.e. superficial) that had existed before the 2012 coup d'état when Mali was considered the "darling of democracy" in West Africa by the broader donor community.

5. **HUMAN RIGHT VIOLATIONS, PARTICULARLY RELATED TO COUNTER-TERRORISM OPERATIONS** – The VE literature for SSA is rife with testimonials from youth claiming that harassment, killing, or false-arrests by state security forces of either themselves or close others (i.e. family, close friends) is what finally triggered them to join a VE group. Victimization and/or vicarious victimization of a close other has also been highly correlated with delinquency more generally (Wiktorowicz, 2004; Nivette et al., 2017; Wareham, 2005). In a recent UNDP report on VE in Africa a shocking seventy-one percent of respondents

claimed, "government action", including "killing of a family member or friend" or "arrest of a family member or friend", was the incident that was the trigger event that prompted them to join a VE group (Ojielo et al., 2017). This victimization leads to intense feelings of anger and moral outrage, motivating a sense of urgency for revenge and justice against the perceived perpetrator (Helfgott, 2013). The most commonly reported emotional reason why youth join VE groups is anger (Ojielo et al., 2017; Proctor, 2015). This anger comes from chronic, unresolved frustrations rooted in various grievances, which all too often includes victimization, particularly as a "last straw" trigger event.

6. **CLIMATE CHANGE, PERSISTENT WEATHER SHOCKS, AND DIMINISHING RETURNS ON TRADITIONAL LIVELIHOODS** – Not only has globalization brought about rapid social change in SSA, climate change has also had profound negative impacts on SSA, particularly in the Sahel region. The Sahel region has been plagued by persistent weather shocks (i.e. droughts) which have gradually created a resilience-deficit amongst many marginalized

> **Once VE actors begin to infiltrate fragile states, potential investors are frightened away and limited state resources get diverted to military operations rather than desperately needed social services.**

Sahelians, particularly those dependent on traditional agricultural practices and subsistence farming for their livelihood. Rapid population growth on account of high fertility rates and improved health outcomes, persistent weather shocks, desertification and increasingly scarce natural resources has led to diminishing returns on traditional livelihoods and growing conflict over scarce resources. The situation in the Sahel is becoming more Hobessian in nature over time, particularly evident in central Mali where it has been described by some as the "wild west" where various local vigilante, VE, and other criminal groups vie for localized power and control in a state of relative lawlessness. According to evidence-based predictions from the prominent social psychologist and criminologist, Robert Agnew, "Climate change will increase strain, reduce social control, weaken social support, foster beliefs favorable to crime, contribute to traits conducive to crime, increase certain opportunities for crime, and create social conflict." (Agnew, 2011) The increasing poverty and conflict that climate change is provoking in SSA will also provide the enabling conditions for VE groups to thrive in. Adaptation using climate smart agricultural practices will be required along with substantial diversification into non-agricultural livelihoods, particularly for Sahelian youth with different, and often more modernized, livelihood aspirations (Agnew, 2011).

7. **VULNERABILITIES OF FRAGILE STATES AND THE "TRAP LIKE" EFFECT OF VE** – A 2008 study (Piazza, 2008) on the relationship of fragile states to VE found that, "states plagued by chronic state failures are statistically more likely to host terrorist groups that commit transnational attacks, have nationals commit transnational attacks, and are more likely to be targeted by transnational terrorists themselves." A study ("Policy", 2016) of VE in the Timbuktu region of northern Mali concluded that, "In contexts where state authorities or local governance is failing to provide financial and physical security, armed groups provide not only alternative economic opportunities, but also an alternative society with its own governance and values effectively replacing the state's". The study goes on to explain that, "It is important to acknowledge that violent extremism does not emerge in a vacuum but rather thrives on existing conflict, ingrained tensions and grievances, and normalized violence. This is supported by evidence that shows that 90% of all terrorist incidents in 2015 occurred in countries with violent conflict." Fragile states sometimes have a hard time selling their value proposition to their citizens in contrast to VE groups. Often fragile communities are compelled to side with the perceived strongest actor, who can provide the most basic level of protection and desperately needed security (Bacon et al., 2011). Fragile states often seek external investments to strengthen their economies in an effort to emerge from fragility though development. Unfortunately, once VE actors begin to infiltrate fragile states, potential investors are frightened away and limited state resources get diverted to military operations rather than desperately needed social services. This in turn creates a "trap like" effect, a vicious cycle, where fragile states begin a downward spiral into instability and conflict that becomes even more difficult and costly to extricate themselves from (Blomberg et al., 2004).

3. CONCEPTUAL MODEL AND PATHWAYS TO VIOLENT EXTREMISM

Youth who join VE groups join on account of their own unique and personalized permutation of factors – just as unique as they themselves are. Each individual who joins is driven by a variety of factors, each prioritized differently within the individual. This is why it is impossible to identify a single cause or a silver bullet VE driver. Yet, amidst the complexity of potential factors that could drive an individual to extremism, a decent conceptual model can facilitate a sense of order out of chaos for the CVE practitioner. There are a variety of conceptual models that attempt to explain the radicalization or recruitment process, the most well-known of which is the dualistic *push-pull* model, with has affinities to the *approach-avoidance* model of human motivation. This model will be developed further and expanded upon into a new *tri-layered model* that will be explained in this section of the report.

REGARDING CAUSATION – IT'S PROBABILISTIC & CONTRIBUTORY VS. DETERMINISTIC & SINGULAR

It is important to clarify here what type of causation is appropriate when determinations of whether or not poverty, injustice, propaganda, or other factors *cause* VE. What can be considered a necessary and/or sufficient factor for an individual to join a VE movement is really uniquely dependent on that individual. When causation is discussed in relation to VE, it must be regarded as probabilistic and contributory causation. Certain factors, such as chronic unemployment, can only be considered as causative in the sense that an unemployed youth in SSA will, generally speaking, be *more likely* to join a VE group than a similar individual who is employed, all other factors being equal. In other words, being unemployed will increase an individual's *likelihood* to join a VE group, but there is no guarantee. In general, many factors need to build up in an individual in order to push them into joining a VE group. This is why each relevant factor can be seen as *contributing to the likelihood* of joining a VE group.

An analogy to chemistry can be considered. There are particular combinations of different types of chemicals that when mixed together in the right proportions *cause* a chemical reaction that results in a sudden thermal increase. The important thing to understand here is that there is no one recipe for which chemicals in which proportions will cause the mixture to heat up. There are many combinations of chemicals in various proportions that can create this heating effect. The same is true for the radicalization process. The right combination of grievances and other factors need to be combined in just the right way *for a particular individual* in order to create the necessary conditions under which that individual may decide to join a VE group.

AN UPDATED CONCEPTUAL MODEL FOR RADICALIZATION: "3 P'S" - PUSH, PULL, & PROCESS FACTORS

The model referenced in this paper essentially builds upon the popular USAID "push" and "pull" factors model of radicalization (Bacon et al., 2011). Push and pull factors have been used slightly differently by different authors and have also been defined a bit different in various reports. This has led to some

> **These factors are labelled "process" factors because they represent all the cognitive-emotional factors individual's use <u>to process</u> and make sense of their world, and make decisions.**

confusion over the semantic boundaries of each category. The updated model presented in this report will make some, hopefully constructive, substantive clarifications in relation to the meaning of push and pull factors while at the same time adding a new dimension that captures the subtleties of the internal cognitive and emotional factors an individual uses to *process* and make sense of the world. These factors are labelled "process" factors because they represent all the cognitive-emotional factors individual's use <u>to process</u> and make sense of their world, and make decisions. Formally, process factors are all of the cognitive-emotional capacities, factors and

propensities that influence an individual's situational construal, reaction to strain, and decision-making processes. The inclusion of process factors provides an enhanced interactive model of radicalization that makes room for and embraces the primacy of human agency, thought processes and emotion. The inclusion of process factors along with push and pull resolves the CVE conundrum that inquires, "Why does one individual under conditions of high push (e.g. poverty) and high pull (e.g. terrorist recruitment efforts) join a VE group while another individual under the same conditions does not?" The answer to this question is that the difference lies within the individual and their different cognitive-emotional makeup – their *process* factors. This is well articulated in a research article on terrorism and political violence:

> *The answer to why one person and not another becomes involved in terrorism (as opposed to those who do not who share similar backgrounds and contexts) is central to addressing the problem of terrorism; the answer lies within the psychological and emotional context of the individual on which the bigger and essentially non-psychological forces of opportunity and context operate. - (Taylor & Horgan, 2006)*

It should be noted that this tri-layered "3 P's" (*push*, *pull*, and *process*) model of radicalization is akin to other models proposed by prominent social science researchers using different terminology (e.g. threat (i.e. push), affordance (i.e. pull), personality (i.e. process)) (Agnew, 2010; McGregor, Hayes, & Prentice, 2015). The definitions of push, pull and process factors used in the context of this report will now be explained in order to provide a conceptual backdrop for this report. A concept diagram of this model can be seen in *figure 1* in this section.

PUSH FACTORS

Quite simply, *push factors are strains from unmet needs*. Whenever an individual has an unmet need, whether material or non-material, this leads to a stress or strain on the individual that compels the person to seek satisfaction of that unmet need. When an individual has unmet needs (push) that are considered of critical importance to the individual, he/she will be driven to seek out the means to satisfy those needs, through legitimate, legally sanctioned means or otherwise.

Examples of *material* push factors: unmet needs relating to money, marriage, food security, employment, education, security, health care, basic human rights, etc.

Examples of *non-material* push factors: unmet needs relating to meaning, purpose and sense of being part of something "bigger than oneself", identity, belonging, care and emotional support, respect, adventure/excitement, fame, empowerment, confidence, etc.

PULL FACTORS

Pull factors represent anything within the environment that offers relief from the strain of unmet needs through the provision of need satisfaction. They essentially reflect the reverse side of the coin of push factors. Pull factors can be classified as either negative or positive depending on their influence over an individual's behavior. Negative pull represents all environmental influences that attract an individual towards VE or other anti-social behaviors. Positive pull represents all environmental influences that attract an individual towards normative, more prosocial behaviors.

Examples of negative pull factors: All negative influences, including: VE propaganda and rhetoric, dysfunctional/disengaged family, drugs (e.g. Tramadol), criminal friends or family members, friends or family in a VE group, exposure to radical sermons, monetary incentives offered by VE groups, security and protection offered by VE groups, sense of meaning offered by VE groups, sense of identity offered by VE groups, purpose and feeling of being part of something "bigger than oneself" offered by VE groups, etc.

Examples of positive pull factors: All positive influences, including: legal and decent employment opportunities; healthy and supportive family; positive mentors or role models; inclusive and transparent governance; equitable distribution of resources; social welfare programs; high quality education; exposure to positive alternative narratives; exposure to counter-narratives that effectively delegitimize VE narratives; a sense of meaning, purpose, and belonging provided by a positive youth movement, trend, or club; positive experiences with perceived outgroups, family and friends who have a general positive outlook and attitude, etc.

PROCESS FACTORS

Process factors are all the cognitive-emotional capacities, characteristics, and propensities that influence an individual's situational construal, reaction to strain, and decision-making processes. They are called "process" factors because they represent the internal capacities, characteristics, and propensities an individual uses to process and make sense of their world and decide a path forward. Process factors, like pull factors, are also classified as either negative or positive relative to how they influence an individual's susceptibility to be attracted to negative pull. Negative process factors represent all of the cognitive-emotional capacities, characteristics, and propensities that increase an individual's susceptibility to negative pull. Positive process factors represent all of the cognitive-emotional capacities, characteristics, and propensities that decrease an individual's susceptibility to negative pull. According the 3 P's model, radicalization is most likely when high push overlaps with high negative pull, low positive pull, and high negative process factors for an individual. Differing process factors are the key to what makes one individual under high push and negative pull join a VE group whereas another individual under the same exact environmental conditions does not join. Social psychological and criminological research have confirmed the critical influence of the following cognitive-emotional factors over an individual's decision-making process relative to pro-social vs. anti-social behavioral choices. Many of these factors will be discussed more in relation to life skills in the policy and programmatic recommendations section near the end of this report.

Examples of _negative process_ factors: low self-control; negative affectivity (e.g. trait anger, irritability); weak critical thinking skills; cognitive inflexibility; high susceptibility to conspiracy theories; propensity to stereotype, prejudge, and make hasty generalizations; black-and-white absolutist thinking; low tolerance for ambiguity/uncertainty; tendency to blame others for problems; low empathy; weak discipline, grit, and work ethic; pessimistic/cynical outlook; despair; low moral beliefs; legal cynicism; low self-efficacy; low preference for universalism values (i.e. appreciation and tolerance for diversity and care for the welfare of all people).

Figure 1 - updated Push, Pull, & Process factors model of radicalization

Examples of _positive process_ factors: high positivity; strong self-control; agreeableness; slow to anger; strong critical thinking skills; ability to see from multiple perspectives; low susceptibility to conspiracy theories; appreciation and love for diversity; capable of nuanced and complex thinking; high tolerance for ambiguity/uncertainty; tendency to blame oneself over others; high empathy; strong discipline, grit and work ethic; optimistic/positive outlook; hopeful; high moral beliefs; respect for the laws and norms of society; strong self-efficacy; strong preference for universalism values (i.e. appreciation and tolerance for diversity and care or the welfare of all people).

## TWO WIDE (AND USUALLY OVERLAPPING) <u>VOLUNTARY</u> PATHWAYS TOWARDS VE

In regards to youth who join VE groups voluntarily (vs. coercion) two wide categorical pathways can be uncovered that describe, in general terms, the overarching nature of the types of pull factors that may have the most influence over the individual – the ideological pathway and the opportunistic pathway. Some joiners may "lean" more ideological whereas others may "lean" more opportunistic,

> **Some joiners may "lean" more ideological whereas others may "lean" more opportunistic, whereas in reality, these pathways often overlap in an individual to varying degrees.**

whereas in reality, these pathways often overlap in an individual to varying degrees. This report argues that transnational terrorists lean more ideological than domestic terrorists who generally lean more opportunistic. This report also argues that the newest wave of terrorists is leaning even more opportunistic and criminal that previous waves. This is largely due to the fact that VE is moving into geographies of abject poverty, extreme lack of opportunity, and with low educational outcomes, where opportunistic appeals may be more effective than more intellectually-based ideological appeals. In this section the dynamics of these two general pathways to VE recruitment will be briefly explained.

IDEOLOGICAL PATHWAY (DRIVEN BY PRIMARILY NON-MATERIAL REWARDS)

Youth who are more drawn to VE groups on account of ideological reasons often have prioritized non-material unmet needs (non-material *push factors*) (Wiktorowicz, 2004; King & Taylor, 2011). These youths often feel disillusioned with society and are searching for a sense of meaning, purpose and identity in their lives. They are often angry at the conditions of the world and more specifically by the perceived injustices and abuses committed against their fellow Muslim brothers and sisters in their communities and globally (Munton et al., 2011).

These ideologically leaning youths are often exposed to VE propaganda and/or extremist sermons and find truth in them. The VE master narratives provide an explanatory power that resonates with them, clearly identifying the problem (i.e. injustice because of lack of "true" Islam), the perpetrator (e.g. "evil West"), and the solution
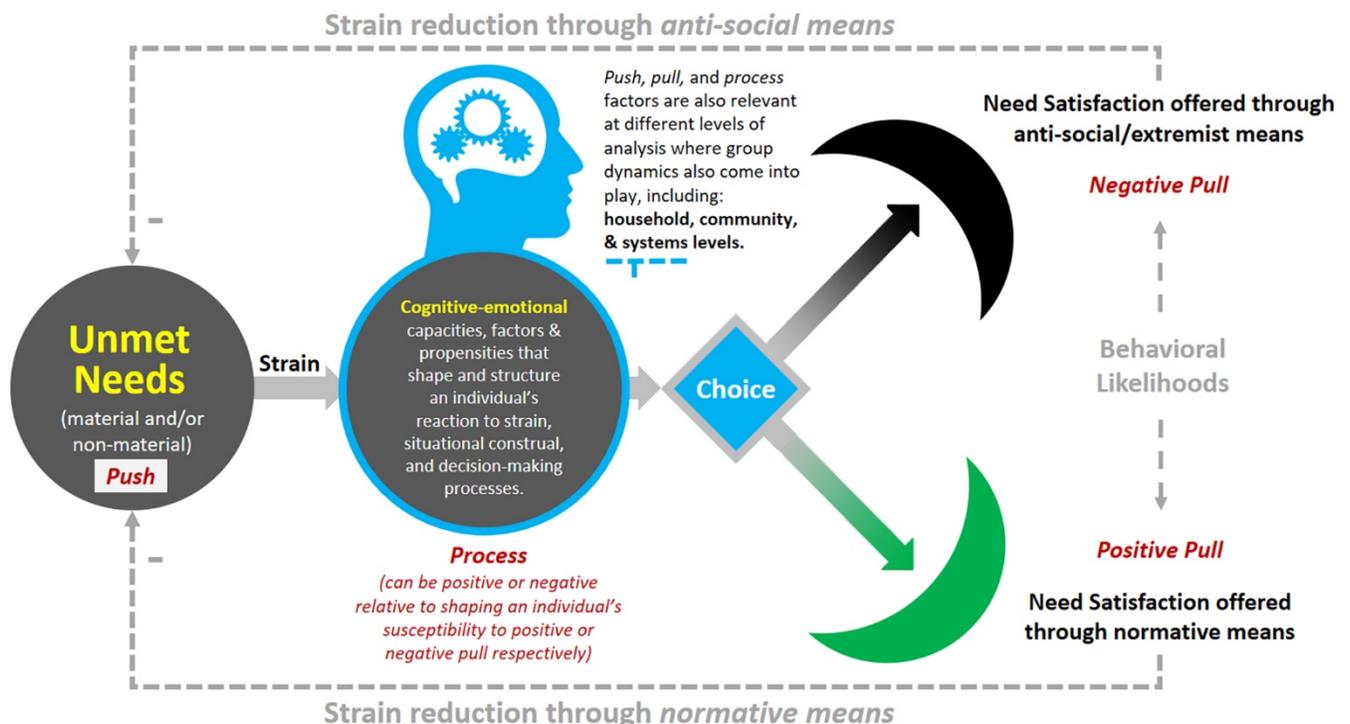
(i.e. *jihad*). Extremist narratives weave in and exploit contextual nuances and personal grievances from the local context of vulnerable youth to strengthen the compelling nature of their recruitment arguments (Fisher, 1985). Youth often brood over the VE ideology for some time before actually deciding to join or make more direct contact with a VE group. Often times there is a "trigger event" that pushes the decision-making process of the individual to join. It may be the loss of a job or the victimization of self or close others (Ojielo et al., 2017). It may be a close friend or family member who coaxes them to join (Sageman, 2004). It may also be on account of a general build-up in frustration that reaches a boiling point and/or an overload of uncertainty in a social environment of overwhelming anomie.

> **Individuals under conditions of high uncertainty and stress often cleave to their most fundamental sense of identity, which for youth in SSA is often their Muslim religious identity. Their Muslim identity can provide a sense of social control that their seemingly normless society cannot.**

A trigger event or a general overload of frustration, uncertainty, meaninglessness, and despair can cross a tipping-point for the individual causing a "cognitive opening" that creates an openness and willingness to consider more deviant and radical solutions to life's problems. One report describes it as such, "a crisis can produce a 'cognitive opening' that shakes certainty in previously accepted beliefs and renders an individual more receptive to the possibility of alternative views and perspectives." (Wiktorowicz, 2004) This often leads an individual to begin a radical search for meaning, identity and purpose that, all too often, is only provided by VE groups through their radical and warped narratives and stark vision.

The high uncertainty that anomie creates for young people in SSA provides the psychological backdrop that facilitates this cognitive opening. Social psychological research has found that individuals under conditions of high uncertainty and stress often cleave to their most fundamental sense of identity, which for marginalized youth in SSA is often their Muslim religious identity (Hogg, 2000; Hogg et al., 2010; McGregor et al., 2015). Their Muslim identity can provide a sense of social control and order that their seemingly normless society cannot. Research has also found that youth under high conditions of uncertainty are more attracted to very clear cut, black-and-white, religious groups (Hogg et al., 2007). This attraction to *high entitativity groups* provides uncertain, identity-seeking youth with dissonance reducing clear order, structure, and simple black-and-white explanations. This process is well articulated in an article on globalization and VE that states:

> *Jihad in its most elemental negative form is a kind of animal fear propelled by anxiety in the face of uncertainty and relieved by self-sacrificing zealotry – an escape out of history…Moral preservationists, whether in America, Israel, Iran, or India, have no choice but to make war on the present to secure a future more like the past: depluralized, monocultural, unskepticized, reenchanted. - (Sandbrook & Romano, 2004)*

Once engagement with VE groups is established by a seeker, these groups draw them closer by emphasizing their collective group identity as part of the true Muslim *umma* (i.e. global Muslim community) (Agnew, 2010; Botha, 2014; Munton et al., 2011). They leverage stories and narratives of Muslim victimization from the potential recruit's own country and globally, thus aligning them to a collective sense of strain through collective identity and generating powerful feelings of *moral outrage* and anger that are channeled towards mobilization into the VE movement (Helfgott, 2013). Once the recruit begins to engage more directly with VE groups there is a quickening process that occurs which ushers with it religious intensification, ideological indoctrination and the crystallization of in-group identity with the VE group, along with the ensuing echo-chamber of groupthink - thus sealing the diabolical deal (Munton et al., 2011; Wiktorowicz, 2004).

OPPORTUNISTIC PATHWAY (DRIVEN BY PRIMARILY MATERIAL REWARDS)

Many of the rank-and-file "foot soldiers" that are part of VE groups in SSA did not join these groups for primarily religious/ideological reasons. A recent UNDP report found that fifty-one percent of those who voluntarily joined cited "religion" as a main reason for joining, yet *fifty-seven percent* also admitted to limited or no understanding of religious texts. It is quite possible that their original not so religious motivations for joining may be clouded and biased by their intensified indoctrination into the group ideology which occurs *after* joining a VE group. Sometimes the leadership or higher-ranking members of these VE groups have a relatively better education, coming from better socio-economic backgrounds and thus may have joined for more ideological reasons than their destitute and more numerous field brethren (Denoeux & Carter, 2009; Rice, Graff, & Pascual, 2010; Sageman, 2004).

It is important to keep in mind that the opportunistic pathway, although largely often driven by monetary incentives, can also be driven by non-material rewards such as the need to belong and be part of a brotherhood of support, the need for vindication or revenge, the allure of the branding and the jihadi "cool" factor, to have a sense of power and respect, and possibly to be part of something exciting that generates a feeling of being part of "something bigger than oneself". Since the opportunistic pathway is likely the most prominent route to recruitment into VE groups in SSA, the following sections will bring in relevant theory and research and expound a bit to create an illustrative example of how an unemployed youth in SSA might go through the opportunistic pathway to recruitment.

> **Many Al-Shabaab recruiters tend to target the unemployed or those already involved with criminal activities. It is much easier to get someone who has already broken the law and the legal boundaries that society holds sacrosanct to commit terrorist acts than someone who has not.**

CVE PRACTITIONERS NEED TO LEVERAGE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH FROM OTHER RELEVANT AND MORE DEVELOPED FIELDS – CRIMINOLOGY & SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

Since the opportunistic pathway has affinities with criminal motivations and since CVE research is still relatively limited, it is critical to leverage the depth and breadth of research and findings from other relevant and more developed fields, such as criminology and social psychology. The following sections of this paper will be leveraging relevant theory and research from both criminology and social psychology. This is particularly important in light of recent findings showing that violent extremists are becoming more criminal over time. Studies that have looked into the backgrounds of jihadists (particularly ISIS) have generally found that 25% to 30% of them had prior criminal records before joining the VE group (Munton et al., 2011; Aly, 2016; Clarke, 2016). This is often discussed in the literature as the "crime-terror nexus". Ties and relationships with criminal networks and VE groups in SSA are also well recognized. In a recent report on perceptions of VE in Kenya (Villa-Vicencio et al., 2016) it was noted that some criminals join al-Shabaab as a way of escaping Kenyan law enforcement. It was also noted that many al-Shabaab recruiters *tend to target the unemployed or those already involved with criminal activities*. It is much easier to get someone who has already broken the law and the legal boundaries that society holds sacrosanct to commit terrorist acts than someone who has not. One article reported that, "High-risk, high-intensity Islamist activism, in other words, seems tailor-made for the needs of criminals and ex-cons, providing them with a supportive community of fellow outsiders, a schedule of work, a positive identity, and the promise of cleansing away past sins." (Cottee, 2016) These new, poorer and more criminal young violent extremists are sometimes referred to as "Islamized radicals" rather than "radical Islamists". One researcher stated, "In the case of Islamist terrorism, socioeconomic status and average age seem to be gradually decreasing while the amount of common criminality is increasing." He goes on to explain that it may be evidence of the growth of "delinquent radicalism" as there appears to be increasingly similar criminal-terrorist profiles which is *indicative of shared pathways into both types of activity* (Mullins, 2009).

LEVERAGING RELEVANT THEORY: FROM RELATIVE DEPRIVATION TO GENERAL STRAIN THEORY

Relative deprivation theory propounds that individuals become frustrated when the standard of living an individual may be accustomed to, or a standard that is widely encouraged or approved of by their society and peers, cannot be achieved. This frustration, when chronic, of high magnitude, and unresolved, can lead to crime, conflict, or even revolution. Relative deprivation theory was later further developed into *three types of deprivation:* 1) deprivation that comes from comparison to others within the same group, 2) the *collective sense of deprivation* that arises from one's ingroup in comparison to other groups, and 3) a combination of the first and second deprivation above (David, Asuelime, & Onapajo, 2015). Often, VE recruiters leverage narratives and rhetoric that incorporates both grievances arising from personal deprivation and a sense of collective deprivation (i.e. the marginalization and victimization of Muslims more broadly). Research has shown that group-based relative deprivation (i.e. *collective strain*) is a more powerful predictor of collective action and mobilization to violence than personal strain or deprivation (King & Taylor, 2011). However, having *both* a personal experience of strain *and* a collective sense of strain together is an even more powerful predictor of violence, as collective strain has been shown to act as a catalyst between personal strain and one's resolve to become radicalized (Agnew, 2010; Torres, 2013; King & Taylor, 2011). This mobilizing effect of collective strain is sometimes called the "robin hood effect" in the literature (Krueger & Laitin, 2008). Collective strain's effect on collective action confirms that an individual doesn't have to be poor themselves to be outraged and mobilized by the poverty of their perceived brethren.

> **Group-based relative deprivation (i.e. collective strain) is a more powerful predictor of collective action and mobilization to violence than personal strain or deprivation.**

The preeminent social psychologist and criminologist Robert Agnew further developed Gurr's relative deprivation theory into what is known as *general strain theory (GST)*. GST proposes that individual's often turn to criminal coping when stress or strain from their life situation becomes too much and legal means to cope seem impossible to find. This can lead to intense frustration and often times the trigger emotion of *anger*. This anger compels an individual to seek a resolution to reduce the strain. As Agnew states, "Anger is said to be especially conducive to delinquency, because it energizes the individual for action, lowers inhibitions, and creates a desire for revenge." (Agnew, Brezina, Wright, & Cullen; 2002) It also clouds thinking and planning skills. Anger is

> **Anger is the primary emotional reason why youth join VE groups in SSA.**

considered to be strain theory's primary mediator between strain and anti-social coping. As CVE research from SSA has shown *anger is the primary emotional reason why youth join VE groups SSA* (Botha, 2014; Ojielo et al., 2017; Proctor, 2015; Helfgott, 2013). Rhetoric from VE groups in their propaganda videos also leverages the emotion of anger since it resonates so strongly with potential frustrated recruits.

Agnew also highlights the importance of what he refers to as "conditioning factors". These are all the factors that condition the effect of strain on coping behavior. Some conditioning factors, like a positive attitude, better critical thinking and planning skills, self-control, or even a positive mentor or family member that can provide emotional support and the right guidance, can reduce the likelihood of anti-social coping. The concept of *strain* correlates to the concept of "push factors". Conditioning factors within the psyche of the individual can be seen as "process factors". Conditioning factors from positive environmental influences, such as family or friends, can be seen as "positive pull". In GST, strain will tend to lead to delinquency when it is: 1) seen as unjust, 2) seen as high in magnitude and chronic, 3) associated with low social-control, and 4) creates some pressure or incentive to engage in criminal coping (Agnew, 2001)**.**

YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT – DOES IT FIT THE CRITERIA FOR STRAIN LIKELY TO LEAD TO VIOLENT EXTREMISM?

At this point, it is crucial to tie the theory directly to the SSA context. How likely is youth unemployment to lead to radicalization into a VE group? Even before considering what strain theory has to say in this regard, it is important to recall that the SSA empirical evidence referenced earlier in this report has already confirmed that a large percentage of youth claim to have joined VE groups for monetary reasons and that most were unemployed and the remaining were underemployed before joining a VE group (Botha, 2014; Kiendrebeogo & Ianchovichina, 2016; Ojielo et al., 2017; Proctor, 2015; Theroux-Benoni et al., 2016; Villa-Vicencio et al., 2016).

Strain theory has recently adapted to VE risk and has identified criteria for the *strain most likely to lead to VE*. This strain should be *collective,* and should be: 1) high in magnitude, with civilians affected; 2) perceived as unjust; 3) inflicted by significantly more powerful others, including 'complicit' civilians, with whom members of the strained collectivity have weak ties (Agnew, 2010). These criteria, since they highlight the role of collective strain, may be more relevant to those who join leaning ideological. However, collective grievances are clearly also leveraged as a kind of "righteous wrapping" around the rhetoric and narratives used to enhance the interest of opportunity seekers by reassuring their conscience and providing them with an internal argument that it isn't just about the money – they are also fighting against the oppression of "their people". Since GST's criteria for the strain most likely to lead to terrorism may be more relevant to those leaning more ideological it is important to revert here to GST's criteria for strain most likely to lead to crime and delinquency and then weave in the additive factor of collective strain.

> **Collective grievances are clearly also leveraged as a kind of "righteous wrapping" around the rhetoric and narratives used to enhance the interest of opportunity seekers by reassuring their conscience and providing them with an internal argument that it isn't just about the money – they are also fighting against the oppression of "their people".**

Let's now examine the example of youth unemployment in light of these various criteria for strain likely to lead to crime from GST:

1. **PERCEIVED AS UNJUST** – It is commonly reported by youth that nepotism is one of the main reasons they cannot find employment. They often point to a corrupt government that doesn't invest in real opportunities for the youth because the government doesn't understand or respect them (this also connects to the generational divide issue) and doesn't truly care about them. Thus, unemployment is perceived as extremely unjust by youth in SSA, particularly in light of their oft-raised expectations from improved educational outcomes without commensurate employment opportunities.

2. **PERCEIVED AS HIGH IN MAGNITUDE, CHRONIC** – Youth unemployment is one of the most oft cited problems and sources of frustration by youth today in SSA. Thus, it is clearly perceived as "high in magnitude" by the youth themselves. It is also a chronic problem.

3. **ASSOCIATED WITH LOW SOCIAL CONTROL** – As pointed out earlier in this report the rapid pace of social change in SSA has increased anomie (i.e. normlessness) where right and wrong is no longer clearly defined by the rapidly changing society youth live in. Also, in many of the marginalized geographies where VE emerges from there is very limited external social controls imposed by rule of law and state presence, fostering an enabling environment for criminal activities and deviancy.

4. **CREATES SOME PRESSURE OR INCENTIVE TO ENGAGE IN CRIMINAL COPING** – VE groups in SSA have been cited by empirical studies as offering potential recruits monetary incentives and the promise of employment as a means to entice the unemployed and destitute youth into their rank-and-file. Most youth in marginalized areas of SSA are acutely aware of the monetary rewards offered by VE groups. These rewards play a powerful role in enticing their engagement with these groups. Often, friends of unemployed or underemployed youth who have already joined VE groups try to get them to join through offers of

monetary reimbursement for their services. Certainly, there are powerful monetary incentives for destitute youth to engage in criminal coping through engagement with VE groups in SSA.

In terms of the vicarious, collective strain which has been shown to be a powerful driver for radicalization, we can also see how chronic unemployment can be perceived as an injustice through the lens of collective strain. Since many youths who live in the marginalized zones where VE groups tend to be most active in SSA are often of a similar ethnic or religious background (e.g. Muslim, Kanuri, Fulani, etc.), their chronic unemployment can begin to be perceived as symptomatic of their *marginalization around ethnic or religious fault lines*. This then becomes combined with perceptions of state-level nepotism, where resources (particularly around employment opportunities) are seen to be disproportionately allotted to those in or from less marginalized zones or geographies where state leadership may have family, ethnic or other close ties. Feelings of injustice and targeted marginalization because they are Muslim, or an ethnic group typically associated with VE, can lead to a sense of moral outrage, extreme anger and rage against a seemingly unfair system. VE groups then nurse this marginalization conspiracy around collective strain for all its worth, attracting many destitute and angry youth to join the "cause" for financial security, and more.

4. CRITICAL ROLE OF RESILIENCE IN CVE PROGRAMMATIC EFFORTS IN SSA

The role of many structural development challenges as determinants of VE elaborated in this report might naturally lead to an appreciation of the relevance of resilience investments in helping to counter violent extremism. Resilience programming can be considered by CVE practitioners as "CVE-relevant" programming versus more "CVE-specific" programming, like counter-messaging radio programming for example. Many CVE practitioners refer to a categorical continuum of interventions. This generally ranges from peace-building, to preventing violent extremism (PVE), to CVE - from the earliest most broadly preventative, to later stage more focused interventions respectively. At the end of the day definitional debates over what is PVE versus CVE or CVE-relevant versus CVE-specific programming matters less than the impact any such programming may have reducing the risk of VE. Particularly since these categories are simply *varying attempts to group different types of non-kinetic programming that may reduce VE risk*. It is also important to note that by labelling a particular kind of programming as "CVE-relevant" does not equate it to being less important or effective in deterring VE than programming labelled "CVE-specific". There is a solid case to be made that earlier, more broadly applicable conflict prevention efforts may be more sustainable and effective in the longer term.

In USAID, resilience programming is mandated to reduce persistently high humanitarian caseloads in structurally vulnerable geographies. Currently USAID's resilience investments in SSA are concentrated in the Sahel and the Horn of Africa, where persistent weather shocks and destitution predominate. Unfortunately, with the recent rise in VE in SSA since around 2010, VE-related conflicts throughout the Sahel are surpassing climate shocks as the key driver of food insecurity, malnutrition, forced displacement, and humanitarian caseloads today. USAID's resilience programming is required to adapt to the complex and constantly evolving humanitarian context in the Sahel, which now necessitates the incorporation of VE and its risk factors into its analysis, strategy development, and programmatic scope.

> **USAID's resilience programming is required to adapt to the complex and constantly evolving humanitarian context in the Sahel, which now necessitates the incorporation of VE and its risk factors into its analysis, strategy development, and programmatic scope.**

When examining the structural grievances/strains outlined in this report - unemployment, poverty, lack of social welfare, poor quality education, corruption and nepotism, etc. – it is clear that addressing these types of structural problems in a substantive manner through the provision of "positive pull" is not within the usual bailiwick of shorter-term CVE

programming. It is also clear that these types of programmatic contributions are desperately needed to contribute to the attainment of CVE goals. Fortunately, resilience programming has experience and specializes in working on these core structural issues that tend to form the strongest grievances in marginalized areas. Also, resilience programming tends to be longer-term than typical CVE interventions, thus allowing the sufficient programmatic life cycle necessary to substantively address more structural challenges. Some examples of areas of resilience programming that are most in need to both build resilience *and* prevent the growth of VE are: pro-poor economic growth, life skills/job readiness, functional literacy, local institution strengthening, and social capital and social cohesion strengthening. These are a few examples of longer term resilience intervention areas that would complement ongoing CVE efforts by reducing abject poverty and providing opportunity, thus weakening the ability of VEO's to recruit from local populations.

Resilience programming is primarily focused on offering desperately needed positive pull in marginalized zones where VE groups are projecting negative pull in order to swell their ranks. Resilience can contribute needed "positive pull" for vulnerable youth by offering them positive life choices, opportunities, and hope. Hope in the face of despair can be a gateway to new opportunities that can help transport an individual out of destitution and poverty. In addition, by programming in more secure neighboring geographies (i.e. buffer zones) in geographic proximity to CVE-specific programming, resilience programs can act as a buffer providing a programmatic backdrop that can help prevent backsliding into conflict and further insecurity so that CVE-specific programs can remained focused on the task at hand, while at the same time laying the foundation for longer term development initiatives.

Finally, resilience programming places strong emphasis on collaboration with diverse funding streams to achieve greater programmatic impact. Through intentional collaboration, resilience programming along with CVE programming can have a much larger impact on peace and development in marginalized areas of SSA. Through effective collaboration the whole becomes greater than the sum of its parts and the impact will likely be greater than if both types of programming were to operate independently of one another, neither sharing lessons nor coordinating activities.

> **Resilience can contribute needed "positive pull" for vulnerable youth by offering them positive life choices, opportunities, and hope.**

5. POLICY AND PROGRAMMATIC RECOMMENDATIONS – DELEGITIMIZE, REINFORCE, AND FACILITATE

Based on the empirical review of the evidence supporting various economic and other sources of strain that are driving and correlated with VE in SSA, some clear policy and programmatic recommendations can be laid out. Based on the 3P's (*push, pull,* and *process factors)* model of radicalization, programmatic and policy guidance can also be provided for both CVE-specific and CVE-relevant resilience programming. For greatest impact, all three programmatic lines of effort articulated below should operate in a collaborative and coordinated fashion.

DELEGITIMIZE NEGATIVE PULL

CVE programs have comparative advantage and a wealth of experience working on the de-legitimization of VE groups and their narratives justifying violence against civilians. This is difficult but important work. VE groups often have slick propaganda and compelling arguments that appeal to a subset of frustrated, angry youth who have lost hope and faith in their society and its ways. Delegitimization of "negative pull" relates to all programmatic efforts that weaken and poke holes in extremist arguments and narratives such that they lose their appeal over destitute youth. Delegitimization of the "negative pull" offered by VE groups is focused

primarily on counter-narrative propagation (i.e. generating counter-arguments to extremist ones) and peace-messaging campaigns.

CVE programs should continue working with locally respected actors to promote moderate interpretations of Islam and to socialize easily understandable, compelling, and locally rooted counter-arguments to VE narratives and rhetoric. Radio and television as well as newer forms of media such as social media should be exploited to amplify positive messages and counter-narratives that weaken the appeal of extremist arguments. Roving theater groups that travel from village to village performing dramas that convey counter-messages is also helpful for last mile messaging. For impactful messaging, it is advisable to work with creative, passionate and innovative youth from marginalized areas since they know their context best and they are able to tailor the appeal of these counter-messages for the local youth audience that needs them most.

REINFORCE POSITIVE PROCESS FACTORS THROUGH LIFE SKILLS

A crucial capacity needing reinforcement in SSA, particularly for the youth, are critical *life skills*. Life skills are generally defined as *the skills and abilities that enable an individual to adapt and respond effectively to the challenges of life*. These skills are sometimes referred to as *psychosocial competency*. Strengthening life skills is an educational approach to preventing violent extremism. Strengthening life skills is how positive process factors are strengthened, ensuring that youth make good life decisions and avoid joining VEOs.

Since resilience is focused on adapting and responding effectively to shocks and stresses (i.e. challenges of life) and CVE is focused on adapting and responding effectively to "push" and "negative pull" (i.e. challenges of life), one can see how life skills lie at the heart of both effective resilience *and* CVE interventions. Having strong life skills can enable a young person in SSA to both have a better chance of finding decent employment and at the that same enables the young person to see through the simplistic black-and-white rhetoric of VE groups. Life skills effectively "kills two birds with one stone", reinforcing both resilience and CVE efforts.

ESSENTIAL *LIFE SKILLS* TO BUILD ADAPTIVE CAPACITIES (FOR RESILIENCE) *AND* REDUCE SUSCEPTIBILITY TO NEGATIVE PULL (FOR CVE)

There are potentially many skills that can be considered as life skills but for the sake of simplicity and brevity this report has categorized the five most critical and impactful life skills that can enhance both CVE and resilience goals. These five life skill categories should also be considered as aggregated groupings of related sub-skills.

> **Since resilience is focused on adapting and responding effectively to shocks and stresses (i.e. challenges of life) and CVE is focused on adapting and responding effectively to "push" and "negative pull" (i.e. challenges of life), one can see how life skills lie at the heart of both effective resilience <u>and</u> CVE interventions.**

1. **SELF-REGULATORY SKILLS** – Self-regulatory skills generally refer to skills required to control one's behavior, emotions, and thoughts. A wealth of research has associated impulsiveness and lack of self-control to violent anti-social behavior, delinquency, crime and violent extremism (Agnew 2010; Munton et al., 2011; Nepple, Jeon, Schofield, & Donnellan, 2015; Agnew, Brezina, Wright, & Cullen, 2002; Schoepfer & Piquero, 2006; Wareham, 2005). A high propensity towards anger and irritability, more specifically, have been strongly linked to violent crime and VE, particularly when associated with a tendency to blame others over oneself for problems (i.e. external attribution of blame) (Agnew, 2010; Ojielo et al., 2017; Agnew et al., 2002; Ahmed, 2015; Capowich et al., 2001; Helfgott, 2013; Jang & Johnson, 2003; Krueger, Schmutte, Caspi, Moffitt, Campbell, & Silva, 1994; Wareham, 2005). It's relevant to recall here that studies have shown that most youth report having joined al-Shabaab because they were angry (Botha, 2014; Proctor, 2015). The ability to control one's anger and move through life in a calmer, emotionally integrated manner is one of the most critically important attributes that needs to be reinforced in vulnerable young people in SSA to keep

them away from VE and crime and also help build their resilience and capacities that better enable them to succeed in the workforce and beyond.

2. **CRITICAL AND COMPLEX THINKING SKILLS** – Research relating to education and violent extremism has shown that a quality and diversified education reduces the risk of VE (Botha, 2014; Bonnell, 2011; Gambetta & Hertog, 2016; Rose, 2015; Wilson, Williams, Garner, Duxbury, & Steiner, 2001). Studies utilizing only basic educational outcome measurements were unable to capture the correlation of quality education and immunity to negative pull from VE groups. Examining issues of educational quality, UNDP's latest report on VE drivers in Africa (Ojielo et al., 2017) found that high quality Islamic education is a source of resilience to recruitment into extremist groups. Here, quality Islamic education refers to an education that focuses more on deeper meaning and interpretation of Islamic texts versus an Islamic education that solely focuses on rote-memorization without deeper reflection and understanding. A recent study on why so many with engineering degrees joined transnational jihadi movements found that the strict black-and-white type of thinking that engineering studies promote (i.e. there is always only one correct answer) can lead to a higher susceptibility to extremist rhetoric and black-and-white ideologies. The study recommends a diversified, balanced education including the humanities and arts, along with the harder sciences, as a preventative measure (Gambetta & Hertog, 2016). Programs that can increase an individual's complex and critical thinking skills and their ability to appreciate multiple perspectives should be at the heart of any high quality educational intervention intending to reduce youth susceptibility to "negative pull" from VE movements. An intolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity has also been highly correlated with delinquency and VE (Hogg, 2000; Hogg et al., 2010; Hogg et al., 2007; McGregor, 2016; McGregor et al., 2001; Victoroff, 2005). Increasing an individual's appreciation for the complexity of the world and the nuances of differing opinions can reduce this intolerance. Use of the Socratic questioning method in and outside of the classroom has been shown to be an effective means to improve critical thinking skills (Bonnell, 2011). Critical thinking skills will also help build resilience as they are often the most sought-after skills in the job market and are the skills needed to problem-solve and help an individual better plan for and adapt to shocks and stresses.

3. **POSITIVITY AND HOPEFULNESS** – Social science research relating to psychological resilience, youth delinquency, crime and VE have shown a strong correlation between negative attitudes, pessimism, cynicism, and despair and anti-social behaviors (Nepple et al., 2015; Alessandri, Caprara, & Tisak, 2012; Caprara & Alessandri, 2011; Caprara, Alessandri, Di Giunta, Panerai, & Eisenberg, 2009; Caprara, Eisenberg, & Alessandri, 2017; Gungea, Jaunky, & Ramesh, 2017; Sherman, Nave, & Funder, 2012). When a young person has a generally negative outlook it is very difficult for them to see any hope or reason to try or be willing to engage in normative strategies for life success. With a negative outlook, the needed sense of agency to succeed is a non-starter. Those with positive attitudes and outlooks tend to react to shocks and stresses more optimistically and adapt better on account of their attitude (Alessandri et al., 2012; Caprara et al., 2017). Individuals with high positivity and agreeable personalities are less prone to anti-social behaviors and are generally more empathetic, kind and less violence prone (Caprara & Alessandri, 2011; Caprara et al., 2009). Those with a sense of hope are open and willing to try and innovate in order to succeed. Their hope and optimism give them a sense of determination and the necessary grit to make it through life's ups and downs while helping them to be a beacon of hope to others in their social networks. A positive outlook also makes the cynical, hateful, and generally negative rhetoric propagated by VE groups unappealing. Hope and positivity make an individual more attracted to "positive pull" rather than "negative pull".

> **With a negative outlook, the needed sense of agency to succeed is a non-starter. Those with positive attitudes and outlooks tend to react to shocks and stresses more optimistically and adapt better on account of their attitude.**

4. **MORAL DEVELOPMENT, PROSOCIAL VALUES & EMPATHY**– An individual's moral beliefs and values can act as one of the most powerful deterrents to violent and anti-social behavior, encouraging empathy and compassion for others. Research has shown that individuals with highly developed moral beliefs are less likely to engage in criminal and anti-social behaviors (Myyra, Juujarvi, & Pesso, 2010; Nivette et al., 2017; Schoepfer & Piquero, 2006). Certain values have also been found to be highly correlated to prosocial behaviors and antipathetic to violent extremist behaviors and ideologies. Universalism values have been

found to promote prosocial behaviors and empathy more than any other values. Universalism values have also been negatively correlated with violent extremists (Suedfeld & Brcic, 2011). These values focus on the welfare of others (even beyond the extended family or ingroup), motivate social perspective taking, and engender an appreciation and respect for diversity.

5. **SELF-EFFICACY & GROWTH MINDSET** – An individual's self-efficacy (i.e. belief in their ability to achieve goals) and growth mindset are both positively associated with prosocial behaviors and life success (Neppl et al., 2015; Agnew et al., 2002; Dweck, 2007). Once an individual embraces a growth mindset they have a fundamental belief that their abilities, skills, and intelligence are not something fixed by chance or birth, but rather, they develop them overtime through persistence and hard work. When youth are encouraged and supported to develop the self-confidence and determination they need to face and overcome adversity and stress, they can better adapt and persevere, thus reducing their likelihood of resorting to anti-social coping behaviors such as crime or VE.

LIFE SKILLS CAN BE TAUGHT AND STRENGTHENED THROUGH VARIOUS MEANS

Life skills can be reinforced in an individual through various modalities. They can (and should) be integrated into primary and secondary educational curricula in public school systems in SSA. They can also be integrated into vocational training or job-readiness programs, that prepare the *whole person* for success. However, it is important to keep in mind that much of the life skills education received by youth in SSA happens *outside of the classroom* in more informal settings that may also be influenced by targeted programmatic efforts.

Home education should be considered as a primary vehicle for the transmission of critical life skills. Social support systems more generally, including family, friends, mentors and role-models should have their capacities as positive influencers reinforced in order to build resilience and immunize youth from the radicalizing forces of negative pull.

> **If talented and creative youth can make empathy, positivity, respect for diversity, intelligence, and education the new "cool" or trending thing, effectively turning life skills into a branded alternative narrative, this catalytic approach can have a tremendous impact on both building resilience and defeating the allure of violent extremism.**

Youth associations, clubs, and positive social movements or trends should also be leveraged to have a more catalytic impact on spreading positive life skills. If talented and creative youth can make empathy, positivity, respect for diversity, intelligence, and education the new "cool" or trending thing, effectively turning life skills into a branded alternative narrative, this catalytic approach can have a tremendous impact on both building resilience and defeating the allure of violent extremism. This, in turn, can catalyze a kind of "peace insurgency" of non-violence, creativity, and intelligence to counteract and offer real, peace-engendering alternatives to the "negative pull" offered by violent extremists and criminals.

FACILITATE POSITIVE PULL BY OFFERING POSITIVE OPPORTUNITIES, IMPROVED SOCIAL SUPPORT SYSTEMS, EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE, AND ENHANCED SOCIAL COHESION

CVE-relevant resilience programming can play a large role in contributing to positive pull in marginalized communities by offering positive opportunities, improved social support systems, effective governance, and enhanced social cohesion. This positive pull will bolster hope in communities as visibly improving conditions begin to actualize on the ground. Although many of these interventions are more appropriate for resilience programming, some of them are typically part of more CVE-specific programmatic approaches.

FACILITATE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES THAT "MEET YOUTH WHERE THEY ARE"

It is critical to connect youth to appropriate economic opportunities in the right manner. Many youths living in marginalized rural areas of SSA have non-farm economic aspirations very different from the older generations. Migration is also a growing trend amongst these youth, where they often end up looking for income generating opportunities in *secondary towns* first, and then perhaps at some point graduating to a further migration to larger urban centers - usually the capital. These youths often migrate with high hopes of earning money that they will be able to send a portion of back to their family in the form of remittances. Unfortunately, the realities of migration aren't as promising as rural youth often arrive in secondary towns with no job-seeking support, help or guidance available. Most end up copying the business models of other migrants on the streets. An illustrative example of this in SSA are the commonly seen cigarette or phone credit vendors, often multiple vendors crowding on each block, all offering the same monotonous products in survival mode.

> **CVE-relevant resilience programming should work to "meet youth where they are", facilitating the emergence of economic opportunities and the desperately needed landing programs that can provide demand-driven technical/vocational training, job-readiness, and job-search support in these rural secondary towns where marginalized rural migrants are often found.**

CVE-relevant resilience programming should work to "meet youth where they are", facilitating the emergence of economic opportunities and the desperately needed landing programs that can provide demand-driven technical/vocational training, job-readiness, and job-search support in these rural secondary towns where marginalized rural migrants are often found. It is important to prioritize non-farm opportunities while also supporting on-farm opportunities for youth inclined to traditional livelihoods. Prioritization of non-farm opportunities for vulnerable youth is critical as livelihood diversification into non-farm opportunities continues to be a dominant and growing trend in SSA, particularly amongst the youth. Many youths aspire to having their own businesses and thus entrepreneurial support and provision of appropriately tailored financial services should also be made accessible.

Urban planning efforts can also be supported, working with local governance structures in these secondary towns to better prepare them for future growth as urbanization and migration target these secondary towns as potential *rural hubs of opportunity*. Supporting the growth of secondary towns/cities also reduces some of the growing strain and risk placed on rapidly growing urban capitals as they are often perceived as the only migration option for real opportunity - leading to overcrowding, environmental risk, and an increased risk of conflict over resources.

STRENGTHEN SOCIAL SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Building *family resilience* at the household level should be considered a high priority for CVE-relevant resilience programs. A plethora of research has laid testament to the positive impacts of good parenting and positive family engagement on an individual's life choices and success (Neppl et al., 2015; Conger & Donnellan, 2007; Conger, McLoyd, Wallace, Sun, Simons, & Brody, 2002; Masten, 2001; Walsh, 2012; Wooditch, Tang, & Taxman, 2014). Studies within the SSA context have shown strong correlations to poor parenting with youth who joined VE groups (Botha, 2014; Ojielo et al., 2017; Proctor, 2015; Villa-Vicencio et al., 2016). Poor parenting in SSA is generally defined as one of two extremes: 1) overly disciplinary, authoritarian (the most common); or 2) low parental involvement – disengaged or preoccupied parents.

Life skills such as self-regulation and self-control, moral beliefs, values, and temperament (e.g. trait anger) are often transmitted by the parents and family members of influence during the formative years of child rearing.

This crucial relationship between a child and their parents (and extended family in SSA context) needs to be supported. Supporting community-led outreach on good parental practices and the negative impacts of domestic violence will help to dramatically reduce youth susceptibility to negative pull from VE and other criminal engagements.

Other potential positive social influences over the youth should also be considered in these programmatic lines of effort. Youth are often strongly influenced by groups, trends and associations they may belong to or engage with. They are also strongly influenced by their friends, and respected mentors and role-models in their communities. CVE-relevant resilience programming should support youth big-brother/big-sister type mentorship programs and also support positive emergent youth trends, groups and associations that foster positivity, morals, civic virtues, critical thinking, and non-violence. At the household level, parents should be reminded of the need to monitor who their children's friends and associations are. Parents need to fully comprehend the potential risks and negative impacts of delinquent friends and associations on their children. Parents should also teach their children about the ethics of money-making and that means of generating income should be considered morally off limits.

> **Social safety nets, both formal and informal, can help reduce the perceptions of targeted neglect that often get exploited by VE narratives to increase their recruitment of the most destitute.**

The provision of social welfare has also been positively correlated with a reduction in VE risk (Burgoon, 2006). Perceptions of targeted marginalization and inequality can be reduced by a more equitable distribution of resources based on level of need - vulnerability. Social safety nets, both formal and informal, can help reduce the perceptions of targeted neglect that often get exploited by VE narratives to increase their recruitment of the most destitute.

SUPPORT EFFECTIVE AND INCLUSIVE GOVERNANCE

There are five critical areas of needed governance related support that are particularly CVE-relevant where contributions from resilience programming would be welcomed: 1) strengthening of local institutions and provision of needed social services in marginalized zones; 2) socialization of soft-power approaches, CVE, & the importance of human rights to government actors; 3) promotion of civic education and inclusive governance; 4) anti-corruption programming; and 5) strengthening the criminal justice system.

Marginalized zones can be identified by their abject lack of social services and dysfunctional or non-existent institutions. Since those living in these vulnerable zones are most in need of these services and institutions, efforts should be there to support them. If the state does not provide these most fundamental support services, VE groups will often replace the state in service provision and institution building ("Policy", 2016). The lack of services also feeds into extremist recruitment narratives that democracy will never work and that only pure *Sha'ria* law can bring justice.

The U.S. has had many years of experience fighting global terrorism that has led to the wisdom that guns and bombs alone cannot solve the problem of VE. Soft-power, development-like approaches, such as CVE and resilience are also key to mitigating the risk of growth of VE. SSA nations have less years of experience fighting terrorism and thus may not understand this critical lesson as well. The importance of soft-power approaches and respect for human rights in preventing violent extremism needs to be well socialized to government actors in host-country nations. Human rights violations committed by local military counter-terrorism operations in SSA have triggered massive amounts of young people to join VE movements out of defiance and moral outrage, and an overwhelming desire for revenge (Ojielo et al., 2017; Villa-Vicencio et al., 2016). Local governments need to understand this in order to prevent future abuses which only exacerbate the problem they seek to resolve.

The promotion of youth civic engagement and inclusive governance is important to strengthen societal bonds and trust in local systems of governance. It is important for building social cohesion and trust between the government and the people. As already explained in this report, when individuals develop legal cynicism and become disillusioned with society and its systems, a cognitive opening is ushered in allowing for extremist and radical ideas to take root. Civic engagement programming should be cautious (do no harm principle) to ensure the host-government is *truly* a willing partner for increasing civic engagement. A recent Mercy Corps report on youth unemployment and VE articulates this risk well:

Human rights violations committed by local military counter-terrorism operations in SSA have triggered massive amounts of young people to join VE movements out of defiance, moral outrage and an overwhelming desire for revenge.

> *Civic engagement programs, isolated from meaningful governance reforms, are unlikely to mitigate political violence. Indeed, such programs may be priming a confrontation. Traditional elites, in many places, will be unenthused about youthful 'troublemakers' issuing demands, and lobbying for positions of responsibility, or improvements in youth services. Where existing political institutions lack the capacity – or the will – to incorporate new voices, youth empowerment may result in expectations outpacing changes in the status quo. Dissatisfied youth may seek alternative methods to express their frustration. - (Proctor, 2016)*

Endemic corruption is also a well-known grievance amongst Africans about their governments. There is a clear need for programming that can improve government transparency, strengthen external sanctions, and improve the sense of moral agency (i.e. *internal* sanctions) of government officials. If a government worker doesn't have strong internal moral sanctions against corruption, the inclination to corrupt whenever an opportunity presents itself will always be there (Schoepfer & Piquero, 2006). Strengthening internal moral sanctions of officials along with stronger transparency and external sanctions will help reduce corruption overtime in SSA.

Finally, it is clear that many of the claims of corruption in SSA are based around problems with local systems of criminal justice, where the wealthy are blessed with impunity through their financial capacity to bribe yet the poor must often suffer the worst of consequences for even the mildest of offences. This leads to feelings of injustice and moral outrage than can seriously radicalize individuals, particularly those personally victimized by this type of corruption. Efforts by CVE-relevant resilience programs to strengthen the transparency and legitimacy of the criminal justice sector can contribute greatly to reducing the risk and allure of negative pull.

STRENGTHEN SOCIAL COHESION THROUGH OUTGROUP "BRIDGING TIES"

CVE programs are often blanketed under the general description of "social cohesion" programming. *Social cohesion* is defined by the strength of the social bonds between members of a social group and is critically reflected in levels of trust between these individuals. *Social capital* is also dependent on levels of trust and bonds between people in order to ensure that one has others within their social network they may "lean on" in times of resource scarcity (Nassar-Eddine, Garnham, Agostino, & Caluya, 2011). Social cohesion and social capital, and the social trust they both depend upon, come more naturally to homogenous societies over more diverse and fractionalized ones often inspired by globalizing influences (Hooghe, Reeskens, & Stolle, 2007). Many researchers link social capital and social cohesion through economic indicators which are seen as fundamental to both of their measurements (Nassar-Eddine et al., 2011).

By strengthening social cohesion across communities, trust and improved perceptions between different identity groups can be established, thus lowering the likelihood of individuals in these communities being attracted to the negative pull of us-against-them narratives espoused by VE groups.

Trust is fundamental to social cohesion and is more difficult to establish in conditions of high ethnic and religious diversity, which is illustrative of many communities and nations in SSA. A lack of trust between one's ingroup (e.g. Muslim) and a perceived outgroup (e.g. Christians) is often exploited by extremists to radicalize an individual to violence against this perceived evil and dehumanized "other" through reinforcing a Manichean us-against-them mentality. By strengthening social cohesion across communities, trust and improved perceptions between different identity groups can be established, thus lowering the likelihood of individuals in these communities being attracted to the negative pull of us-against-them narratives espoused by VE groups. Strengthening social cohesion is about strengthening bonds of trust through positive relationships between different individuals and groups in diverse societies.

Social cohesion can be strengthened by increasing outgroup "bridging ties". Outgroup bridging ties represent positive connections or relationships with members of a perceived outgroup. If one identifies as a Muslim, one may perceive Christians as an outgroup. The more a Muslim has positive relations and interaction experiences with Christians the less likely the Muslim will be to hold negative stereotypes against Christians *and* the less susceptible they will be to buying into negative outgroup stereotypes proffered by extremists. Christians will be seen as more equal instead of less than equal, and dehumanized. It is the dehumanization of outgroups that enables groups to commit atrocities against each other through *moral disengagement* (Bandura, 2002). Practical ways in which programming can support "bridging ties" between different identity groups include: mixed social activities, sports, travel experiences, cultural sharing/outreach activities (e.g. inter-religious dialogue, cultural festivals), and exchanges and dialogues that focus on common values, beliefs, and priorities rather than group differences. By strengthening our common sense of humanity, we can effectively reduce the dark allure of violent extremists and their vision of separation, violence, and hate.

References

Abadie, A. (2005). Poverty, freedom, and the roots of terrorism. *American Economic Review, 95 (4),* 50-56.

Agnew, R. (2010). A general strain theory of terrorism. *Theoretical Criminology, 14 (2),* 131-153.

Agnew, R. (2001). Building on the foundation of general strain theory: Specifying the types of strain most likely to lead to crime and delinquency. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency, 38 (4),* 319-361.

Agnew, R. (2011). Dire forecast: A theoretical model of the impact of climate change on crime. *Theoretical Criminology, 16 (1),* 21-42.

Agnew, R., & Brezina, T., & Wright, J. P., & Cullen, F. T. (2002). Strain, personality traits, and delinquency: Extending general strain theory. *Criminology, 40 (1),* 43-72.

Ahmed, B. (2015). What's the real root cause of terrorism: Poverty or anger? *ThinkProgress.* Retrieved from https://thinkprogress.org/whats-the-real-root-cause-of-terrorism-poverty-or-anger-d9d3f53324c5/

Alessandri, G., & Caprara, G. V., & Tisak, J. (2012). The unique contribution of positive orientation to optimal functioning. *European Psychologist, 17 (1),* 44-54.

Aly, A. (2016). The new breed of terrorists: criminals first, Islamists second. *The Conversation.* Retrieved from https://theconversation.com/the-new-breed-of-terrorists-criminals-first-islamists-second-56996

Bacon, B., & Chandonnet-Bedoya, L., & George, S., & Martin, A., & Mullaney, C., & Werchick, L., & Wilcox, O. (2011). *The Development Response to Violent Extremism and Insurgency.* Washington, DC: United States Agency for International Development.

Bandura, A. (2002). Selective Moral Disengagement in the Exercise of Moral Agency. *Journal of Moral Education,* Vol. 31, No.2.

Beckman, M. (2016). Which countries' terrorist attacks are ignored by the U.S. media. Retrieved from https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/which-countries-terrorist-attacks-are-ignored-by-the-u-s-media/

Bhatia, K., & Ghanem, H. (2017). *How do education and unemployment affect support for violent extremism?* Global Economy & Development Working Paper: Brookings Institute.

Blankenship, K. L. et al. (2012). Circumventing resistance: using values to indirectly change attitudes. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology. 103: 606-21.

Blankenship, K. L. et al. (2015). Values, Inter-Attitudinal Structure, and Attitude Change: Value Accessibility Can Increase a Related Attitude's Resistance to Change. Personality & Social Psychology Bulletin. 41: 1739-50.

Blankenship, K. L. & Wegener, D. T. (2012). Value Activation and Processing of Persuasive Messages Social Psychological and Personality Science. 3: 391-397.

Blomberg, S. B., & Hess, G. D. (2005). *The lexus and the olive branch: globalization, democratization and terrorism.* Washington, DC: World Bank Workshop on Security and Development.

Blomberg, S. B., Hess, G. D, Weerapana, A. (2004). Economic conditions and terrorism. *European Journal of Political Economy, 20,* 463-478.

Bodaken, E. M. (1976). An Empirical test of a role enactment model of persuasion. *Human Communication Research.* Volume 2, Issue 4, pages 330–337.

Bonnell, J. (2011). Teaching approaches that help to build resilience to extremism among young people. *UK Department of Education.*

Borum, R. (2014). Psychological vulnerabilities and propensities for involvement in violent extremism. *Behavioral Sciences and the Law, 32 (3),* 286-305.

Botha, A. (2014). Political socialization and terrorist radicalization among individuals who joined al-Shabaab in Kenya. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism, 37,* 895-919.

Bravo, A. B. S., & Dias, C. M. M. (2006). An Empirical Analysis of Terrorism: Deprivation, Islamism and Geopolitical Factors. *Defense and Peace Economics, 17,* 329-341.

Buchanan-Clarke, S., & Lekalake, R. (2016). *Violent extremism in Africa – Public opinion form the Sahel, Lake Chad, and the Horn.* Policy Paper No. 32: Afrobarometer.

Burgoon, B. (2006). On welfare and terror. *Journal of Conflict Resolution, 50 (2),* 176-203.

Butler, T. (N.A.). *What causes terrorism?* Lebanon, Illinois: McEndree University.

Capowich, G. E., & Mazerolle, P., & Piquero, A. (2001). General strain theory, situational anger, and social networks – An assessment of conditioning influences. *Journal of Criminal Justice, 29,* 445-461.

Caprara, G. V., & Alessandri, G. (2011). Prosociality: The contribution of traits, values, and self-efficacy beliefs. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 102 (6),* 1289-1303.

Caprara, G. V., & Alessandri, G., & Di Giunta, L., & Panerai, L., Eisenberg, N. (2009). The contribution of agreeableness and self-efficacy beliefs to prosociality. *European Journal of Personality, 24 (1),* 36-55.

Caprara, G. V., & Eisenberg, N., & Alessandri, G. (2017). Positivity: The dispositional basis of happiness. *Journal of Happiness Studies, 18,* 353-371.

CIA World Factbook. (2016). *GDP per capita by country.* Retrieved from https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/rankorder/2004rank.html

Clarke, C. P. (2016). *Crime and Terror in Europe: Where the nexus is alive and well.* The Hague, The Netherlands: International Centre for Counter-Terrorism.

Conger, R. D., & Donnellan, M. B. (2007). An interactionist perspective on the socioeconomic context of human development. *Annual Review of Psychology, 58,* 175-199.

Conger, R. D., & McLoyd, V. C, & Wallace, L. E., & Sun, Y., & Simons, R. L, & Brody, G. H. (2002). Economic pressure in African American families: A replication and extension of the Family Stress Model. *Developmental Psychology, 38 (2),* 179-193.

Corman, S.R et al. (2008). *Weapons of Mass Persuasion: Strategic Communication to Combat Violent Extremism.* Peter Lang Publishing, New York.

Cottee, S. (2016). Reborn into terrorism – Why are so many ISIS recruits ex-cons and converts? *The Atlantic.* Retrieved from https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2016/01/isis-criminals-converts/426822/

CT Morse (N.A.). Reviewing the Evidence Base on Migration and Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism. Retrieved from http://ct-morse.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/EU-CVE-Migration-.pdf

David, O. J., & Asuelime, L. E., & Onapajo, H. (2015). *Boko-Haram: the socio-economic drivers.* London, England: Springer International Publishing.

Denoeux, G., & Carter, L. (2009). *Guide to the Drives of Violent Extremism.* Washington, DC: United States Agency for International Development.

Durkheim's Concept (2008). Durkheim's concept of anomie – Against the broader backdrop of his theory of good society. Retrieved from http://www.oocities.org/ylhao/Durkheim.htm

Dweck, C. (2007). *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success.* Ballantine Books.

Enders, W., & Hoover, G. A. (2012). The nonlinear relationship between terrorism and poverty. *American Economic Review, 102 (3),* 267-272.

Enders, W., & Hoover, G. A., & Sandler, T. (2016). The changing nonlinear relationship between income and terrorism. *Journal of Conflict Resolution, 60 (2),* 195-225.

Feddes, A. R., & Mann, L., & Doosje, B. (2015). Increasing self-esteem and empathy to prevent violent radicalization: a longitudinal quantitative evaluation of a resilience training focused on adolescents with a dual identity. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 45,* 400-411.

Fisher, W. R. (1984). Narration as a Human Communication Paradigm: The Case of Public Moral Argument. *Communication Monograph*s, 51(1), 1-22.

Fisher, W. R. (1985). The Narrative Paradigm: An Elaboration. *Communication Monogra*phs, 52(4), 347-367.

Freytag, A., & Kruger, J. J., & Meierrieks, D. (2010). *The origins of terrorism: cross-country estimates of socio-economic determinants of terrorism.* Berlin, Germany: German Institute for Economic Research.

Gambetta, D., & Hertog, S. (2016). *Engineers of Jihad: the curious connection between violent extremism and education.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Gassebner, M., & Luechinger, S. (2011). Lock, stock, and barrel: a comprehensive assessment of the determinants of terror. *Public Choice, 149,* 235-261.

Global Terrorism Database (GTD). (2016). Retrieved from http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/

Goldstein, K. B. (2005). Unemployment, inequality and terrorism: Another look at the relationship between economics and terrorism. *Undergraduate Economic Review, 1 (1):* 1-21.

Green, M. (2017). USAID Administrator Mark Green participates in a panel discussion with congressman Ed Royce and congresswoman Nita Lowey on "U.S. development priorities: views from the administration and congress". Retrieved from https://www.usaid.gov/news-information/press-releases/sep-19-2017-usaid-administrator-mark-green-participates-panel-discussion

Gungea, M., & Jaunky, V. C., & Ramesh, V. (2017). Personality traits and juvenile delinquency – a critical analysis. *International Journal of Conceptions on Management and Social Sciences, 5 (1),* 42-46.

Helfgott, J. (2013). Emotional Correlates of Radicalization and Terrorism. In *Criminal Psychology* (pp. 215-226). Westport: Praeger.

Hinds, R. (2013). *Islamic Radicalization in North and West Africa – Drivers and approaches to tackle radicalization.* Birmingham, UK: University of Birmingham.

Hogg, M. A. (2000). Subjective uncertainty reduction through self-categorization: A motivational theory of social identity processes. *European Review of Social psychology, 11,* 223-255.

Hogg, M. A., & Meehan, C., & Farquharson, J. (2010). The solace of radicalism: Self-uncertainty and group identification in the face of threat. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 46,* 1061-1066.

Hogg, M. A., & Sherman, D. K., & Dierselhuis, J., & Maitner, A. T., & Moffitt, G. (2007). Uncertainty, entitativity, and group identification. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 43 (1),* 135-142.

Holmes, R., & McCord, A., & Hagen-Zanker, J. (2013). *What is the evidence on the impact of employment creation on stability and poverty reduction in fragile states – a systematic review.* London, UK: Overseas Development Institute.

Holmes, R., McCord A., Hagen-Zanker, J., Bergh, G., & Zanker, F. (2013). *What is the evidence on the impact of employment creation on stability and poverty reduction in fragile states.* London, UK: Overseas Development Institute.

Hooghe, M., & Reeskens, T., & Stolle, D. (2007). Diversity, multiculturalism and social cohesion: trust and ethnocentrism in European societies. In *Belonging? Diversity, Recognition and Shared Citizenship in Canada* (pp. 1-24). Institute for Research on Public Policy.

Jang, S. J., & Johnson, B. R. (2003). Strain, negative emotions, and deviant coping among African Americans: A test of general strain theory. *Journal of Quantitative Criminology, 19 (1),* 79-105.

Jetter, M., & Stadelmann, D. (2017). Looking at terror attacks 'per capita' should make us rethink beliefs about levels of risk and Muslims. Retrieved from http://theconversation.com/looking-at-terror-attacks-per-capita-should-make-us-rethink-beliefs-about-levels-of-risk-and-muslims-78449

Kabiru, C. W., & Mojola, S. A., & Beguy, D., & Okigbo, C. (2013). Growing up at the 'margins': Concerns, aspirations, and expectations of young people living in Nairobi's slums. *Journal of Research on Adolescence, 23(1),* 81-94.

Kiendrebeogo, Y., & Ianchovichina, E. (2016). *Who supports violent extremism in developing countries? Analysis of attitudes based on value surveys.* Washington, DC: World Bank Group.

King, M., & Taylor, D. M. (2011). The radicalization of homegrown jihadists: A review of theoretical models and social psychological evidence. *Terrorism and Political Violence, 23,* 602-622.

Krueger, A. B., & Laitin, D. D. (2008). Kto Kogo?: A Cross-Country Study of the Origins and Targets of Terrorism. In Keefer, P., and N. Loayza (Eds.), *Terrorism and Economic Development* (pp. 148-173) Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Krueger, A. B., & Maleckova, J. (2003). Education, Poverty and Terrorism: Is There a Causal Connection? *Journal of Economic Perspectives, 17,* 119-144.

Krueger, R. F., & Schmutte, P. S., & Caspi, A., Moffitt, T. E., & Campbell, K., & Silva, P. A. (1994). Personality traits are linked to crime among men and women: Evidence from a birth cohort. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology, 103 (2),* 328-338.

Li, Q., & Schaub, D. (2004). Economic Globalization and Transnational Terrorism. *Journal of Conflict Resolution, 48,* 230-258.

Luckham, R., & Ahmed, I., & Muggah, R., & White, S. (2001). *Conflict and poverty in sub-Saharan Africa: an assessment of the issues and evidence.* Brighton, England: Institute of Development Studies, IDS Working Paper 128.

Masten, A. S. (2001). Ordinary magic – Resilience processes in development. *American Psychologist, 56 (3),* 227-238.

Mcgregor, I. (2016). *Defensive zeal: Compensatory conviction about attitudes, values, goals, groups, and self-definitions in the face of personal uncertainty.* York University, Toronto, Canada.

McGregor, I., & Hayes, J., & Prentice, M. (2015). Motivation for aggressive religious radicalization: goal regulation theory and a personality x threat x affordance hypothesis. *Frontiers in Psychology, 6,* 1-18.

McGregor, I., & Zanna, M. P., & Holmes, J. G., & Spencer, S. J. (2001). Compensatory conviction in the face of personal uncertainty: Going to extremes and being oneself. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 80 (3),* 472-488.

Miguel, E., & Satyanath, S., & Sergenti, E. (2003). Economic shocks and civil conflict: An instrumental variables approach. *Journal of Political Economy, 112 (4):* 725-753.

Mullins, S. (2009). Parallels between crime and terrorism: A social psychological perspective. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism, 32 (9),* 811-830.

Munton, T., Martin, A., Lorenc, T., Marrero-Guillamon, I., Jamal, F., Lehmann, A., Cooper, C., & Sexton, M. (2011*). Understanding vulnerability and resilience in individuals to the influence of Al Qa'ida violent extremism – A Rapid Evidence Assessment to inform policy and practice in preventing violent extremism.* London, UK: Office of Security and Counter-Terrorism.

Myyra, L., & Juujarvi, S., & Pesso, K. (2010). Empathy, perspective taking and personal values as predictors of moral schemas. *Journal of Moral Education, 39 (2),* 213-233.

Nassar-Eddine, M., & Garnham, B., & Agostino, K., & Caluya, G. (2011). *Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Literature Review*. Edinburgh, Australia: Counter Terrorism and Security Technology Center.

Neppl, T. K., & Jeon, S., & Schofield, T. J., & Donnellan, M. B. (2015). The impact of economic pressure on parent positivity, parenting, and adolescent positivity into emerging adulthood. *Family Relations, 64 (1),* 80-92.

Nivette, A., & Eisner, M., & Ribeaud, D. (2017). Developmental predictors of violent extremist attitudes: A test of general strain theory. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency,* 1-37.

Ojielo, O., & Yahya, M., & Bandield, J., & Kipgen, C., & Botha, A., & Elman, I., &… van Hemmen, J. (2017). *Journey to Extremism in Africa.* New York, New York: United Nations Development Program.

Olojo, A. (2013). *Nigeria's Troubled North: Interrogating the Drivers of Publics Support for Boko Haram.* The Hague, The Netherlands: International Centre for Counter-Terrorism.

Piazza, J. A. (2008). Incubators of Terror: Do Failed and Failing States Promote Transnational Terrorism? *International Studies Quarterly, 52,* 469-488.

Piazza, J. A. (2006). Rooted in poverty? Terrorism, poor economic development, and social cleavages. *Terrorism and Political Violence, 18,* 159-177.

Policy Brief (2016). *"They treat us all like jihadis".* London, England: International Alert.

Proctor, K. (2015). *Youth & Consequences – unemployment, injustice and violence.* Portland, Oregon: Mercy Corps.

Pyszczynski, T., & Abdollahi, A., & Solomon, S., & Greenber, J., & Cohen, F., & Weise, D. (2006). Mortality salience, martyrdom, and military might: The great satan versus the axis of evil. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 32 (4),* 525-537.

Rice, S. E., & Graff, C., & Pascual, C. (2010). Confronting poverty: weak states and U.S. national security. In Rice, S. E., & Graff, C., & Pascual, C. (Eds.), *Poverty, Development, and Violent Extremism in Weak States* (pp. 42-89). Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press.

Rose, M. (2015). Immunizing the Mind. *British Council.*

Sageman, M. (2004). *Understanding Terror Networks.* Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Sandbrook, R., & Romano, D. (2004). Globalisation, extremism and violence in poor countries. *Third World Quarterly, 25,* 1007-1030.

Schoepfer, A., & Piquero, A. R. (2006). Self-control, moral beliefs, and criminal activity. *Deviant Behavior, 27 (1),* 51-71.

Schuurman, B., & Eijkman, Q. (2013). *Moving terrorism research forward: the crucial role of primary sources.* The Hague, The Netherlands: International Centre for Counter-Terrorism.

Sherman, L. W. (1993). Defiance, Deterrence, and Irrelevance: A Theory of the Criminal Sanction. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency, 30*(4), 445-473.

Sherman, R. A., Nave, C. S., Funder, D. C. (2012). Situational construal is related to personality and gender. *Journal of Research in Personality, 47,* 1-14.

Sixtus, M. (2017). Development deficit feeds Boko Haram in northern Cameroon. Retrieved from https://www.irinnews.org/analysis/2017/09/06/development-deficit-feeds-boko-haram-northern-cameroon

Suedfeld, P., & Brcic, J. (2011). Scoring universal values in the study of terrorist groups and leaders. *Dynamics of Asymmetric Conflict, 4(2),* 166-174.

Taylor, M., & Horgan, J. (2006). A conceptual framework for addressing psychological process in the development of the terrorist. *Terrorism and Political Violence, 18 (4),* 585-601.

Theroux-Benoni, L., & Assanvo, W., & Maiga, I., & Abatan, J. E., & Ba, F., & Gnonsekan, P. O., … & Tounkara, A. (2016). *Mali's young 'jihadists' – fueled by faith or circumstance?* Dakar, Senegal: Institute for Security Studies.

Torres, J. A. (2013). *Exploring the causes of Islamic radicalization and recruitment and the general strain theory in identified terrorists* (master's thesis). Retrieved from http://epublications.regis.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1231&context=theses

Victoroff, J. (2005). The mind of the terrorist: A review and critique of psychological approaches. *The Journal of Conflict Resolution, 49 (1)*, 3-42.

Villa-Vicencio, C., & Buchanan-Clarke, S., & Humphrey, A. (2016). *Community perceptions of violent extremism in Kenya.* Cape Town, South Africa: Institute for Justice and Reconciliation.

Wareham, J. J. (2005). Strain, personality traits, and deviance among adolescents: Moderating factors. *Graduate Theses and Dissertations.* http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/etd/904

Wingard, M. (2017). *Resilience and Fragility.* Washington, DC: United States Agency for International Development.

Walsh, F. (2012). Family resilience: Strengths forged through adversity. In *Normal Family Processes* (pp. 399-427). New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Wiktorowicz, Q. (2004). Joining the Cause: Al-Muhajiroun and Radical Islam. *Rhodes College research paper.* https://www.scribd.com/document/105382704/Wiktorowicz-joining-the-Cause

Wilson, J. J., & Williams, S. E., & Garner, E., & Duxbury, E., & Steiner, H. (2001). Personality traits in juvenile delinquents: Associations with peer and family relations. *Jefferson Journal of Psychiatry, 16 (1),* 32-43.

Wooditch, A., & Tang, L. L., & Taxman, F. S. (2014). Which criminogenic need changes are most important in promoting desistance from crime and substance use? *Criminal Justice Behavior, 41 (3),* 276-299.

Zhao, R., & Cao, L. (2010). Social change and anomie: A cross-national study. *Social Forces, 88 (3),* 1209-1229.