

**UNIVERSITY OF GHANA**



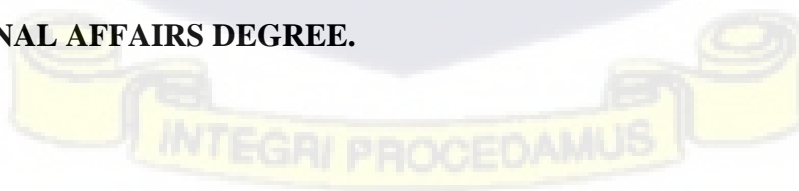
**COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN WEST AFRICA: THE  
“SMART” ROLE OF THE MILITARY**

**BY**

**FELIX ADOM ASANTE**

**(10145251)**

**THIS THESIS IS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA, LEGON IN  
PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF PhD IN  
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS DEGREE.**



**APRIL 2024**

## DEDICATION

This research work is dedicated to my wife Mrs. Florence Asante and my children Rudolf, Emily, Lois, Lynn and Lauren for their love and support throughout my academic journey.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A number of individuals and institutions have in diverse ways contributed significantly towards the completion of this work. My utmost thanks go to the almighty God for his provision, protection and abundant grace throughout the journey of this endeavor. I am deeply indebted to my supervisory team, Dr. Ken Ahorsu, Dr. Fredrick Boamah and Dr. Festus Aubyn, for their technical input, guidance, patience and expert advice which saw the completion of this study. I am particularly grateful for all the sacrifices and the valuable time you had with me. I say a special thank you to Professor Emmanuel Debrah for his immeasurable support and confidence in my ability to complete this study.

I acknowledge the value of the interviews granted by His Excellency Lt General Obed Boamah Akwa (retired) Ghana Ambassador to Egypt and former Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) of the Ghana Armed Forces. I am grateful to Vice Admiral Seth Amoama (retired) the former CDS for his support and guidance in my work. I am grateful to the members of the Military Attache Agency Cairo (MAAC) for their invaluable support and contribution towards the completion of this study. To the staff of the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping and Training Center (KAIPTC) and the Ghana Armed Forces Command and Staff College (GAFSC), I express my gratitude for the access to their libraries and various documents of relevance to my work. I am however solely responsible for all shortcomings associated with the entire study.

Special thanks go to Florence my wife who encouraged me not to give up on this study.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACSRT-	African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism
ADF -	Africa Defense Forum
AI -	Accra Initiative
AQIM -	Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
AU -	Africa Union
CAS -	Chief of Air Staff
CDS -	Chief of Defense Staff
CIMIC-	Civil-Military Cooperation
CNS -	Chief of Naval Staff
COAS-	Chief of Army Staff
COE-DAT-	Centre of Excellence Defence Against Terrorism
COS -	Chief of Staff
CSIP -	Command and Staff Instructions and Procedures
CVE -	Countering Violent Extremism
DCIS -	Defence Communication and Information Systems
DDR -	Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration
DG LOG	Director General Logistics
DPR -	Department of Public Relations
DRA -	Director Religious Affairs
DSFs -	Defense and Security Forces

EAF	-	Egypt Armed Forces
ECOWAS	-	Economic Community of West African States
EOMOG	-	Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group
EPON	-	Effectiveness of Peace Operations Network
EU	-	European Union
GAF	-	Ghana Armed Forces
GAFCS	-	Ghana Armed Forces Command and Staff College
GTI	-	Global Terrorism Index
GWOT	-	Global War on Terror
HLD	-	High- Level Defection
ISGS	-	Islamic State in the Greater Sahara
ISIL	-	Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant
ISIS	-	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
ISSER	-	Institute of Statistical, Social, and Economic Research
JNIM	-	Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin
KAIPTC	-	Kofi Anna International Peacekeeping Training Centre
LECIAD	-	Legon Center for International Affairs and Diplomacy
LEGO	-	Legal Officer
MNJTF	-	Multinational Joint Task Force
NAFPCVET	-	National Framework for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism and Terrorism

### DECLARATION

I hereby declare that except for references to other publications which have been duly acknowledged herein, this thesis is the result of an original research conducted by me under the supervision of the undersigned. I also declare that I have not submitted this work to any other institution for assessment, publication, or for any other purpose.

Signature.....

**FELIX ADOM ASANTE**

(STUDENT)

Date **3 APRIL 2024**

Signature.....

**DR. KEN AHORSU**

(PRINCIPAL SUPERVISOR)

DATE: **03/04/2024**

Signature.....

**DR FREDRICK BOAMAH**

(SUPERVISOR)

DATE: **03/04/2024**

Signature.....

**DR FESTUS KOFI AUBYN**

(SUPERVISOR)

DATE: **03/04/2024**

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b>CONTENTS</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
DECLARATION.....	ii
DEDICATION.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.....	iv
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	viii
LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES.....	xviii
ABSTRACT.....	xix
<b>CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>1</b>
1.0 Background of the Study.....	1
1.1 Statement of the Problem.....	10
1.3 Research Questions.....	13
1.4 Research Objectives.....	14
1.5 Scope of the Research.....	14
1.6 Significance of the Research.....	15

1.7	Limitations of the Study.....	17
1.8	Organization of Chapters.....	18
<b>CHAPTER TWO.....</b>		<b>20</b>
<b>LITERATURE REVIEW.....</b>		<b>20</b>
2.0	Introduction.....	20
2.1	Concepts of Violent Extremism, Radicalism, and Countering Violent Extremism.....	20
2.1.1	Emergence of the Concept of Violent Extremism.....	21
2.1.2.	Conceptual Models of the Process of Radicalization into Violent Extremism.....	23
2.1.3.	Origin and Evolution of Countering Violent Extremism (CVE).....	26
2.2	Drivers of Violent Extremism and Consequences in West Africa.....	29
2.2.1	Push and Pull Factors of Violent Extremism.....	29
2.2.2	Lack of Socio-economic Opportunities.....	30
2.2.3	Marginalization and Discrimination.....	32
2.2.4	Poor Governance, Violation of Human Rights and the Rule of Law.....	34
2.2.5	Prolonged and Unresolved Conflicts.....	36
2.2.6	Radicalization in Prisons.....	36
2.2.7	Individuals Motivation for Radicalization.....	38

2.3	Strategies in Countering Violent Extremism.....	39
2.3.1	Offensive strategies to countering violent extremism.....	41
2.3.2	Defensive strategies to Countering Violent Extremism.....	42
2.3.3	Ideological Strategy to Countering Violent Extremism.....	44
2.3.4	Communication Strategies to Countering Violent Extremism.....	45
2.3.5	Political strategies to Countering Violent Extremism.....	47
2.3.6	Social policy strategies to Countering Violent Extremism.....	48
2.3.7	Critiques of Countering Violent Extremism Strategies.....	50
2.4.	Importance of Non-kinetic Warfare Doctrine.....	53
2.5.	Smart Military Doctrine in Countering Violent Extremism.....	55
2.6.	Military force as an instrument for Countering Violent Extremism.....	56
2.6.1	West Africa Military Strategy in Countering Violent Extremism.....	57
2.7.	Case Study -Turkey Application of Smart Military Strategy.....	60
2.8.	Case Study-Egypt’s Application of Smart Military Strategy.....	62
2.8.1	Egypt Armed Forces (EAF) Kinetic Activities.....	63
2.8.2	Egypt Armed Forces Non-kinetic Activities.....	64
2.9.	Gaps in Countering Violent Extremism Research.....	65

2.10. Conclusion .....	66
<b>CHAPTER THREE.....</b>	<b>68</b>
<b>THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....</b>	<b>68</b>
3.0 Introduction.....	68
3.1 Conceptualizing Hard and Soft Power.....	69
3.2 Analysis of the Relationship between Soft and Hard Power.....	70
3.2.1 Understanding the Dichotomous Continuous Relationships between Hard and Soft Power .....	72
3.3 Smart Power Theory.....	74
3.3.1 Smart Power Theory and the Liberalism Tradition.....	75
3.3.2 Smart Power Theory and the Realist Tradition.....	76
3.3.3 Key tenets of Smart Power.....	78
3.3.4 Criticisms of Smart Power.....	79
3.3.5 Justifying the use of Smart Power.....	81
3.4 Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT).....	83
3.4.1 Criticisms of the RSCT.....	86
3.4.2 Significance and Justification for the Use of RSCT.....	88
3.5. Conclusion .....	90

<b>CHAPTER FOUR.....</b>	<b>92</b>
<b>METHODOLOGY.....</b>	<b>92</b>
4.0 Introduction.....	92
4.1 Research Philosophy.....	92
4.2 Research Approach.....	94
4.2.1 Rationale for a Qualitative Approach.....	95
4.3. Research Design.....	97
4.4 Selection of Cases.....	99
4.5 Sampling Techniques/Methods.....	102
4.5.1 Sampling Size and Justification.....	103
4.5.2 Study Population.....	104
4.6 Sample Population.....	104
4.7 Method of Data Collection .....	107
4.7.1 Sources of Data Collection.....	108
4.7.2 Instruments for Data Collection.....	109
4.7.3 Data Collection Techniques.....	110
4.7.4 Observation of Respondents.....	111

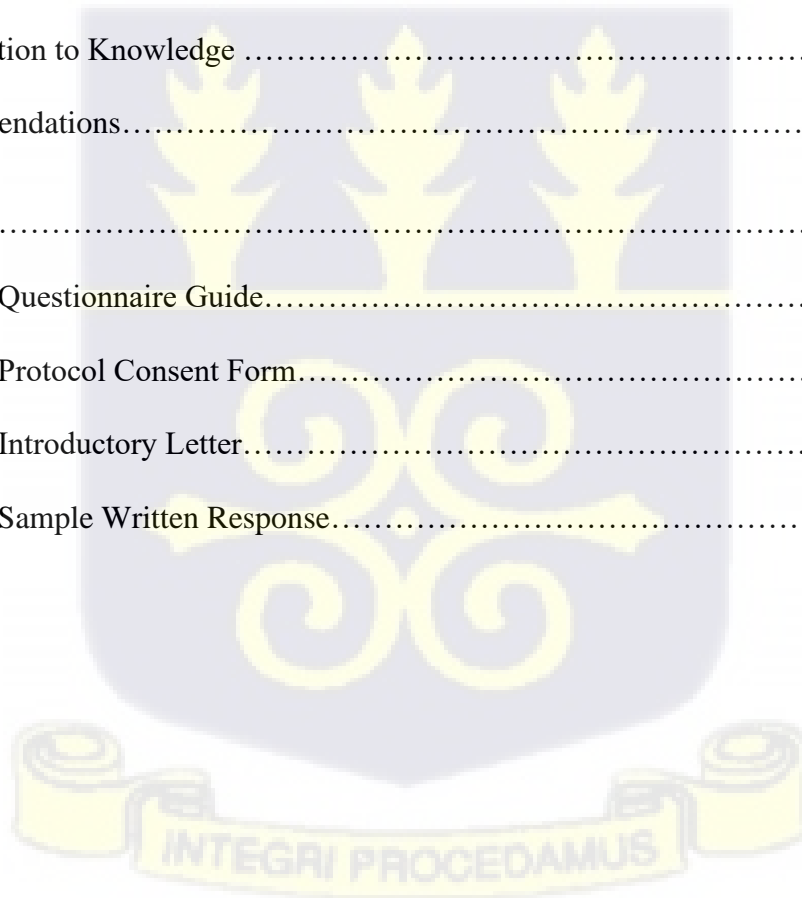
4.8	Method of Data Analysis.....	112
4.9	Ethical Considerations.....	113
4.10	Ensuring Validity and Reliability.....	114
4.11.	Conclusion .....	116
<b>CHAPTER FIVE.....</b>		<b>117</b>
<b>SMART MILITARY STRATEGY IN COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN WEST AFRICA.....</b>		<b>117</b>
5.0	Introduction.....	117
5.1	Background to Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria.....	118
5.2	Nigeria’s Kinetic Military CVE Strategies.....	119
5.2.1	Nigeria’s Non-kinetic Military CVE Strategies.....	122
5.2.2.	Analysis of Nigeria’s Non-kinetic Military Strategy.....	124
5.3	Background to the Mali Insurgency.....	127
5.4	Mali’s Military Kinetic Strategies in CVE.....	129
5.4.1	Mali’s Military Non-Kinetic Strategies in CVE.....	130
5.4.2.	Analysis of the Mali Military Strategy for Countering Violent Extremism.....	132
5.5	Ghana’s Readiness to Counter Violent Extremism.....	137
5.6.	Ghana’s Military Strategy in Countering Violent Extremism.....	139

5.6.1. Ghana Armed Forces Kinetic Activities.....	139
5.6.2. Ghana Armed Forces Non-Kinetic Activities.....	141
5.6.3 Analysis of Ghana Armed Forces Non-kinetic Strategy.....	142
5.6.4 Impact of GAF Military Strategy on Violent Extremism.....	144
5.7 Accra Initiative (AI).....	145
5.7.1 AI Kinetic Military Operations.....	146
5.7.2 AI Non-Kinetic Military Operations.....	147
5.8. Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) Strategy in Countering Violent Extremism.....	148
5.8.1 LCBC-MNJFT Kinetic Activities.....	149
5.8.2 (LCDC) MNJTF Non-Kinetic Activities.....	152
5.9 The G5 Sahel CVE Measures.....	154
5.10. Is the West Africa CVE Military Strategy Smart? .....	156
5.11. Conclusion.....	158
<b>CHAPTER SIX.....</b>	<b>159</b>
<b>CHALLENGES AND TRANSFORMATION FOR EFFECTIVE SMART MILITARY STRATEGY APPLICATION IN WEST AFRICA.....</b>	<b>159</b>
6.0 Introduction.....	159

6.1.	Challenges in the Application of Smart Military Strategy in West Africa.....	159
6.1.1	Doctrine Challenges in the Application of Smart Military Strategy in West Africa.....	160
6.1.2.	Cultural and Institutional Challenges in the Application of Smart Military Strategy....	161
6.1.3.	Organizational Structures and Operational Challenges in the Application of Smart Strategy.....	162
6.1.4.	Training and Capabilities Challenges in the Application of Smart Military Strategy....	166
6.1.5	Challenges of Utilizing Non-kinetic Military Strategy in Countering Violent Extremism in West Africa.....	167
6.2.	Transformation for Effective Smart Military Strategy in West Africa.....	169
6.2.1.	On-Going Military Transformation in West Africa.....	170
6.2.2.	Military Training Institution’s Transformation in West Africa.....	172
6.2.3	Military Gender Sensitivity Transformation in West Africa.....	174
6.2.4.	What Should Not Change in the Military? .....	177
6.3.	Transforming Military Personnel for Smart Military Application in West Africa.....	178
6.4	Equipping for Smart Military Application in West Africa.....	180
6.5.	Establishing Civil –Military-Cooperation (CIMIC) Commands in West Africa.....	181
6.6.	Towards an Effective Smart Military Application in West Africa.....	184
6.7	Conclusion.....	185

<b>CHAPTER SEVEN.....</b>	<b>187</b>
<b>ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION.....</b>	<b>187</b>
7.0. Introduction.....	187
7.1 Analyzing the Smart Military Strategy for countering violent extremism in West Africa.....	188
7.2 Analysis of Utilization of the Non-kinetic Capabilities of the military in West Africa.....	191
7.3 Evaluating the Doctrinal, Operational and Training Challenges in Applying Smart Military Strategy.....	195
7.4. Examining the Military Transformation for Effective Smart Military Application in West Africa.....	197
7.5. Conclusion.....	199
<b>CHAPTER EIGHT.....</b>	<b>200</b>
<b>SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND     RECOMMENDATIONS.....</b>	<b>200</b>
8.0. Introduction.....	200
8.1 Summary of Research Findings.....	200
8.1.1 Examining the Smart Military Strategy in Countering Violent Extremism	

in West Africa.....	201
8.1.2 Analyzing the West Africa Military’s Utilization of Non-kinetic Military Capabilities in Countering Violent Extremism.....	203
8.1.3 Evaluating the Challenges of Smart Military Strategy.....	204
8.1.4 Examining the Transformation of the West Africa Military for the Application of Smart Military Strategy.....	205
8.2. Other Findings.....	206
8.3 Conclusion.....	207
8.4 Contribution to Knowledge .....	209
8.5. Recommendations.....	210
Bibliography - .....	214
Appendix I - Questionnaire Guide.....	238
Appendix II - Protocol Consent Form.....	242
Appendix III - Introductory Letter.....	246
Appendix IV - Sample Written Response.....	247



**LIST OF TABLES**

<b>Serial Figure</b>	<b>Content</b>	<b>Page</b>
Table 1	- Distribution of sampled study population.....	102
Table 2	- Number of Boko Haram attacks in the Lake Chad region.....	146
Table 3	- Number of Refugees and IDPs returned to their Ancestral Homes.....	149
Table 4	- Combining the Advantages of kinetic and non-kinetic military Structures for smart strategy.....	179

**LIST OF FIGURES**

<b>Serial Figure</b>	<b>Content</b>	<b>Page</b>
Figure 5.1	- Map showing the four sectors of the MNJTF in the Lake Chad Region.....	145
Figure 5.2	- Fatalities from Boko Haram attacks in the Lake Chad region.....	147
Figure 5.3	- Map of G5 Sahel, West, Central and East Sectors.....	151
Figure 6.1	- Ghana Infantry Battalion Organizational Structure.....	161
Figure 6.2	- Spectrum of Hard and Soft Power Activities.....	167
Figure 6.3	- Current Ghana Armed Forces Organizational Structure.....	179
Figure 6.4	- Proposed Ghana Armed Forces Organizational Structure.....	179

## ABSTRACT

Violent extremism is a major security concern in the international political system. Having recognized the devastating effects of violent extremism, there have been countless international regional and national initiatives to prevent and counter the phenomenon. Most of the initiatives to counter violent extremism have involved the military. The international, regional multinational military and national armies have played a major role in countering violent extremism. However, the role of the military in countering violent extremism has often been analyzed in the context of their kinetic military approaches. Most security analysts have argued that the overly-military centric approach has resulted in the increasing spread of extremism and that violent extremism cannot be halted by kinetic military approach alone. There is the general conception that combining kinetic and non-kinetic military approaches is the best option in dealing with the spread of violent extremist ideology. The problem is although the global initiatives in countering violent extremism is shifting emphasis from kinetic to combined kinetic and non-kinetic military approaches (smart military), the validity of the concept of “smart” military strategy has not been fully explored in literature. The capabilities of the military in West Africa to effectively apply “smart” military strategy have not been fully explored. Given that most analysts attribute the failure of the US and NATO campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq to the overly kinetic approach, the study examined the “smart” role of the military in countering violent extremism in West Africa. It is factual that the militaries in West Africa have combined kinetic and non-kinetic military approaches in countering violent extremism however, how to transform the military in West Africa to be effective in the application of “smart” military strategy was the focus of the study. The study used Joseph Nye’s Smart Power Theory and the Regional Security Complex Theory to examine how the national armies and the multinational task forces have utilized their non-kinetic and kinetic military capabilities in countering violent extremism. The study used interpretive qualitative approach in understanding the “smart” role of the military in countering violent extremism, bearing in mind the regional security and how the culture and ethos of the military can affect the application of smart military strategy. Thirty respondents with expert knowledge and experience in the subject matter were interviewed using semi-structured and unstructured interviews. The study found that both the national armies and the various military interventions to counter the phenomenon have mostly focused on kinetic military approaches. The study again found that there are challenges in integrating and combining kinetic and non-kinetic military approaches. There is the need for a significant shift in the culture, orientation and organizational structure of the military force in West Africa to be effective in the application of “smart” military strategy.



## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.0 Background of the Study.

Violent extremism is a persistent global issue that knows no border, nationality, or religion. The phenomenon is widely regarded as a significant threat to global peace and security, human rights, and sustainable development (Amit et al, 2021). Violent extremism is a diverse phenomenon without a clear universally accepted definition. It is neither new nor exclusive to any system of belief. Fundamentally, violent extremism is a process by which an individual or a group comes to take up a violent form of action that is directly linked to an extremist ideology that contests the established order at the political, social, or cultural level (Ambrozik, 2018). Violent extremism has emerged as one of the most pressing global security challenges of the 21st century (Farhadi, 2020). Its effects essentially resonate on a global scale as evidenced by the insecurity that pervades the international system. Violent extremist attacks have occurred in more than 210 different countries and territories since 1970 (LaFree, 2019).

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (2016) says that the global spread of extremism and the extent to which the groups' influence, recruitment, and operations transcend borders is of major global security concern. This has been aided by the increased flow of people, goods, and ideas across borders in recent times. The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and al-Qaeda for example, despite originating in Syria and Saudi Arabia have conducted acts of violence not only within their home regions but also in various parts of Asia, Africa, Europe, and North America (Byman, 2015). This has served as a catalyst for the surge of violent extremism

that has claimed the lives of numerous innocent individuals of various colors, religions, and nationalities.

For the past twenty years, the fight against violent extremism continues to see no resolve. It is estimated that about 120 Islamist extremist groups are active all over the world (Blair, 2018). These groups have recruited about 230,000 fighters involved in atrocities in some 70 countries (Blair, 2018). The year 2017 alone recorded 84,000 casualties according to the Global Extremism Monitor (2018). The number of fatalities attributable to violent extremism has risen from approximately 3000 in 2003 to over 30,000 in 2022 (Global Terrorism Index, 2023). Despite a drop, 2015 still ranked second among the worst years on record with 29,376 fatalities (UNDP, 2016) while in 2022, 6,701 people died from 3955 extremist attacks globally (GTI, 2023).

The African continent is a microcosm of the nature and effects of extremism on the global stage. The continent is vulnerable to violent extremism because of its porous borders, weak institutions, poorly trained or equipped military, historical conflicts, and lack of economic development (Adesote & Ajayi, 2021). Due to this, violent extremist organizations like al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), Boko Haram, and al-Shabaab have taken the opportunity and increased insecurity in most African countries. Even before the famous 9/11 attacks in the US, Kenya and Tanzania suffered simultaneous terrorist attacks when car bombs destroyed the US Missions in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam (Duncker, 2016). These attacks killed at least eighty people and injured over 1,600 others. Post 9/11, Kenya especially suffered other attacks, including a major attack on the Westgate Shopping Mall in Nairobi (Gacau, 2019). The attack which was claimed by al Shabaab killed 67 people and injured 175 (Parrin, 2016).

The state of extremism on the larger African continent has been mirrored in West Africa where the influence and operations of extremist groups are witnessed. While some academics trace extremist ideologies in West Africa to the 19<sup>th</sup> century Sokoto Caliphate (Chafe, 1994), the causes of extremism in West Africa are contemporary and can be attributed to a myriad of factors. Weak and illegitimate governance, corruption, economic decline, and the worsening effects of climate change are among the factors that account for extremism in the West African sub-region (Centre for Preventive Action, 2023). Poverty, youth unemployment, restricted educational opportunities and the porous borders of West Africa further exacerbate the problem (Akinola, 2015). According to Bøås (2015), the porosity of West Africa's borders especially, has facilitated not only the physical movement of militants and weapons but also the transference of radical ideologies into West African countries.

The rise of extremist factions in West Africa, exemplified by groups like Boko Haram, al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), and the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS), has precipitated widespread sociopolitical, economic, and humanitarian disruptions across the region. According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) report in 2020, acts of violence especially those of Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin led to the displacement of over 2.4 million individuals in 2020. The violence has escalated security tensions and simultaneously weakened regional economies through the hindrance of trade, the decline in tourism, and the deterrence of potential investors (World Bank, 2016). To worsen these problems, extremists have exploited and exacerbated ethnic and religious tensions, as shown in Mali and Burkina Faso, where jihadists incite inter-communal warfare (International Crisis Group, 2019). The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (2019)

explains that the transnational operations have triggered large cross-border migrations, putting surrounding nations under pressure and exacerbating regional tensions.

The influence of extremist groups in West Africa has become so much that the Sahel and West Africa became the epicenter of violent extremism in 2022, accounting for more extremist deaths than both South Asia and MENA combined (GTI, 2023). There were around 20 extremist attacks in Benin between the end of 2021 and summer 2022, while in May 2022 eight Togolese soldiers were killed in the first terrorist attack in that country. Burkina Faso and Mali recorded substantial increases in extremism and accounted for 73 percent of violent extremist deaths in West Africa in 2022 (GTI, 2023). Extremist activity is rising in Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger despite the presence of the EU, France, Russia, the UN, and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) military actions in these nations. Mali and Burkina Faso were two of the nations with the highest number of violent extremism-related deaths worldwide in 2022, according to the GTI report.

The widespread impact of violent extremism has deeply affected many societies, economies, and several cultures. The Syrian conflict, intensified by the likes of ISIS, stands as testament to this, resulting in the death and displacement of countless individuals (UNHCR, 2020). Extremist activities in various regions have caused disruptions in key economic sectors, with the aviation industry's significant revenue decline after the 9/11 attacks serving as a somber indicator (International Air Transport Association, 2002). In response, governments have ramped up security, leading to ballooning defense budgets, exemplified by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security after 9/11 (Department of Homeland Security, 2019).

On the political front, extremist events have bolstered populist sentiments, particularly in Europe, where there's a push for stricter immigration protocols in light of refugee movements

from war-torn areas (Pew Research Center, 2018). Such radicalism deepens societal divides, and events like the Christchurch shootings stand as grim reminders of the rising tide of far-right sentiments and Islam-phobic tendencies (Kirk, 2019). The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2015), avers that from a cultural perspective, the loss resonates deeply when extremist factions, like the Taliban and ISIS, obliterate irreplaceable historical sites, as seen in Bamiyan and Palmyra in Afghanistan and Syria respectively.

The increase in violent extremism has thus become a growing concern for governments, policymakers, security experts, and academia. The international community has invested significant resources and effort towards addressing the threat but the problem still persists (Clubb et al, 2021). Governments all over the world have initiated measures at various levels of governance to deal with the problem of violent extremism (Gielen, 2020). Despite the various global interventions in the fight against violent extremism the threat is gaining momentum through a series of attacks in countries across the globe. The international community recognizes the importance of international cooperation in the fight against violent extremism. One obstacle to international cooperation is the failure to achieve a universally acceptable definition of violent extremism.

Before 9/11, violent extremism was primarily seen as a form of crime. The countermeasures therefore prioritized the rule of law, respect for human rights, and the primacy of law enforcement over the military option. The military option and the use of force at the time were the last resort and were used in support of other agencies. This approach to countering violent extremism changed immediately after the 9/11 coordinated terrorist attacks in the United States of America.

The counter-strategy that emerged after 9/11 was the “Global War on Terror” (GWOT), which viewed violent extremism primarily as a new form of warfare, necessitating a robust military response. The immediate policy response of the US and most governments after the 9/11 attacks was the counterterrorism approach (Abbas, 2019). In the GWOT response, the primary strategy for dealing with extremism was the kinetic military approach. The kinetic military response included target killing, drone bombing attacks and assassinations, military deployments, criminal justice, and intelligence gathering. Eliminating and destroying violent extremist groups is the primary goal of a kinetic military strategy (Hoffman, 2018). The kinetic military policy was popular and appealing since historically, governments have primarily used repressive methods to combat violent extremism (Nwangwu & Ezeibe, 2019). That approach is in line with a widespread presumption held by the majority of criminal justice policymakers, who argue that harsher punishments serve as the best deterrent against enemy fighters (LaFree, 2019).

In the past decade, there has been profound disagreement over the effectiveness of the military-led approach to countering violent extremism. The inability of US and NATO military operations in Somalia in 1993, Iraq in 2003, and Afghanistan in 2021 to eradicate violent extremism is evidence that purely kinetic military strategies are ineffective in dealing with the phenomenon (Ivanov, 2020). According to the GTI report, purely kinetic military strategies have a 7% success rate in eradicating violent extremism (GTI, 2015). Given the complexity of the phenomenon, it is widely acknowledged that countermeasures can no longer remain focused on criminal justice and kinetic military approaches.

The broader awareness that countering violent extremism must go beyond the two traditional coercive models of criminal justice and war gave birth to the concept of Countering Violent Extremism (CVE). The concept of CVE was introduced in Europe after the attacks in Madrid

(2004) and London (2005) in response to the fear of homegrown Islamist terrorism (Nunlist & Frazer, 2015). The fundamental driving force behind CVE is the employment of non-coercive methods to prevent people and groups from becoming radicalized toward violent extremism (Koehler & Fiebig, 2019).

The concept of CVE attracted increased attention after the UN Secretary-General committed the UN to the idea by releasing the UN Plan of Action for Preventing Violent Extremism in 2016 (Schomerus et al, 2017). The idea underpinning CVE is that violent extremism should not be fought exclusively with the military. Since 2016 the number of countries in the world with CVE programs has increased from 58% to over 88% in 2019 (Ambrozik, 2019). Nations are shifting their counterterrorism strategies to focus more on CVE. Countering violent extremist approach emphasizes prevention, community involvement, and addressing the root causes of radicalization, in response to the increasingly complex and diverse nature of terrorist threats. The militarized counterterrorism response is seen as counter-productive because it tends to generate more extremist activities (Williams, 2016). The failures of the war on terror in Afghanistan and Iraq made the US to initiate the smart military strategy to secure these countries from violent extremism (Shammari, 2021).

In West Africa, the constantly evolving nature of CVE means that the concept of “smart power” has become an increasingly important strategy in recent times. Smart power, as conceptualized by Barnett et al. (2022), bridges the traditionally opposing concepts of “hard” and “soft” power in CVE. While “hard” power includes direct, typically military, interventions and coercive diplomacy, “soft” power emphasizes non-kinetic, non-aggressive techniques (Said, 2020). Ivanov (2020) advocates an innovative “smart CVE” approach that intelligently combines these kinetic and non-kinetic resources, resulting in a more holistic and effective response to violent

extremism. The UN Plan of Action for Preventing Violent Extremism supports a multifaceted approach that combines kinetic and non-kinetic military strategies (Jansson, 2018). Efforts are being made to assess the successes and challenges of using kinetic and non-kinetic military methods in countering violent extremism at the global, continental, and sub-regional levels.

However, West Africa continues to prioritize kinetic military tactics despite a global shift away from a kinetic-focused strategy in combating violent extremism. Following the GWOT approach, the European Union (EU), France, the United Kingdom, NATO, and the UN have initiated military operations to combat violent extremism in West Africa (USAID, 2021). Operation Serval, Operation Barkhane, and Operation Flintlock are a few examples of foreign military involvement in West Africa. The French military force has been in West Africa and the Sahel since their deployment in Mali in 2013 to fight extremism. They remained there until February 2022, when they started to withdraw due to their unpopularity in the region. Since 2021, Russian influence in the Sahel and West Africa has greatly risen. The Wagner Group, a private military contractor for the Russian government, began operations against jihadist organizations in Burkina Faso and Mali in December 2021. The operations of the foreign military and the training given to local military forces in West Africa have focused on the kinetic military response (GTI, 2023).

The military in West Africa has also been involved in national, sub-regional, and international initiatives to counter the violent extremist groups in the sub-region (Ugwueze & Onuoha, 2020). Several sub-regional military initiatives to counter violent extremism have emerged since the terror threat started spreading in West Africa (Ajodo-Adebanjoko, 2022). The Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) comprising the militaries of Benin, Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria was formed in April 2012 to fight against Boko Haram (Sharif, 2016). The Group of

Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) is also a sub-regional group created in 2014. This group was made up of the militaries of Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Chad, and Mauritania. The mandate of the G-5 Sahel is to fight the extremist groups in the G-5 countries' border areas (Comolli, 2019). Another sub-regional military arrangement is the Accra Initiative (AI) which was launched in 2017 (Theroux-Benoni, 2019). The AI is made up of the militaries of Ghana, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Togo, Mali and Niger. Nigeria is an observer state waiting to be fully integrated as a full member. The three foundations of AI are training military personnel, performing cooperative military actions, and exchanging intelligence and information (Kwarkye, et al, 2019).

All the above-mentioned initiatives to counter violent extremism have been military-led interventions (Comolli, 2019). The specific tasks of these sub-regional interventions include cross-border kinetic military operations, intelligence sharing, and joint border patrols. However, in establishing these sub-regional military interventions, the AU Peace and Security Council recognized the necessity for non-kinetic initiatives to enhance regional development, education, and employment (Ajodo-Adebanjoko, 2020). Most policymakers in West Africa support the kinetic military approach to countering violent extremism (Tella, 2018). For that reason, nearly 80% of the planned budget for the AI is allotted to border security and kinetic military operations (Kwarkye, 2021). Therefore, only 20% of the initiative's budget is designated for its non-kinetic components, which address the root causes of violent extremism. In West Africa, combating violent extremism has become synonymous with using hard-power military action (Ramdeen, 2017).

The rise and spread of violent extremism in West Africa has shown that overly relying on the kinetic capabilities of the military in countering extremism in West Africa is counter-productive

(Nwangwu & Ezeibe, 2019). Further, the kinetic military strategy is believed to have created grievances that fuel violent extremism and radicalism (GTI, 2023). The military intervention strategy is alleged to be authoritarian and has come under criticism for indiscriminately killing people and destroying property (Dze-Ngwa, 2018). The situation in West Africa has worsened because the kinetic military strategies are detrimental to combating violent extremism (Ezeibe et.al, 2022). The question is does it mean that the military is no more relevant in the fight against violent extremism? Some analysts such as Nye have advocated for "smart CVE" which combines kinetic and non-kinetic military approaches to counter violent extremism (Nye, 2023). This study seeks to analyze the "smart CVE" military approach in West Africa with the view to examine its applicability to effectively counter the menace of violent extremism in the sub-region.

### **1.1 Statement of the Problem**

West Africa has witnessed a significant increase in violent extremist activities in recent years, bringing serious security, socioeconomic, and political concerns to the region (Haruna, 2022). Extremist groups such as Boko Haram in Nigeria, Ansarul Islam in Burkina Faso and Mali, and a host of jihadist factions in the Sahel region have carried out devastating attacks, displacing millions and causing significant loss of life and property (Zenn, 2020). The pervasive effects of the operations of extremist groups have engendered CVE efforts by West African governments to mitigate the menace of violent extremism.

Most policymakers and the public supported the aggressive counterterrorism response to violent extremism following the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the US (Horgan et al, 2020). It has been determined that the early US counterterrorism policy, which emphasized military and securitized approaches, is ineffective at tackling the underlying causes of violent extremism (Hakimi, 2020).

The claim is that using development strategies rather than just using force will help combat violent extremism. This has led to a shift from kinetic to non-kinetic military approaches to counter the phenomenon (Ajodo-Adebanjoko, 2022).

The argument for shifting from a kinetic to a non-kinetic military strategy is that repressive policies adopted by governments led to more rather than fewer violent extremist groups (Glowacz, 2020). The effectiveness of the government using a kinetic or non-kinetic approach to combat violent extremism is a topic of general dispute (Phillips, 2023). Some academics and policymakers contend that kinetic military tactics alone can quell violent extremism (Abdulazeez, 2016, LaFree et al, 2017, Byman, 2006). Others argue that non-kinetic military tactics are superior for combating the issue (Hewitt, 1980 LaFree, 2019, Argomaniz & Vidal-Diez, 2014). Some other academics and policymakers support combining kinetic and non-kinetic military strategies (Nye, 2023, Burke, 2004).

Since 2001, there has been a lot of literature, research, and reports on every aspect of violent extremism. The majority of the studies are primarily focused on violent extremism in the US and Europe (Gebremariam, 2022). Research on countering violent extremism in Africa has increased since the African Centre for the Study and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT) was established in 2004 (Maluku, 2018). However, the non-kinetic military approach to suppressing violent extremism in West Africa has received relatively little attention.

The empirical evidence that kinetic military strategy might increase violent extremism does not necessarily authenticate the idea that kinetic military strategy is not useful in countering violent extremism. The counterargument is that even if the kinetic military approach fails to stop violent extremism, it could still be a superior approach to a non-kinetic military strategy. Studying non-

kinetic military strategies is necessary to address this problem and determine how effective they are at preventing violent extremism. Without data on non-kinetic military capabilities, one cannot fully evaluate the impact of the alternatives to kinetic military strategies in countering violent extremism. Empirical evidence on non-kinetic military strategy in countering violent extremism is scarce and emerging (Cherney & Belton, 2021). A study into the non-kinetic role of the military in West Africa is not only appropriate but also most pertinent, given the fact that there are still significant empirical and literature gaps about non-kinetic military strategy in countering the phenomenon.

Most research in CVE in West Africa have been conducted by INGOs which were not focused on non-kinetic military interventions. As such, policymakers have lacked critical primary data on the impact of non-kinetic military operations in CVE in the sub-region. This research will focus on the collection of empirical primary data on the impact of non-kinetic military operations in communities susceptible to violent extremism to inform the military high command in their strategic decision-making process.

Previous empirical studies in CVE have looked at how the military employed kinetic strategy and other governmental and non-governmental agencies used non-kinetic strategy to tackle violent extremism in West Africa (Adesote et al, 2022; Prah & Chanimbe, 2021; Ezeibe et al, 2022; Ramdeen, 2017; Tella, 2018). In these studies, the investigations were on the kinetic military roles in combating violent extremism in West Africa. Adesote, Ajayi, and Akande (2022) assessed the military and counter-insurgency operations against Boko Haram from 2010-2015. Adesote and Akande again investigated the kinetic and non-kinetic approaches of the Federal Government of Nigeria. These studies, however, did not delve into the non-kinetic military approach in countering violent extremism. None of these studies, considered how the

military may counter violent extremism by combining kinetic and non-kinetic measures. There hasn't been much thorough primary data research on CVE in West Africa that combines kinetic and non-kinetic military tactics.

The problem is that although the global emphasis on kinetic military response to violent extremism is shifting towards non-kinetic approaches, little research has been done on smart military measures in countering violent extremism. Some research has been done on the use of smart military power in the US campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq (Shammari, 2021; Abouaou & Gallagher, 2020). In this study, the “smart military strategy” is an integrated approach where non-kinetic military capabilities are brought to the fore and the military institutions have core values that allows for credible use of soft power. This involves the effective use of non-combat military personnel, intelligence and diplomacy in addition to the kinetic military operations in countering violent extremism.

The validity of the concept of a smart military approach to counter violent extremism in West Africa has not yet been fully explored extensively in scholarly literature (Ezeibe et al, 2022). Thus, this research seeks to fill the void by exploring the smart military roles and capabilities in countering violent extremism in West Africa. This research specifically aims to examine both kinetic and non-kinetic military (smart) approach and its impact on violent extremism in West Africa.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

The study is driven by the following research questions:

- I. What is the “smart” military strategy for countering violent extremism in West Africa?

- II. How has the military utilized its non-kinetic capabilities in countering violent extremism in West Africa?
- III. What are the doctrinal, operational, and training challenges of smart military strategy in West Africa?
- IV. How should the military of West Africa be transformed to be effective in employing smart military strategy?

#### **1.4 Research Objectives**

Based on the research questions enumerated above, the objective of the study is as follows: To,

- I. Examine the smart military strategy in countering violent extremism in West Africa.
- II. Analyze how the military has utilized its non-kinetic potential in countering violent extremism in West Africa.
- III. Evaluate the doctrinal, operational, and training challenges of smart military strategy in West Africa.
- IV. Critically examine the transformation of the military for effective application of smart military approach in West Africa.

#### **1.5 Scope of Research**

The research examines the role of the military in countering violent extremism in West Africa. It specifically explores the application of smart military capabilities of Nigeria, Mali, and Ghana in countering violent extremism. The three militaries were chosen because Nigeria was the first to

experience extremist attacks in West Africa, followed by Mali. Ghana on the other hand has not experienced any terrorist attack. Focusing the research on the militaries of these three nations will enable us to examine the different phases of the fight against violent extremism in West Africa. Secondly, the three militaries are the main actors of the three major sub-regional military-led response initiatives. Nigeria is the lead country with the MNJTF, Mali is also a major player in the G-5 Sahel operations while Ghana is the main actor of the Accra Initiative.

Another reason for choosing these three national armies is to have an unbiased sample in terms of the lingua franca in West Africa. Ghana and Nigeria are English-speaking countries while Mali is French-speaking. These are the two main lingua Franca in West Africa.

The UN Plan of Action in Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism was launched in 2016. As a result, most governments shifted their policies from a counter-terrorism approach to countering violent extremist approaches in 2016. As such the research will be limited between the periods 2016 to 2023.

## **1.6 Significance of the Research**

The growing spate of violent extremism in West Africa, epitomized by groups like Boko Haram, has made the region a focal point for security studies. Understanding the military's role in this context is not merely about evaluating combat strategies but examining its broader role in ensuring national security, stability, and even socio-economic growth. The threat of violent extremism has impeded socioeconomic development efforts in West Africa as most of the governments in the sub-regions have struggled to achieve their sustainable development goals. Due to their structural fragility, the majority of West African states require a secure environment to develop and flourish economically. A stable security framework, backed by effective counter-

terrorism measures, invariably creates an environment conducive to economic advancement, attracting foreign investments and aiding development initiatives. This study can contribute to economic growth by creating a secure environment for businesses to thrive, attracting investment, and fostering trade relationships with other nations.

The study also has broad ramifications for regional, continental, and global security. The spillover effects of violent extremism mean that their effects and presence are not confined within national borders, and thus reverberate in other nations, emphasizing the imperative for regional cooperation. The study will prove instrumental to regional stability by providing an in-depth insight and understanding of the intricacies of extremism in the West African sub-region. It will also help in preventing the expansion of terrorist networks in the region and the intensification of extremist actions by analyzing and applying successful military techniques. This study holds the potential to underscore the essence of collective security mechanisms among West African states, fostering a spirit of collaborative military responses.

The timeliness of this research is evident, given the evolving extremist threats. While there is a wealth of studies focusing on extremism in West Africa, there remains a lacuna in understanding the nuanced, multifaceted roles of the military, which extends beyond conventional combat. Such a study can bridge this gap, offering fresh insights that resonate with the realities on the ground. These findings would be invaluable not only for national defense establishments but also for international stakeholders like the UN and the African Union (AU), aligning their peacekeeping and counter-terrorism efforts with the region's unique challenges. Furthermore, the research delved deeper into the symbiotic relationship between the military and civilians, elucidating trust-building measures and collaborative initiatives. By exploring this "smart" role

of the military, the study also catered for the global audience, presenting lessons and best practices that can be adapted in other regions grappling with similar challenges.

Ultimately, the findings of this study can direct efforts aimed toward the prevention of the emergence of violent extremism. The study will help to understand the underlying causes of violent extremism, such as poverty, political marginalization, and social grievances, by developing a thorough understanding of the role of the military in combatting extremism. This will help to end the vicious cycle of radicalization and extremism, ultimately promoting long-term stability and security in West Africa and beyond.

### **1.7 Limitations of the Study**

Violent extremism and in particular religious militancy is very fluid. As a result, there are constant changes and uncertainties associated with the subject. The changing environment limited the collection and access to data. Potential political instability in the sub-region was a challenge in getting access to already targeted respondents. Additionally, conducting research in areas impacted by violent extremism was difficult as access to extremist-controlled regions was restricted.

The security concerns of the researcher and how to relate with the respondents in these countries was a limitation. This is owing to the fact that the attitudes of some of those interviewed altered as the nation's security environment changed. Moreover, the covert nature of extremist groups and their operations prevented the researcher from gathering enough data on their organizational structures, operations, and strategies which could have enriched the data.

Time constraints and short deadlines limited the depth of data collection and analysis. Despite these limitations rigorous research was conducted with data and facts cross-checked and any

inaccuracies removed. The researcher took care to avoid personal biases and ensured the accuracy and dependability of the findings.

## **1.8 Organization of Chapters**

This research work is arranged in eight chapters as follows:

Chapter One is the introduction which comprises the background to the study, statement of the problem, and research questions. It also discusses the scope, significance, and limitations of the study as well as the organization of the chapters. Chapter Two reviews the relevant literature in the research area. It discusses among other things research works on countering violent extremism in West Africa. It also discusses the debate on the application of kinetic and non-kinetic military strategies in countering violent extremism. The chapter also reviews publications on how some countries have applied smart military strategy in countering violent extremism.

Chapter Three sets the theoretical and conceptual framework for the research. It discusses in detail the Smart Power Theory and the Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT) and their key paradigms which underpin this research work. It also looks at the conceptual framework for countering violent extremism. Chapter Four outlines the methodology of the research. The research adopts a qualitative research design. It discusses in detail the philosophy of qualitative research and the key guidelines that direct such research methods. It further addresses the data collection techniques including the respondent selection and how other sources of data are acquired.

Chapter Five discusses the “smart” military capabilities of the militaries in West Africa and analyze how those capabilities have been utilized in countering violent extremism. Chapter Six evaluates the doctrinal, operational, and training challenges of the application of smart military

strategy. It also critically examines how the military in West Africa can be transformed to effectively employ the smart military strategy.

The findings are analyzed and discussed in Chapter Seven. Chapter Eight is the summary of findings, conclusion, and recommendations



## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a literature review and analysis of existing and relevant research concerning Countering Violent Extremism (CVE). Violent extremism is a multi-systemic phenomenon (Grossman, 2021). The investigation and understanding of how complex multilevel elements interact with numerous systems to create circumstances that favor the use of violence are therefore essential components of analyzing violent extremism. This review adopts a thematic approach to better understand the intricate interplay of multilevel elements within various systems that foster conditions conducive to violence. The review of the literature is divided into four sections. The first section deals with the concepts of violent extremism, radicalism, and countering violent extremism. The second section discusses the drivers and consequences of violent extremism in West Africa. The third section discusses the strategies for countering violent extremism. The fourth analyzes the military force as an instrument for countering violent extremism.

#### 2.1 Concepts of Violent Extremism, Radicalism, and Countering Violent Extremism.

Rigorous empirical research that would allow definitive statements on violent extremism is rare (Phillips, 2023). As a result, unproven theories frequently serve as an explanation for extremist violence. The phenomenon borders many fields of study, such as sociology, psychology, and international relations, and makes it difficult to understand the ideas of violent extremism and radicalization and how to address them (Grossman, 2023). The topics of violent extremism, radicalism, and combating violent extremism are examined in this section.

### **2.1.1 Emergence of the Concept of Violent Extremism**

Historically, instances of “violent extremism” have been documented for ages, ranging from religious crusades to revolutionary movements. The Zealots of ancient Judea, for example, are sometimes considered one of the oldest known extremist groups, employing assassination to advance their anti-Roman agenda (Horsley, 1999). However, the modern notion and terminology of “violent extremism” emerged mostly in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, particularly in the context of global terrorist activity (Bak et al., 2019). The term “violent extremism” became popular because policymakers who introduced it wanted to discard the political baggage that was associated with the word terrorism (Frazer & Nunlist, 2015). They claimed that the new word "violent extremism" better captured the nature of contemporary terrorism. They contend that violent extremism encompasses a wide range of violent activities carried out by extremist organizations in addition to terrorist acts. Many definitions of terrorism fail to encompass violent behaviors like riots motivated by politics, hate crimes, and even more traditional military operations (Neumann, 2011).

The term violent extremism gained popularity in 2005 when President Bush used it as an alternative to the much-criticized GWOT (Nünlist, 2015). The reconstruction of the terminology was made in an effort to repackage the GWOT in a manner that turned the focus away from the over-militarized responses of the early 2000s, to methods linked to social support and prevention (Bak et al., 2019). Violent extremist groups use fear, coercion, and mass violence to legitimize or assert themselves, doing so not for political gain, but because of a deeply felt inner identity that clash with anyone who does not share that identity (Bak et al., 2019). Consequently, violent extremism employs a mix of violence, coercion, and widespread atrocities, while offering benefits for compliance through services presented under the mask of strict ideological beliefs

that tolerate no dissent. While similarities have been drawn between violent extremism and terrorism, proponents of the former contended that it was distinct from terrorism. There are acknowledged distinctions between the two that have led to a change in terminology from "terrorism" to "violent extremism" on a worldwide scale.

According to Lake (2002), because of their long-term objectives, violent extremist groups seek to elicit a strong reaction, radicalize moderates, and increase support for their cause. On the other hand, the goal of terrorism is to use violence to spread fear and panic. Homicide, genocide, fratricide, and terrorism are all forms of violent extremism (Mroz, 2009). According to Mroz (2009), while violent extremism cannot be combated by the military or other security services, terrorism on the other-hand can be eliminated by the military. Thus, counter-terrorism policies cannot be used to counter violent extremism (Frazer & Nunlist, 2015).

Transnational Islamist networks are the main concept used in contemporary literature to explain the dangers of violent extremism and radicalization. In the aftermath of 9/11, the US-led GWOT started to dominate. A significant portion of the literature made the explicit claim that networks fueled by political and radical Islamic ideology characterize modern violent extremist groups (Hoffman, 2018; Grossman, 2023; Farhadi, 2020). Currently, it is believed that these Islamic extremists pose the greatest threat to global security (Malmros, 2021). However, Kundnani (2009) observed that focusing only on Islamic extremists is reductive and excludes analysis of religion-cultural ideology and political conflicts.

Modern violent extremism is conceptualized as a worldwide phenomenon with an emphasis on transnational extremist networks. Critical theorists contend, however, that violent extremism is not genuinely a global issue and that its threat and consequences are relative to each community,

society, and region. In order for the world to identify violent extremism and radicalization as a global problem, the Western nations have militarized these phenomena and developed a dominant rhetoric (Jackson, 2007). Pollard (2007) argues that violent extremism is a direct effect of modern globalization. The shifting networks and ever-evolving arrangements of the extremist transnational networks are their distinguishing features (Jenkins, 2002). As such there are calls by analysts and policymakers for the development of new and more effective diplomatic and other unconventional ways of dealing with contemporary violent extremism.

### **2.1.2. Conceptual Models of Radicalization into Violent Extremism**

Radicalization is the process by which individuals come to believe that their engagement in or facilitation of non-state violence to achieve social and political change is necessary and justified (Sinai, 2012). Over the past two decades, social scientists and security analysts have proposed many theories and models designed to explain the process of radicalization into violent extremism. Most of these theories are conceptual rather than empirical (Borum, 2011). Conceptual models attempt to understand the paths individuals take from holding mainstream views to embracing radical ideologies and potentially engaging in violent acts in the name of those beliefs. These conceptual models fundamentally provide a logical descriptive narrative of a transformative process even if they are frequently not informed by social science theories. Nevertheless, some of the models can help us understand the ideas and mechanisms behind violent extremism.

There are numerous models that illustrate the radicalization process. Randy Borum created a four-step radicalization model in 2003. The conceptual model aims to explain how grievances and vulnerabilities become hatred of a target group, and how hatred becomes a justification or

motivation for violence for some (Borum, 2012). The first stage of the four-stage Borum process is the identification of a pre-radicalized person or group with a grievance. The second stage is to frame the complaint as being unfairly biased. When complaints are directed towards a target policy, person, or state, the third stage takes place. The last phase is to demonize the people or state which makes it easier to justify violence (Borum, 2013). The model was created as a law enforcement training heuristic, not as a formal social science theory.

Moghadam (2009), also created the complex staircase to terrorism model in 2005. He employed the metaphor of a staircase that gets narrower as it ascends a structure, in his staircase model. A ground floor and five higher floors make up the structure to symbolize each stage of the radicalization process that leads to violent extremism. Moghadam (2009), asserts that the majority of people have grievances and a sense of deprivation at the ground level. Some people who are extremely unhappy relocate to the first level in an effort to find a better circumstance. Some of the people will move up to the second floor where they display aggressive feelings after unsuccessful attempts to improve their position (Moghadam, 2009). Some people on the second floor will move up to the third floor, where they will morally reject society and join an extremist group. On the fourth level, a smaller group makes their way up and declares their unwavering support for violent extremist organizations. At this stage, individuals start to be integrated into the extremist group's organizational structures. The few people who are recruited to commit violent crimes are located on the fifth or top floor (Moghadam, 2009).

Joshua Sinai created a different radicalization model in 2012. The journey was divided into three distinct periods by his concept. Radicalization, mobilization, and action are the phases. Sinai (2012) categorized the radicalization phase's components into six sets. The variables are: Individual variables, Political and economic variables, Ideological variables, Community

variables, and Facilitating variables. When specific catalysts in the form of triggers push people further down the road of radicalization, the Sinai model's mobilization phase is reached. The action phase, which concludes the process, is when violent extremist behavior really manifests itself (Sinai, 2012).

The Identity Theory provides insights into the psychological underpinnings of radicalization, tying the path of extremist alignment to an individual's intrinsic search for identity (Sageman, 2004). The urge for self-discovery is central to this goal. This journey, however, is not always linear or free of difficulty. For many, especially those facing personal or societal obstacles, this path becomes a tumultuous and uncertain journey. Crises are crucial in this development. Personal upheavals, such as discrimination, loss, or feelings of great alienation, might make a person open to extremist offers (Sageman, 2004). Concurrently, broader societal disruptions ranging from political shifts to economic distress can increase feelings of disenfranchisement. Such crises invariably test and sometimes shatter one's fundamental sense of identity, prompting a search for meaning and belonging.

Humans, by nature, gravitate into social attachments, seeking solace in shared values and a common goal. Extremist groups provide not only ideological frameworks but also a sense of belonging and validation. The combined powers of peer pressure, group loyalty, and the inherent human desire for acceptance intensify extreme beliefs inside these communities (Sageman, 2004). These groups' collective ethos frequently overshadows individual identity distinctions, emphasizing the primacy of group goals and ideas (Sageman, 2004). These factors are further exacerbated by the attractiveness of radical narratives. These narratives, which frequently provide a binary picture of the world, promise clarity in the midst of turmoil. They provide distinct antagonists, noble causes, and a definite role for the seeker within this big story. This

intense and enticing attraction reshapes the individual's sense of self-worth, cementing their identity inside the folds of extremist ideology (Sageman, 2004). In this vein, individuals' idea of self undergoes a paradigm shift as they get more immersed in these radical currents. This new self-concept meshes perfectly with extremist ideology, legitimizing not only radical beliefs but, in extreme situations, actions of violence advocated by those beliefs (Sageman, 2004).

Despite the good explanations they offer, the majority of analysts agree that while there isn't a single model that accurately depicts the radicalization process, it is a process but not an event. The majority of academics stress that not every person will experience all stages of radicalization in the same way. As a result, radicalization is a dynamic process that never stops changing. Additionally, some people will change their minds and return to society after reaching a particular stage of radicalization, while others will continue on to engage in extremist activities (Rusumanov & Bogdanova-Smilevska, 2018). Radicalization should not be directly linked to violent extremism. The majority of radical thinkers abstain from violent extremism. According to Borum (2011), radicalization is one route that violent extremism may take, but it is not the only way. The lesson is that the radicalization process is not continuous and is always changing, so strategies to combat radicalism should not be static but rather dynamic.

### **2.1.3. Origin and Evolution of Countering Violent Extremism (CVE)**

Counter-Terrorism (CT) is often used as synonym of Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) (Glazzard & Zeuthen, 2016). However, CVE mostly refers to the 'soft' side of CT strategy that addresses the drivers which lead people to engage in politically or ideologically motivated violence (Frazer & Nunlist, 2015). CVE has a complex history and is linked to prior initiatives to confront violent forms of political elements. However, its growth as a field in the 2000s may be

traced back to the response of US agencies to the increased importance they placed on the threat of violent extremism and the conditions that foster it. CT has changed during the past 20 years on a global, institutional, and governmental scale. The SCR 1373, which placed a focus on governmental counterterrorism efforts and law enforcement, was adopted by the UN Security Council in 2001.

The UN General Assembly also adopted the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in 2006, which called for a balanced strategy that addressed the factors that encourage terrorism as well as advancing and defending human rights. The UN acknowledged at the time that the SCR 1373 CT policy had failed to address the underlying causes of violent extremism. Most people agreed that both hard and soft power strategies must be used to combat terrorism (Frazer & Nunlist, 2015). This laid the groundwork for an increase focus on countering violent extremism and brought about the adoption of the UN Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism in December 2016.

The concept of Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) was introduced in Europe in 2015 in response to the threat of homegrown Islamist fundamentalism and radicalism (Frazer & Nunlist, 2015). The UK government's Prevent Strategy (CONTEST) is a practical example of CVE program. The UK government spent 80 million pounds between 2005 and 2011 on local projects for the prevention of Jihadist radicalization based on the CVE concept (Frazer and Nunlist, 2015). Australia, Canada and the US also adopted their national CVE programs in 2015. Many countries including France, Finland, Nigeria and Ghana have drafted national strategies to combat terrorism with focus on the prevention of violent extremism and radicalization.

In the areas of international cooperation and sustainable development, CVE is becoming more influential. The idea of CVE goes beyond employing military force against specific terrorist

organizations (Randy, 2011). It uses strategies that are frequently employed in sustainable development, such as promoting civil society, economic empowerment, and education, but with the explicit goal of preventing violent extremism and radicalization. (Norwegian Refugee Council, 2017).

The basis of CVE originated from governmental policies rather than scholarship. As a result, countering violent extremism is not conceptualized or theorized within literature (Nasser-Eddine et al, 2011). The focus in the literature on countering violent extremism is generally on strategies that aim to respond to or combat violence. Instead of focusing on how to understand how countering violent extremism is constructed and develops in certain contexts, research in CVE is primarily focused on policy recommendations (Crelinsten, 2014). The ways in which violent extremism is conceptualized informs how the counter strategy is developed and applied (Coaffee, 2006; Goldsmith, 2008). Understanding the connection between violent extremism and countering violent extremism is crucial because it highlights the rationale behind why a specific response plan is chosen and other options are ruled out (Crelinsten, 2009).

A key tenet in the literature on CVE is that multifaceted approaches are needed (Atran, 2004; Crelinsten, 2009; Mroz, 2009, Grossman, 2023). This is due to the fact that efforts are increasingly focused on preventing violent extremism rather than combating it. Traditional combating strategies involving the military, policing, intelligence, and law are considered as important but insufficient in this situation (Randy, 2011). The root causes of violent extremism must be addressed in order to have an effective and long-term strategy for combating it (Freedman, 2005). Strategies for CVE should take into account the social, economic, political, and historical settings in which violence occurs in order to confront the root causes of violent extremism (Guiora, 2009).

## **2.2 Drivers of Violent Extremism and Consequences in West Africa**

The main drivers of violent extremism differ from country to country, and between regions especially in developing countries. The primary causes of violent extremism in some countries in West Africa such as Nigeria, Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger differ from those of the countries in the Middle East and North Africa. Analysts contend that in much of North Africa, religious beliefs serve as a trigger for violent extremism, whereas in West Africa, psycho-social reasons predominate (Ogharanduku, 2017). There are variations in the causes of violent extremism even within West African nations. The complaints of young people in Mali and Nigeria are very different from one another. Therefore, it is important to understand the international, regional, national, and local contexts while considering the causes of extremism. (Nasser-Eddine et al, 2011). At the international level the causes of violent extremism are categorized into push and pull factors.

### **2.2.1 Push and Pull Factors of Violent Extremism**

Governments and policy makers need to be aware of what motivates people to join extremist groups if they are to address the issues of violent extremism. The causes of violent extremism are not static as stated earlier. They are dynamic and ever-evolving (Sinai, 2007). There are two primary groups of drivers identified in the UN Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism. These are the "Push" factors and the "Pull" factors. The push factors are conditions conducive to violent extremism and the structural environment in which it takes root. According to the UNODC (2018), lack of socioeconomic opportunity, marginalization and discrimination, bad governance, infringements on one's rights as a citizen and the rule of law, protracted and unresolved wars, and indoctrination by extremist ideologies in prisons are a few

of the push factors. According to the research, "Pull" factors are psychological variables that can make someone more susceptible to engage in violent extremist conduct. "Push" factors are those that are mainly structural within society (Nanes & Lau, 2018).

The "Pull" factors are personal motives and thought processes that have a significant impact on how ideas and grievances are translated into violent extremist action. Individual motivations and origins; group grievances and victimization; oppression; misrepresentation and abuse of beliefs; political ideologies; discrimination on ethnicity and culture bases are some of these factors (Sharif & Richards, 2016). It is important to keep in mind that none of these potential causes mentioned above should be considered in isolation because multiple factors are often involved in the process. These "Push" and "Pull" factors must also be understood in the context of current local, national, and geopolitical environment. In the context of West Africa, the main "Push" and "Pull" variables are considered below:

### **2.2.2 Lack of Socio-economic opportunities**

The growth of extremism in West Africa has been attributed to a number of sociological and economic factors. The sub-region's level of poverty has been the main issue. (Ardila, 2002; Orbach, 2001). The gap between the rich and the poor and the general economic decline has contributed to the surge of radicalism in West Africa (Mazarr, 2004). President G. W Bush in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks emphasized that poverty leads to violent extremism (Khan & Azam, 2008). His perspective was predicated on the idea that addressing poverty will have a big positive impact on reducing violent extremism.

The UNDP Report of 2017 indicated that economic exclusion, unemployment and limited economic opportunities are significant drivers of radicalization leading to violent extremism

(UNDP, 2017). The high numbers of educated but unemployed youth is an issue in West Africa and may push the youth to engage in extremist activities that draw the attention of the political elite to their plight (Marke, 2007). According to Ikejiaki (2009), when the youth in West Africa can no longer cope with the lack of basic needs, they display a higher tendency to engage in violent extremist behavior. The extremists' tactic is to promise a way out of poverty with economic opportunities that are difficult to come by through more legitimate channels. The extremists' plan is to use the state's dire socioeconomic circumstances as justification for providing free social assistance to the needy and impoverished, effectively establishing a quasi-state within a state (Stern, 2003). For instance, there are claims that the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) has the ability to compensate (or at least proposes to compensate) its combatants with a monthly sum of US\$500. This offer can be appealing to individuals who are uneducated, lack skills, hail from rural areas, or are unemployed (UNDP, 2016)

Although the World Bank has claimed that economic marginalization and poverty are the primary causes of radicalization, it is unclear whether there is a relationship between economic factors and violent extremism (MENA Economic Monitor, 2016). Empirical research of Krueger and Laitin (2008) concludes that violent extremists are not more prevalent in poor countries than in prosperous ones. Vaillancourt and Boyd (2007) also contend that there are more impoverished individuals than violent extremists therefore they contest the direct link between poverty and extremism. Krueger and Maleckova (2003) suggest that the economy and education are not significant predictors of violent extremism because the extremist groups are neither uneducated nor poor. Social inequalities and socioeconomic marginalization are the main grievances as opposed to poverty (Gurr, 2006). Even while some statistical data suggest the link between violence and lack of economic opportunities, great caution should be taken when drawing

conclusions on the negative correlation between violent extremism and economic opportunities (Chingle, Mancha & Gukas, 2015). Equally, caution should be exercised not to dismiss the possibility of the links existing between the lack of economic opportunities and violent extremism (UNDP Report, 2017).

Notwithstanding the lack of a definitive link between economic possibilities and violent extremism, research has demonstrated that the likelihood of violent extremism is higher in developing than in developed countries (Abadie, 2004). Additionally, it is more prevalent in nations with restricted political and civil liberties and rapid modernization (Gurr, 2006). Some researchers have concluded that structural inequalities and marginalization within countries are major factors for violent extremism (The Club de Madrid Series on Democracy and Terrorism, 2005). The causes and consequences of violent extremism have received a lot of attention in the literature. However, there have been few attempts to understand the complaints of people who engage in violent extremism (Ogharanduku, 2017). In West Africa, people and groups are drawn to violent extremism for a variety of reasons, but it has long been known that the complaints of marginalization, victimization, and discrimination are key motivators.

### **2.2.3 Marginalization and Discrimination**

Marginalization and discrimination may take different forms. People can be marginalized or discriminated through socio-economic, ethnic, cultural, racial, or religious ways. The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) advocates for an equitable, tolerant, open and socially inclusive world. The UN recognizes that reduction in discrimination will not only help in achieving the SDGs but also assist in mitigating the factors that aids radicalization and violent extremism (UNGA Resolution 70/1). Discrimination and marginalization have long been seen as

catalysts for violent extremism. Marginalization and discrimination were blamed for the violent conflict in Northern Ireland in the 1960s and 1980s (Bonner, 1992).

Silke (2003) asserts that a person is more prone to engage in violent behavior if they believe they belong to a marginalized group in society. The influence marginalization and discrimination on individuals' proclivity for extremist violence can vary significantly. This fact is evident in the dual categories of ISIL recruits. One group comprises of those who have had severe unpleasant personal experiences, such as witnessing conflict, being displaced, or living in impoverished situations (UNODC, 2018). The second category, on the other hand, consists primarily of foreign terrorist combatants (United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, 2017), who are frequently recruited through links with friends, family, or persons seeking a purpose in life (Downey, 2015). Ultimately, marginalization can lead an individual to lose their inherent stake in upholding that society, thus making such alienation a potential catalyst for violent extremism

In West Africa, marginalization, discrimination and grievances stem predominantly from the failure of the state to implement effective policies that enables the youth to access equal employment opportunities. The lack of any form of social protection, the state's use of force, continued existence of political and economic discrimination and double standards in the enforcement of laws and regulations are some of the grievances that push the youth towards extremism (Ogharanduku, 2017). The absence of economic opportunities can deepen the sense of disillusionment among an already struggling population. This can escalate into feelings of alienation and frustration. If not properly managed, such sentiments can lead to radicalization to violent extremism.

Violent extremist organizations have become more strategic in their approach. They are capitalizing on global economic issues as well as a sense of unfairness generated by the political and socioeconomic systems. The COVID-19 pandemic for example, has recently destroyed economic hopes, and the Russia-Ukraine crisis has further affected the economic realities of most West African countries, exacerbating the plight of vulnerable people in society (NSD-S HUB & ACSRT, 2022). Given their desperate economic complaints, violent extremist groups promote ideological alternatives and a better democratic narrative, frequently using violence to impose their ideals on the larger society. In the literature, most scholars have stressed the importance of including the youth and women as key players in CVE. Some analysts have argued that poor governance and lack of equal socioeconomic opportunities are the main causes of violent extremism in West Africa (Boutellis et al, 2016).

#### **2.2.4 Poor Governance, Violation of Human Rights and the Rule of Law**

The issues of poor governance, together with violation of human rights and rule of law have been of major concern for conflict and security in West Africa. While violent extremist organizations have consistently committed grave violation of human rights, it is also important to emphasize that some state actors have similarly perpetuated crime against humanity. The UN reiterated the point that violent extremism is more potent when poor governance is combined with repressive policies and practices which violate human rights and the rule of law. Jihadists have used state repression and other grievances as weapons in their conflict with the state in West Africa. (UNGA Report A/70). Furthermore, a UNDP report revealed that 71 percent of individuals who joined extremist groups did so because of government's repressive actions (UNDP, 2017). Feelings that violence is acceptable can be fueled by bad governance, which includes corruption, an environment of impunity, and unfairness. Any government initiatives that result in the

profiling of particular social groups might lead to a sense of alienation that may lead people to join extremist organizations.

The fragility of its states is one of the biggest issues facing the African continent. West African governments, and by extension the African continent as a whole, is seeing a drop in democratic dispensation (NSD-S HUB & ACSRT, 2022). This is evidenced by the number of major demonstrations in many West African states, as well as the recent coups d'etats in Western Sahel. While the COVID-19 pandemic has contributed to the decline in democracy to some extent, other governance deficit issues such as violations and abuse of human rights by state authorities, complete disregard for the rule of law, injustice, poor governance, and some context-specific factors have contributed to the decline in governance.

Violent extremism thrives and grows in environments characterized by strong evidence of governance deficiencies. When these factors are paired with human rights violations, a lack of rule of law, and oppressive government policies, the situation becomes even more dangerous. Extremist groups frequently seize upon and exploit using it as a tool to further their agenda. As such, the appeal of violent extremism becomes more potent in circumstances where government repression is evident. Additionally, the people have little faith in the state's institutions and view them as a threat. Most of the states exist only in the capital, where the country's elite is based. As such, extremist groups step in to provide security in cases where states are reluctant or unable to do so. Thus, ineffective government, disregard for the rule of law, and the fragility of West African states have made it easier for extremist groups to recruit new members.

### **2.2.5 Prolonged and Unresolved Conflicts**

Violent extremism in the twenty-first century thrives on local and regional conflicts. Violent conflict remains the primary driver of violent extremism with over 88 per cent of attacks and 98 per cent of terrorism deaths in 2022 taking place in countries in conflict (Global Terrorism Index, 2023). Without these conflicts most extremist groups would not have appeared in the first place (Steinberg & Weber, 2015). Al-Shabaab, Boko Haram, and AQIM are examples of organizations that take advantage of and operate within local conflicts. To understand and counter extremism in West Africa one has to delve into the specific circumstances of existing conflicts within the countries and the region.

Prolonged and unresolved conflicts are interlinked with the other drivers, mentioned earlier, in facilitating radicalism and violent extremism in the sub-region (Kisangani, 2012). Prolong conflict is of great significance because, mostly, it is the cause of poor governance and weak statehood. For instance, in conflicts where the state apparatus has been compromised, the state is unable to provide effective control and this provides the space for violent extremist groups to operate (USAID, 2009). Such situations can also be exploited by the extremist groups to further their agendas such as taking over of territory, resources and control. In the literature it is argued that armed conflicts can act as a motivational factor inspiring individuals to choose violent extremist path (Steinberg & Weber 2015).

### **2.2.6 Radicalization in Prisons**

As the number of violent extremist attacks has increased rapidly in West Africa, the number of violent extremist inmates in prisons has also grown tremendously (Van der Heide & Coleman, 2020). It has long been claimed that the radicalization of Islamic extremism poses a serious

strategic threat to the entire world. According to the literature, prison-based radicalization has been identified as a major factor in the advancement of violent extremist ideologies. Violence in prison stemming from radicalization to extreme views is however not exclusive to actions motivated by Islam (Goldman, 2009). For example, in the US, the prison experience has long been acknowledged as having a radicalizing effect. According to Speckhard, Shajkovic and Esngul (2017), prisons provide a unique environment within which individuals can spread extreme and violent ideologies. The environment within prisons can act to create, or inflate already existing animosity. Existing research suggest that harsh treatment in prisons has played a major role in the recruitment of sizeable number of individuals to violent extremist groups (UNGA Report A/70/674).

According to the UN, prison congestion rate in West Africa is the highest in the world exceeding 230% (Heide & Coleman, 2020). Prison conditions in countries like Mali, Ghana, and Nigeria raise several concerns about both operational security and human rights. The long-term possibilities for offenders' rehabilitation and reintegration are also impacted by the conditions inside the institution. Therefore, the prison setting offers a safe haven where extremists may compare and discuss methods, find new members and radicalize them, and even command lethal actions outside the prisons.

Prisoners may turn to violent extremist organizations for support and safety due to a variety of reasons, including bad prison environment, inhumane treatment of inmates, institutional corruption, and criminal activity. In effect, a compassionate detention policy that upholds human rights and places an emphasis on rehabilitation and reintegration is without a doubt the most effective tool in the battle against radicalization in prisons. (Belgium Federal Public Service-Justice, 2015).

While the jail environment can have an impact on radicalization, it can also offer chances for positive change. When well-managed, the controlled prison environment can be used to pursue a rehabilitation process that directs offenders toward becoming productive citizens. In order to effectively combat radicalization and violent extremism, West African states must uphold the basic rights of prisoners and offer stronger rehabilitation programs.

### **2.2.7 Individuals Motivation for Radicalization**

The majority of academics previously came to the conclusion that personality traits and extremism were directly related. However, there is disagreement about these findings among modern researchers. Some suggest that extremists have abnormal personalities with some identifiable character traits. For example, Thackrah (2004) suggests that extremists suffer from disturbed relationship with their identity that leads them to choose violence. According to some researchers, the characteristics of extremists include a lack of independence, low self-esteem, a lack of empowerment, and a lack of empathy (Ardila, 2002; Bell, 2005; Lawal, 2002). Additionally, some analysts suggest that extremists are mentally ill and have labeled them as psychopathic or sociopaths (Piven, 2002; Juergensmeyer, 2000; Pearlstein, 1991). However, interviews conducted with extremists from different prisons have not discovered evidence of general mental illness among extremists (Sageman, 2004).

Some scholars have also argued against the idea that extremists possess particular abnormal character traits (Horgan, 2007; Reid, 2002). They contend that emotional attachment to a certain cause is a normal psychological process that gives rise to extremist behavior. According to these academics, extremists are typically regular, educated young men. They however get involved in extremism because it provides them with a sense of self-actualization, fulfillment and status

(Sageman, 2004; Schwind, 2005). Other findings indicate that extremists act rationally and there is no evidence that they are abnormal (Merari, 2000; Post, 2001).

Some analysts also suggest that there are elements of adventure in getting involved in violent extremism. For example, Sageman (2004) suggests that the causes for joining an extremist group include the feeling of being powerful and belonging to a notorious group. The majority of current research points to peer pressure, group loyalty, and the psychology of group dynamics as factors that aid extremists in remaining in the group (Hudson, 1999; Stern, 2003).

Psychologists have not been able to adequately define the mindset of an extremist because there is much variation among extremist groups (Hudson, 1999). The main premise of the majority of hypotheses about the mentality of extremists is that they are rare. As a result, understanding why someone picks a violent extreme path will require a thorough understanding of psychology and psychiatry. However, other researches argue that the search for a clearly defined extremist character trait is fruitless (Laqueur, 1987; Wilkinson, 2001).

### **2.3 Strategies in Countering Violent Extremism**

The evolution of various strategies in countering violent extremism has encountered many difficulties. In its initial stage, the traditional approach relied on counter and anti-terrorism strategies. The rubrics involved counter intelligence, surveillance, and other military operations to eliminate violent extremist groups. This approach was largely security and military oriented (Freedman, 2005). The CVE paradigm was developed in response to the successful recruitment tactics used by organizations like Al-Qaeda, al-Shabaab, Boko Haram, ISIS, and Daesh. The main objectives of CVE efforts were to fight recruitment techniques, targeting messages, young engagement strategies, and religious counter-narratives. The creation of the Preventing Violent

Extremism (PVE) framework represents the next stage in the growth of the fight against violent extremism. In the PVE framework, agencies stress the need for a more all-encompassing strategy that involves the community, non-state actors, and the government in addressing the underlying causes of violent extremism. The CVE and PVE frameworks are merged and used interchangeably in the literature. (Abu-Nimer, 2018).

A range of prevention and intervention tactics are used to combat violent extremism with the goal of enhancing individual and community resistance to radicalization and violent extremism. In the literature, the strategies in dealing with violent extremism and radicalism are broadly structured according to 'hard' and 'soft' power approaches. The 'hard' power strategies are generally conceptualized within the offensive and defensive frameworks for countering the phenomena. The 'soft' power strategies are employed according to whether the phenomenon is viewed ideologically, communicative, politically or socially.

While conceptually categorizing the strategies into hard and soft approaches is helpful, it is vital to remember that the strategies for preventing violent extremism lack defined lines of demarcation. Although the military is typically connected with "hard" power strategies, it can also be a part of "soft" power narratives. Similar to this, community policing that works in tandem with social methods to CVE is receiving more attention. Furthermore, political and ideological strategies overlap in the context of countering Islamic extremism. Social CVE strategies are linked to political strategies through social policy development and implementation. The separation of the CVE strategies into the categories outlined above is a valuable mechanism for understanding how the CVE strategies are framed, notwithstanding the conceptual and practical complexity. The various CVE strategies are discussed below:

### **2.3.1 Offensive strategies to countering violent extremism**

Focusing within the hard power (kinetic) CVE strategy, what is considered an “offensive” approach to countering violent extremism includes military, legislative and policing approaches. In the literature, the prevailing theme pertaining to these areas is that new forms of extremism require new forms of response (Nasser-Eddine et al, 2011). The literature suggests that the old-fashioned military form of warfare designed for inter-state conflict is not conducive for countering violent extremism (Arquilla, 2007; Franck & Pierce, 2006). Military strategies to counter extremism are designed to disrupt and eliminate the operational capacity of the extremist groups. Disruptive military strategies is conceptualized in terms of “search and destroy” and winning ‘hearts and minds’ (Freedman, 2005). The concept of “search and destroy” consists of those hard power approaches that are aimed at dismantling extremist networks, weapons and infrastructures (Brimley, 2006; Busch & Weissman, 2005). The winning “hearts and minds” approach uses soft power (non-kinetic) and it necessitates the military gaining the trust of the local people (Freedman, 2005). In the rubrics, the hard power military response is considered necessary but not sufficient for countering violent extremism unless it is combined with other approaches.

Using legal means to combat extremism is another aggressive tactic in CVE. Many nations created anti-terror laws in the wake of the 9/11 attacks with the intention of making specific extremist organizations and behaviors illegal. Numerous new laws have been passed at the national, regional, and international levels to combat violent extremism (Reilly, 2007; MacDonald & Williams, 2007). The anti-terror legislations contain provisions for executive detention of suspects without charges or trial and specification of violent extremist offences (Hocking, 2007).

The policing approaches to counter extremism are consolidated by framing criminal justice and crime prevention instruments. Policing approaches normally combine offensive and defensive strategies (Newman & Clarke 2007). In the literature a recurring theme is that policing needs new forms of tactics characterized as intelligence-led and community-based (Oliver, 2006; Bettison, 2009; Brown, 2007). The emphasis on an intelligence-led approach, where communication between the police and the community is crucial for efficient crime prevention and the use of law enforcement, is predominated in this growing discourse (McGarrell, 2007; Pickering et al, 2007). Community policing is a “soft” power approach which incorporates elements of public diplomacy to increase public support (Keelty, 2008). Policing's role in countering violent extremism also entails arresting the functions and capacity of the extremist organizations to operate. In this regard, policing in countering extremism overlaps with other efforts such as countering money laundering, drug smuggling, and organized crime (Brimley, 2006; Winer, 2008).

### **2.3.2 Defensive strategies to Countering Violent Extremism**

Deterring and reducing vulnerabilities to attacks and responding to attacks after they occur are the objectives of defensive measures to fighting extremism (Freedman, 2005). This calls for a policy for border security, crisis management, and infrastructure security. The concepts of risk management and risk control are the dominant frameworks that influence how these strategies are understood and implemented (Nasser-Eddine et al, 2011).

Lazarus (2005) argues that from a defensive standpoint, the most powerful weapon in preventing violent extremism and dismantling its networks is intelligence. Intelligence plays a pre-emptive and preventive role in countering violent extremism (Omand, 2006). Jenkins (2005) contends

that intelligence services must be flexible and able to build their own networks for the gathering, analyzing, and exchanging of information in order to effectively combat extremist networks. Analysts have urged the intelligence agencies to improve their capacity and innovation in light of the seeming failure of their intelligence services that resulted in the 9/11 attacks. The literature lists a few avenues for capacity building, including the advancement of information technology, the training of intelligence analysts, and the use of research findings (Ranstorp, 2006).

Extremists can use the internet to distribute propaganda, recruit followers, and plot assaults. To disrupt their online presence, a combination of technological measures, intelligence activities, and legal proceedings is required. In this vein, major technological companies such as Google, Facebook, Twitter, and Microsoft have formed the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism (GIFCT) to combat the dissemination of extremist information, highlighting the need of coordinated efforts in this area (UN, 2017).

Violent extremists view infrastructure, public spaces, and buildings as soft targets. Target hardening is necessary to reduce the threat of attacks on these vulnerable targets. Security features are embedded in public spaces and vital infrastructure to prevent and mitigate the impact of extremist attacks (Coaffee, 2003). The border security approach is another defensive CVE strategy that involves deterrence and detection of potential threats and aims to prevent extremists from entering state territory (Storbeck, 2005). Efficient border controls can halt the movement of extremists and their resources, limiting their operational capacity. This includes not just physical checks, but also intelligence-driven controls and cooperation with airlines and other transport operators.

### **2.3.3 Ideological Strategy to Countering Violent Extremism.**

In the literature and within the context of "soft power," ideology is seen as a primary driver of radicalization and extremism (Jacobson, 2010). The inevitable conclusion is that ideology-driven violence can only be defeated by an even stronger ideology (Hoffman, 2018). Many radicalizations and de-radicalization models emphasize ways to stop people from adopting anti-democratic viewpoints and from adopting specific ideologies that encourage violence (Nasser-Eddine et al, 2011). Many analysts argue that the dominant paradigm for understanding the ideological root causes of contemporary violent extremism is radical Islamic ideology (Baran, 2008; Bergin et al, 2007; Zalman, 2008). According to Cordesman (2006), the war on violent extremism can only be won within Islam and at the religious and ideological levels.

Despite the fact that Islamism is a complex combination of political and religious ideology, the literature on ideological techniques to combat violent extremism frequently focuses on its religious aspects (Zalman, 2008). Thus, the counter-ideology narrative is to promote progressive, modern and moderate Islam (Ramakrishna, 2005). This has led to the reliance on selected Islamic leaders and organizations to play a major role in countering violent extremism (Gregg, 2010). Islamic leaders are consequently urged to explore non-violent responses to pressing issues based on the Quran and to publicly condemn the use of violence (Qureshi & Marsden, 2010). Some of the ideological strategies to counter violent extremism include religious dialogue, counseling, education, advisory and advocacy campaigns. The campaigns in the strategy focus on countering aberrant ideology and disseminating accurate perceptions of Islam (Ansary, 2008). Other approaches in countering violent extremism focuses on morality, and values instead of religion. Some scholars have argued that values rather than religion are the most appropriate

vision of countering extremism because religion is subjective and arguably a Western construct (Mroz, 2009). The inability to assess the effectiveness of the ideological techniques for combating violent extremism outlined above has been criticized. This is so because there are no clear standards for success and no assurances that people who have been de-radicalized won't re-radicalize again (Horgan & Braddock, 2010).

Some academics question whether ideological techniques are effective in battling violent extremism. They contend that incorporating ideological considerations distorts the emphasis on violence. Qureshi and Marsden (2010) contend that instead of concentrating on combating radical ideology, the international community should target countering the belief that violence is a legitimate response. Bettison (2009) contends that since radical ideology has impacted the world throughout history there is no need to overreact to radical ideas or teachings. In order to combat violent extremism, communication should emphasize planned, coordinated, and executed violent assaults rather than extreme ideology (Bettison, 2009). Despite the counterclaims, it can be argued that the ideological strategy offers a tangible means of countering violent extremism. However, for an ideological strategy to be effective, legitimate concerns that extremists exploit must be addressed and rectified. Extremist ideologies frequently gain acceptance because they provide a simplistic solution to complicated sociopolitical situations. By addressing core issues such as political persecution, economic imbalance, and social injustice, extreme ideas find it more difficult to flourish.

#### **2.3.4 Communication Strategies to Countering Violent Extremism**

Violent extremist groups radicalize and recruit individuals through online propaganda, social media platforms, networking sites and traditional media (UN Counter-Terrorism Centre, n.d).

Contemporary violent extremism is understood to have entered into the terrain of communication, information and symbolism. The relationship between the media and violent extremism is often described as symbiotic (Cvrtila & Peresin, 2009). The aim of communicative approaches to countering violent extremism is to undermine the extremist generated narratives and to promote Western counter-narratives. This is done through public diplomacy to win the hearts and minds of prospective sympathizers. Some commentators argue that the conflict between the states and violent extremists is a struggle over legitimacy and reputation on the communication terrain (Chowdhury & Krebs, 2010).

In the literature, the communication terrain is conceptualized within the context of an information society characterized by worldwide communication networks. Therefore, strategies in countering violent extremism are increasingly focused towards network communication technologies such as the internet (Stevens, 2010). An approach in countering the communicative aspects of violent extremism involves the disruption, censorship and monitoring extremist media online through technical and legal restrictions (Kohlmann, 2006; Shapiro, 2002). To be effective in generating intelligence from online media, states need to develop IT capacity to monitor extremist activities online (Kohlmann, 2006).

Some analysts are emphasizing the deployment of diverse range of counter-narratives instead of disruption and censorship of extremist media (Chowdhury & Krebs, 2010; De Graaff, 2010).

While some scholars advocate for countering the narratives deployed by the extremists, others suggest the democratic nations need to construct their own narratives (Kokoda Foundation, 2008). Counter-narrative suggestions offered in the literature include representing state governance as offering life whereas violent extremists champion death and destruction (DeGraaff, 2010). Emphasizing the non-violent nature of Islam and the rejection of violence as a

strategy for addressing grievance is another counter-narrative that can be employed. States can also construct their own narrative by promoting an image that emphasizes tolerance, open-mindedness, economic prosperity, cultural respect and political freedom.

### **2.3.5 Political strategies to Countering Violent Extremism**

Most of the violent extremist movements in West Africa are spurred on by political grievances. In the literature many studies have provided evidence of the relationship between political rights, civil liberties and violent extremism (Frey & Leuchinger, 2008). Political strategies in countering violent extremism therefore, aims at addressing grievances through dialogue with mainstream politics and legislative processes. One of the effective approaches identified in countering violent extremism is to address grievances by dialoguing with groups in conflict resolution and peace processes. This approach involves negotiating with activists with regards to their grievances and developing strategic plans in addressing their concerns (Juergensmeyer, 2003).

An effective approach to prevent violent extremism is to promote state-making and building political capacity (Crelinsten, 2009; Cordesman, 2006). In this regard, the Western world has a major role to play in assisting West African states to improve quality of governance through promoting strong democratic institutions (Von-Hippel, 2008). The general framework of such strategies is based on democratic principles. However, some scholars argue that promoting democracy in developing countries can be seen as promoting Western political culture and meddling in internal affairs of other nations (Nodia, 2005). In this regard, approaches to democracy building in other states can prove counterproductive.

Another political strategy to counter extremism and radicalism is building the capacity of individuals and groups to partake in the process of democratic politics. Encouraging political

activism through political engagement and healthy radicalism is important in preventing extremism (Briggs, 2010). According to Bartlett and Birdwell (2010), political activism acts as a safety valve and could be an important outlet for individuals considering violence. Supporting moderate and progressive Muslim political activists has been suggested as a good idea to counter radicalism and violent extremism. However, political approach to counter extremism that engages moderate Muslims has been criticized as state sponsorship of religion and transgresses the division between religion and state in secular societies (Maira, 2009). A 2010 House of Commons investigation concluded that focusing on Muslim community engagement is a misguided venture because evidence indicates that policy and socio-economic issues are more important factors.

### **2.3.6 Social policy strategies to Countering Violent Extremism**

Social strategies to counter violent extremism and radicalism are policies aimed at socioeconomic, social group membership and social citizenship dimension of the phenomena. Such policies are oriented to prevent radicalism and extremism by addressing the social factors that facilitates or generate support for radicalism (Chandran, 2021). The focus of such policies is also to help members to disengage from extremist groups and offer alternative pathways.

Foreign policy plays an important role in countering violent extremism in terms of conflict resolution and social welfare aid. A nation's foreign policy can be the underlying cause of the extremist grievances within the domestic borders and beyond. In the literature some scholars are calling for greater effort in resolving regional conflicts. Again, they call for international assistance to the political and social development of third world countries through the provision of foreign aid (Albini, 2001, Ramakrishna, 2005, Crelinstern, 2009). Most extremist groups take

advantage of the inability of government to provide social services and support to communities. To undermine the community support of these extremist groups, states are to improve the social services of these communities. The international community should assist developing nations by investing in social welfare policies and programs (Ferrero, 2006).

An emerging literature on countering violent extremism is the notion of generating alternate pathways for individuals to prevent their support for violent extremism. The argument is that any policy that gives alternative opportunities will decrease the attractiveness of any benefits the extremist membership may confer (Akinyetum, 2021). Therefore, social strategies to counter violent extremism should aim at providing skills development, training and education as well as social welfare packages that will assist beneficiaries move towards employment and integration (Qureshi & Marsden, 2010). Social strategies should aim at outcomes that involve psychological aspects such as self-confidence, motivation and promoting social-inclusion as well as trying to develop a sense of belonging (Frey & Luechinger, 2008).

There is increasing emphasis on the importance of the role of civil society in countering radicalism and violent extremism within the literature. Non-state actors such as Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), social movements, media, academic community and spiritual and local leaders are to play a more active role in countering radicalism (Kaldor & Oliveira, 2005). Some scholars have argued that governments should allow non-state actors to engage each other in a free and open atmosphere. This will enable liberty, freedom and prosperity to create the conditions for civil society to develop and grow (Mroz, 2009).

### **2.3.7 Critiques of Countering Violent Extremism Strategies**

The term "violent extremism," which is central to CVE strategies, has been criticized for its vagueness. The absence of a universally accepted definition allows for varied interpretations, leading to inconsistencies in CVE initiatives across jurisdictions. Such ambiguity can inadvertently target individuals holding radical but non-violent beliefs, confusing radical thought with violent action (Kundnani, 2012). This broad targeting can erode trust in institutions, especially when community cooperation is vital for effective CVE programs. Additionally, unclear definitions can result in misallocation of resources and challenge the evaluation of program efficacy (Kundnani, 2012). While the goal of CVE is essential, a clearer delineation of terms is crucial for both effectiveness and upholding individual rights.

In the rubrics there are suggestions that some strategies to counter violent extremism have the potential to be counterproductive, unnecessary and waste of government resources (Aziz, 2017). A dominant theme in the rubrics is that strategies to counter violent extremism can erode democratic principles, increase radicalization and incite conflict. The critics argue that strategies to counter the phenomenon can create the very violence they are intended to prevent. According to De Figueiredo and Weingast (2001), states crackdowns radicalize moderates and therefore lead to an increase in violence.

Kessler and Daase (2008), also posit that paradoxically responding to perceived threats within the framework of security creates insecurity. This is because the deployment and application of security measures can increase rather than decrease fear and create insecurity (Coaffee, 2003). Elaborating on the security paradox, Huysman and Tsoukala (2008) argue that insecurity is

politically constructed and, therefore, the meaning of insecurity and danger is always a question rather than given.

Most governments securitize strategies for countering violent extremism thereby engaging in politics of fear to engender public support for policy decisions (Sivananda, 2006). The problem is how to ensure the balance and proportionality of threat and response. In the literature governments have been criticized for securitizing strategies for CVE to circumvent normal democratic processes. Legislations are developed outside normal democratic principles which transgress the normative criminal law framework. For example, some democratic countries introduced anti-terror legislations such as executive detention without charges or trial which are seen to breach the rule of law (Aly, 2008; Crelinsten, 2009). Further, there is the potential for the politicization of CVE strategies. This offers considerable dangers, particularly in authoritarian circumstances. Governments may abuse CVE initiatives to crush political opposition, taking advantage of the ambiguity of phrases like "extremism" (Khalil, 2014). This abuse can result in human rights violations, such as arbitrary arrests and torture, all justified under the pretense of combating extremism. This type of co-optation undermines public faith in CVE initiatives, reducing their perceived legitimacy and effectiveness. Furthermore, countries' worldwide reputations may suffer, leading to diplomatic conflicts and less cooperation (Khalil, 2014). Blending political goals with legitimate security initiatives undermines CVE's core goal and can leave society more exposed to serious extremist threats. It is critical to keep CVE initiatives apolitical in order to ensure their success and the preservation of democratic norms.

The possibility of profiling under CVE initiatives, particularly with regard to Muslim communities in Western countries, has aroused serious concerns. While CVE initiatives aim to combat extremism, there is a widespread impression that they unfairly target Muslim-majority

populations, perpetuating stereotypes and implying a collective responsibility (Patel & Koushik, 2017). This strategy has the potential to destroy confidence between these communities and law enforcement, making the programs less successful. Furthermore, such profiling may overlook other risks, violate individual rights, and prolong societal divisions (Patel & Koushik, 2017). To be effective and just, CVE initiatives must respect individual rights, create trust, and prevent spreading damaging stereotypes

The ‘trade off’ between national security and civil liberties is a discourse which has been debated in the rubrics of countering violent extremism (Hanlon, 2007; Michaelsen, 2006; Tsoukala, 2006). This discourse suggests that the goal of respecting and protecting human rights may be a price to pay for short term security consideration. Some scholars argue that the erosion of freedom and democratic principles are necessary to enhance national security (Ramraj, 2002). However, other scholars question the relative costs and benefits to security response which erodes freedom and democratic principles (Crenshaw, 2010). In a related debate, some scholars emphasize that trading against civil rights and democratic principles in the name of security undermines credibility and moral legitimacy of governments (De-Graaff, 2010, Sabadia & Austin, 2007; van Ginkel & Westervelt, 2009).

Emerging body of literature on social policy approaches to countering violent extremism has criticized the blurring of government agendas through the securitization of community development. These community development programs are perceived to be embedded with covert surveillance and intelligence gathering. Such perceptions undermine credibility and trust of security authorities (Kundnani, 2009).

To prevent counterproductive strategies, the literature suggests that governments should try and avoid over-reactive and repressive actions by their military forces (Flint, 2003; Wilkinson 2003). Therefore, kinetic military strategies for countering violent extremism and radicalism must be regulated to be firm but never excessive, non-discriminatory and adhere to democratic framework and human right laws (Aly, 2008; Crenshaw, 2010). Non-kinetic warfare as a doctrine in countering violent extremism is becoming more popular in recent security discourse.

#### **2.4. Importance of Non-kinetic Warfare Doctrine**

Conflict that does not involve using force to inflict physical damage is non-kinetic (non-combat) warfare. Non-kinetic warfare is rapidly gaining in importance. The concept “non-kinetic warfare” may seem to be an oxymoron (Teo, 2008). The idea of non-kinetic warfare seems contradictory to think that something that is not kinetic can be described as warfare. In recent years there is a shift to non-kinetic warfare and that can be attributed to four global trends namely, economic prosperity, freedom of information, the rise of nationalism, and globalization and interdependence (Boot, 2005). These global trends have made kinetic military action a lesser attractive option.

Long time scholars of war such as Sun Tzu have articulated that destroying an enemy is neither essential nor necessarily the best route to ultimate victory (Sun Tzu, 1963). Sun Tzu argues that to capture the enemy’s army is better than to destroy them and to subdue the enemy without fighting is the acme of skill. Clausewitz in his seminal work “On War” was conscious of the limitations of kinetic military strategy as an instrument of war and acknowledges the importance of non-kinetic military strategy (Clausewitz, 1976). Liddell Hart argues that kinetic military strategy is a supporting element and only one of the various means to the strategic end (Liddell

Hart, 1967). He is of the view that the perfection of strategy is to produce decision without serious fighting.

In 2004 Thomas Hammes described the fourth-generation of warfare as warfare that uses all available resources such as political, economic, social and military to convince the enemy's leaders that their strategic goals are either unachievable or too costly to achieve. Whereas in the previous three generations warfare entailed the destruction of physical military forces, the fourth-generation targets the enemy's will to fight (Teo, 2008). In the fourth-generation warfare, the objective of war has moved from the kinetic military destruction to non-kinetic military response. According to Hammes, the most appropriate military response to the fourth-generation warfare involves moving the preponderance of conflict and strategy into the non-kinetic realm (Hammes, 2004). This is because based on sociopolitical and economic factors that have evolved over the years, kinetic military warfare today is more of a liability.

The increase and spread of violent extremism despite the numerous kinetic military responses suggest that the objective of dealing with the phenomenon should shift from the kinetic destruction of the extremist combatants to the non-kinetic response of winning the hearts and minds of the populace and the weakening of the extremists will to fight. Non-kinetic warfare in general involves information warfare, cyber warfare, psychological operations and electromagnetic warfare. The most important non-kinetic military operations to counter violent extremism are information and psychological warfare. To address the complex security challenges of the 21st century, some security analysts advocate for smart military approach that combines kinetic and non-kinetic military strategies.

## 2.5. Smart Military Doctrine in Countering Violent Extremism

The underlining principle of smart military doctrine is that violent extremism is conceptualized as a social problem with security implications (Aly et al, 2015). The doctrine requires military analysts to discard the conceptions of war and warfare that concerns only the traditional kinetic sense and instead think about forms of conflict that do not take lives or cause damage. The smart military doctrine alludes to the fact that the failure of the current strategies in dealing with violent extremism is more complex than a simple combination of non-kinetic and kinetic military strategies. It is not simply a matter of too much kinetic and not enough non-kinetic. Most of the militaries and multi-national joint task forces in West Africa have initiated both kinetic and non-kinetic military approaches. However, the current strategies failed to conceptualize violent extremism as social problem but rather it is seen as a security problem with a social implication. To be effective a smart military strategy should be led by dedicated and sustained non-kinetic approaches.

When violent extremism is conceptualized as a social phenomenon as opposed to a security problem, formulation of strategy to counter the problem will involve actors that have previously been excluded or marginalized. Reconstructing violent extremism as a social issue creates the platform for recognizing the role of military supporting units such as the Medical, Engineers and Signal Battalions. The effective combination of non-kinetic and kinetic military capabilities is the basis of smart military doctrine.

In the work of Aly, Balbi and Jacques (2015), “Rethinking countering violent extremism: implementing the role of civil society”, the authors argue that conceptualizing CVE has its origins in the school of thought of international relations, where strategies have been understood

in terms of exercise of power. In the literature, hard power advocates argue that hard power is the most effective means of achieving results when dealing with violent extremists (Coronado, 2005). Soft power proponents on the other hand, argue that it is a more ethical approach providing an alternate to the use of power politics (Nye, 2011). While hard power commonly refers to military interventions and punitive measures, soft power is designed to address root causes of violent extremism and radicalism.

The failure of the GWOT to effectively eradicate the threat of international extremism brought to bear the limitations of the hard power approach. This prompted the need for parallel soft power approaches in countering violent extremism (Aly et al, 2015). The relative new focus on CVE is therefore, to incorporate a multifaceted approach that combines soft (non-kinetic) and hard (kinetic) approaches into a single framework. The combined hard and soft power approach is conceptualized as “smart power” approach (Armitage & Nye, 2007). Smart power strategies, therefore, project a military force that can employ both hard and soft power concurrently (Christensen & Edu-Afful, 2019; Roselle et al, 2014). According to Nye (2006), a well-run military can be a source of soft power and should be capable of employing smart power.

## **2.6. Military force as an instrument for Countering Violent Extremism**

Some analysts have argued that the military force is irrelevant and useless in irregular warfare and thus not a useful policy tool in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (Gray, 2011). Their argument is that the military force is losing its relative significance because it is counterproductive and ineffective in countering violent extremism and insurgency. However, there are other analysts who believe the military is still a useful policy tool and an important instrument of power in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (Smith, 2005). This is because the military is recognized globally as one of the major actors in

countering violent extremism and radicalism (Ezeibe et al, 2022). According to Duyvesteyn (2008), although the military is often associated with the kinetic aspect of CVE, it has non-kinetic capabilities which can be exploited. Most of the commentators are of the view that the kinetic military responses while seen as effective in extricating extremists, are insufficient in eliminating the drivers of violent extremism (Clubb & Tapley, 2018; Powers, 2017).

The kinetic military response to countering violent extremism is mostly brutal and unsustainable. (Nwangwu & Ezeibe, 2019). It can produce instant results, such as the elimination of extremist leaders or the recapture of areas, as demonstrated by the assassination of Osama bin Laden in 2011 (Bowden, 2012). While kinetic military responses address outward concerns, they frequently ignore the underlying drivers of extremism, such as socioeconomic inequality and political persecution. Furthermore, if not executed carefully, military campaigns can unwittingly aggravate discontent, particularly if civilian losses occur or foreign soldiers are regarded as occupiers. Such activities have the potential to promote extreme narratives and foster hatred. According to Bellflower (2008), policymakers should be mindful of the fact that kinetic military response is not always the most desired response.

### **2.6.1 West Africa Military Strategy in Countering Violent Extremism**

In the literature, the military forces in West Africa are often described as vicious, fraudulent, partisan, politicized, poorly equipped and poorly motivated (Adeakin, 2016; Bappah, 2016; Robertson, 2015). These negative profiles of the militaries in West Africa according to some scholars can be traced to their colonial history (Clubb & Tapley, 2018, Omitoogun & Odumtan, 2006). Despite the negative perception off the military in countering violent extremism in West

Africa, most of the military deployments operate with other agencies in conflict areas to improve human security and development (Abiew, 2003, Bell et al, 2013).

In West Africa, the transnational nature of extremist threats, especially from groups like Boko Haram, necessitated a broader, collaborative response beyond individual country efforts. Recognizing that unilateral actions might fall short, the focus shifted to the creation of regional coalitions. These coalitions aimed to synergize military, intelligence, and logistical capabilities to tackle the shared extremist threat more effectively. A significant embodiment of this strategy is the MNJTF (Biya, 2018). Comprising forces from Nigeria, Niger, Chad, Cameroon, and Benin, the MNJTF was established specifically to counter Boko Haram, reflecting a regional understanding of the group's widespread threat (Onuoha, 2017). Through combined operations, the MNJTF has made notable strides, targeting Boko Haram's key areas, disrupting their supply chains, and reclaiming previously held territories. This joint approach ensures that the extremist group cannot find refuge merely by navigating borders, capitalizing on the united strength of the participating nations (Onuoha, 2017).

Regional coalitions like the MNJTF have been central in the fight against extremism in West Africa. International collaboration and support have further amplified military efforts in CVE. International engagement, particularly from France and the United States, has greatly supplemented regional measures in West Africa's concentrated attempt to combat extremism. With historical ties to the region, France began Operation Barkhane in 2014, deploying over 5,000 troops in the Sahel region, principally in Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger (Petrini, 2022). Beyond its military objectives, this operation prioritized intelligence sharing, local force training, and humanitarian initiatives, frequently in coordination with regional forces and UN peacekeeping deployments (Lebovich, 2019). Meanwhile, the US maintained a more

inconspicuous presence while focusing on capacity building, specialized counter-terrorism programs, and developmental aid, addressing both immediate dangers and underlying causes of radicalization. These foreign actors' coordinated efforts with regional troops illustrate a holistic strategy, integrating military objectives with developmental goals.

Despite some successes of West African military in CVE, Rugutt (2018) avers that the military forces in West Africa have been known for their heavy-handedness in their operations. The alleged excesses carried out by the military have undermined public trust and support for their military operations. Most scholars argue that although the military has reduced the size and strength of the extremist groups, they have not completely wiped out their influences in West Africa (Dze-Ngwa, 2018). The argument is that even with the most technologically advanced weapons the military cannot tackle youth employment, poverty, religious fundamentalism, marginalization and poor governance which are the main causes of violent extremism.

Most governments in West Africa depend on the military to resolve violent extremism and radicalism without considering other conflict management options (Dze-Ngwa, 2018). Some analysts argue that violent extremism in West Africa is a man-made crisis that can be resolved through genuine dialogue (Dibie, 2016). Other analysts are of the view that it is impossible to dialogue with faceless extremist groups. Some analysts advocate for the military force to blend their current hard power (kinetic) strategy with soft (non-kinetic) power strategy. They argue that military forces should engage in providing social services such as health service, civil engineering and education (Dze-Ngwa, 2018). The military's non-kinetic potential need to be developed in order for it to be more effective in today's world. Combining kinetic and non-kinetic military strategies has become a popular approach in countering violent extremism. Thus,

the military in West Africa should envisage smart military approach in countering violent extremism.

## **2.7. Case Study -Turkey Application of Smart Military Strategy**

Turkey is located between Europe and Asia, the Black Sea and the Mediterranean (Bakir, 2021). This places it at the center of diverse geopolitical terrains encompassing varied geographical, political, and cultural contexts. This position means Turkey is susceptible to a myriad of violent extremism and other unique threats that have placed security at the fulcrum of Turkish military thinking (Bakir, 2021). As part of the military campaign of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) against ISIS/ Daesh in Syria, Turkey deployed a military presence with multiple soft power approaches. Turkey's military undertook tangible soft power engagements in the form of education in Syria, infrastructure development, and, religious and cultural attraction (Euronews, 2019). The country promoted peaceful coexistence and mutual respect by supporting moderate Islam and distinguishing it from the radical interpretations that extremist groups like ISIS often propagated. Turkey's soft power approaches included religious education aimed at offering a balanced perspective of Islam and encouraging critical thinking among people (TRT World, 2018).

In Somalia, the Turkish military has given non-kinetic approaches prominence. In their strategy to counter al Shabaab in Somalia the military targeted areas of publicly-identified needs. Turkey's approach to humanitarian assistance in Somalia encompasses a range of initiatives. These includes the construction of educational facilities, healthcare centers, and governmental infrastructure. Furthermore, the Turkish military has been active in fostering local entrepreneurship, offering scholarships, and facilitating the training of police and military

personnel (Siradag, 2022). Further, the military constructed a waste-disposal facility in Mogadishu and provided trucks to collect the city's uncollected garbage (Mesfin, 2012). The Turkish military with help from the Turkish Red Crescent developed an IDP facility where food was supplied and shelters were built. It is also dug water wells and helped build an urban water infrastructure in Mogadishu (Muktar, 2021).

As a result of the emphasis on a non-kinetic approach, the public perception polling in Somalia consistently identifies Turkey as the most reliable partner and genuine mediator (Czerep, 2022). The Turkish military has led most of the negotiated settlements and reconciliation including Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) in Somalia. Turkey was the focal country for the “High- Level Defection” (HLD) program funded by the UK aimed at persuading al-Shabaab commanders to defect (Cannon, 2016). There were more than 80 defections by al-Shabaab commanders in the period of the HLD program from June 2014 to June 2018. At the Serendi Defector Rehabilitation Center (DRC) in Mogadishu, Turkish military Imams clarified misconceptions about the Quran and other military experts teach skills such as tailoring and vehicle maintenance (van Loon, 2022). There is also an extensive program of sports at the center. There was also a post-care business development program that offers micro-finance funded by Japan at the DRC and managed by the Turkish military. Those defectors requiring assistance in dealing with trauma and other medical issues are attended to by military medical specialists.

Despite the emphasis on soft power responses, Turkey’s engagement in security sector reforms in Somalia has focused on using kinetic military attacks on al-Shabaab militants (Abdulle & Bulut, 2019). The Turkey military has supervised the Somalia National Army (SNA) to conduct Special Forces raids and conventional military operations to recover rural towns and villages from al-Shabaab control. Turkey signed the “Military Training Cooperation Agreement” and the

"Defense Industry Cooperation Agreement" with Somalia. It has provided military training to Somali police and soldiers in both Ankara and Mogadishu (Abdulle & Bulut, 2019).

Somali battalions are sent to Turkey to engage in training programs, including commando and special operations, counter-terrorism and urban warfare (Kasapoglu, 2020). In 2019 for example, Somalia succeeded in reclaiming territories on the outskirts of Mogadishu from al-Shabaab, thanks to capacity-building initiatives undertaken by Turkey, the United States, and African Union forces. Furthermore, Turkey opened its largest military training camp outside of Turkey in Somalia, which cost \$50 million. Every year, 1500 Somali soldiers get military training at the complex (Abdulle & Bulut, 2019). According to Siradag (2022) since 2009, Turkey has maintained a military naval force in the Gulf of Aden, off the coast of Somalia, and in the Arabian Sea in partnership with the UN to suppress piracy on the Somali Coast.

Turkey is an embodiment of a country that has fully integrated its kinetic and non-kinetic military capabilities into a smart military strategy, with an overall emphasis on a non-kinetic military approach. Despite not fully eliminating the issue of violent extremism in Somalia, Turkey's use of smart power strategies has played a vital role in suppressing the activities of al-Shabab in Somalia.

## **2.8. Case Study-Egypt's Application of Smart Military Strategy**

According to the 2018 Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy (TIMEP) report, on 24 July 2013, the Egyptian government declared a state of emergency and launched a military campaign to defeat the Takfiri extremist group. The strategy adopted involved a wide range of kinetic military activities resulting in thousands of deaths and many arrests. TIMEP conducted research on Egypt's counterterrorism strategy from 2014 to 2019 (Egypt Security Watch, 2020). The

research indicates that Egypt adopted a purely kinetic military strategy approach from 2014 until 2017. The Egypt government then shifted to a smart military strategy approach in April 2017. The findings of the TIMEP study demonstrated that the purely kinetic military strategy used from 2014 to 2017 resulted in an increase in violent extremism in Egypt (TIMEP, 2018). However, the report found out that violent extremism reduced drastically in 2017 when they shifted to a smart military approach. The fourteenth report of the Secretary General of the UNSC issued on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2022 indicated that since 2019 the activities of violent extremists have decreased due to the smart military approach adopted by the Egypt government.

### **2.8.1 Egypt Armed Forces (EAF) Kinetic Activities**

The main military objective of the EAF was to defeat the Takfiri and other terrorist groups who had taken control of a number of cities in Egypt. The EAF launched pre-emptive strikes against extremist organizations aimed not only at eliminating them but also at destroying the infrastructure that sustains them (Kassem, 2022). The military carried out special operations with firepower backed by intelligence and strategic forms of combat to confront and eliminate extremist cells. The EAF initiated the Comprehensive Operation Sinai 2018, which incorporated rigorous training and operational activities, all meticulously designed to dismantle the strongholds of extremist groups (State Information Service, 2018). Cordon, search, and destroy operations were conducted in areas where the presence of extremist elements was observed. Interdiction operations to cut off logistical support to the terrorist group were part of the kinetic tactics employed. In addition, the Egyptian military collaborated with the US, EU and Arab forces in Operations Bright Star in 2017 and 2018 (State Information Service, 2022). These operations consisted of a series of combined command-post and field-training exercises and

drills, conducted with the objective of enhancing regional security and stability (State Information Service, 2022)

### **2.8.2 Egypt Armed Forces Non-kinetic Activities**

Since 2017, the EAF has embarked on a non-kinetic military initiative aimed at supporting the defection of terrorist elements and their families. The strategy is a systematic plan to integrate the post-extremist persons into civil society in a manner that does not affect the peace in the communities. The counterterrorism experiences of the EAF have proven the need to combine kinetic and non-kinetic military activities to be successful. The EAF supports the state in developing the infrastructure in extremist-prone areas to provide a suitable environment for a more prosperous livelihood. This commitment is evident in the launch of the 'Constructing Bedouin Developmental Communities' initiative in 2017. The initiative includes several projects, such as building a cement factory, developing modern subsidized housing, and implementing healthcare, sanitation, and water supply projects (Kassem, 2022). Additionally, various educational programs have been introduced.

The Ministry of Defense in collaboration with other ministries went on a social initiative for the construction of social housing, public transportation infrastructure as well as clean water and sanitation installation (Kassem, 2022). Managing the defected dissidents' integration into the Egyptian society was also high on the agenda. Food, jobs and medical care for dissidents and family were provided and in coordination with relevant authorities; entertainment programs were provided for children to change their perceptions (Kassem, 2022).

The organization of awareness meetings for the purpose of renouncing hostile ideas against the Egypt State was initiated. Several research and academic centers dedicated to addressing the

issues of extremist Islamist thought from a theological point of view have been established (Kassem, 2022). For instance, the Al-Azhar Observatory for Combating Extremism was inaugurated in 2015, with the aim of understanding and analyzing the dialogue of extremist Islamic groups and creating a counter narrative to correct it. Further, these religious lectures are intended to improve the mental image of the defectors so that their children do not inherit extremist ideas that negatively affect their attitudes and behavior.

The implementation of the combined kinetic and non-kinetic military strategies since 2017 has resulted in the reduction of terrorist attacks, weak morale of the extremist groups, and an increase in defection of extremist elements in Egypt.

## **2.9. Gaps in Countering Violent Extremism Research**

Some scholars have highlighted several research gaps in effectively countering violent extremism. Some of the gaps identified are definitional or methodological. The difficulty in agreeing on a global accepted definition of a global problem such as violent extremism makes it difficult to reach consensus on the subject of investigation. This has led to a lack of uniform coding and counting rules in capturing data across the range of violent extremism databases (Laqueur, & Wall, 2018; Jackson, 2018). Moreover, there is no agreement on the causal theory of violent extremism which makes it difficult to identify effective solutions. Due to the lack of definitional consensus, it is difficult to use data and statistical inference to predict potential outcomes of counter policies (Cronin, 2009).

Another research gap identified is the lack of localized field-based scientific research in countering violent extremism (Atran, 2011). The limited empirical data makes it difficult to assess the effectiveness of violent extremist interventions. In terms of methodology, there is lack

of longitudinal studies in CVE research. Measuring and analyzing CVE measures is difficult in the short term (Sinai et al, 2019). Unfortunately most of the studies on CVE are based on cross-sectional studies (Koehler, 2017; Watson et al, 2011). There is lack of long-term longitudinal studies to track CVE interventions.

In the literature, while most scholars and policymakers acknowledge the importance of the military in countering violent extremism, they mostly identify the military with the hard power aspects of CVE. There is a research gap in the soft power role of the military in countering violent extremism. Most policymakers and foreign donors are willing to provide funding for military firepower, training and equipment but reluctant to finance research into non-kinetic military aspect of CVE (Montibeller & von Winterfeldt, 2015).

## **2.10. Conclusion**

The literature on violent extremism traces its origin from the religious crusaders and revolutionary movements. In the modern era, countering violent extremism strategy has evolved from offensive to preventive approaches. The idea of CVE is to address the main causes of violent extremism. The root causes of violent extremism differ from region to region particularly in the developing countries. Therefore, there is the need to understand the regional and local context in order to successfully formulate and implement strategies to counter violent extremism in West Africa.

Strategies in CVE includes military offensive and defensive strategies, ideological, communication, political and social policies. The military offensive strategies often erode freedom and democratic principles, and it is seen as counterproductive. Some analysts are

advocating for a non-kinetic military approach in CVE. The non-kinetic military strategies involve information, social development and psychological warfare.

The West Africa Military strategy in CVE has focused on kinetic military activities. The heavy-handed approach has not been successful in eliminating violent extremism in the sub-region. Therefore, in the literature there is an activism for a “smart” military strategy that combines kinetic and non-kinetic military approaches to counter the phenomenon.



## CHAPTER THREE

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### 3.0 Introduction

This chapter sets out the theoretical and conceptual framework used for the study. The theoretical underpinning of this research is the Smart Power theory and the Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT). Violent extremism poses a global threat that calls for a diversified strategy that goes beyond traditional military strategies. In order to effectively combat violent extremism, a comprehensive framework that integrates both hard (kinetic) and soft (non-kinetic) power tools is provided by the notion of smart power theory in international relations. Armed forces will be able to deploy this strategy to combat both current threats and the underlying causes of violent extremism.

Smart power theory, popularized by Joseph Nye, emphasizes the combination of hard power (military force and coercion) and soft power (diplomacy, economic aid, and cultural influence) as a more effective approach to exercising power. An actor can influence the actions of another through threats of coercion, inducements payments, and attraction. The ability to affect others through threats of coercion and payments is referred to as “hard power”. Soft power on the other hand is the ability to influence others to obtain the outcomes you want through attraction. Smart power strategy combines hard and soft power resources. The battle against violent extremism is a battle for the public's heart and mind, hence relying too heavily on force alone may not yield the desired outcomes. The key to success is combining soft and hard power tools to combat violent extremism (Nye, 2023).

The premise of the research using the smart power theory is the assumption that most violent extremists in West Africa have genuine grievances that need to be addressed. This is due to the recognition that these concerns frequently create fertile grounds for extremist narratives and recruitment. Violent extremist groups in West Africa, especially in the Sahel region, have been successful in exploiting the frustrations of the local people to gain influence and recruitment. The focus of the strategy to counter violent extremism should therefore not aim at elimination but to attract moderates and deny extremist recruits. The RSCT is used to support the smart power theory since combatting violent extremism requires a regional security approach. This is wholly relevant in the context of the transnational nature of extremist groups and their operations.

The chapter analyzes the smart power theory by first conceptualizing the hard and soft power thesis. Second will be the analysis of the relationships between the hard and soft power. Third, is the discussion on smart power theory and the justification of using the theory for this research. The fourth part discusses the regional security complex theory, its criticisms and justification and significance to the study.

### **3.1 Conceptualizing Hard and Soft Power**

Realist theory has historically been used in academics to explain and understand the idea of power. Based on the Realist interpretation of anarchy from the Hobbesian state of nature, power is oriented toward the idea that nations use material resources to achieve greater influence (Korab-Karpowicz, 2010). This theoretical perspective contends that power is dependent on the military-industrial complex that is used to coerce others in pursuit of an actor's national goals (Gallarrotti, 2015). The tangible power resources such as population, economic strength, and military have been categorized as hard power resources. According to Nye, hard power is rooted

in the neorealist tradition that focuses on military intervention, coercive diplomacy, and economic sanctions to enforce national interests (Nye, 2023). The changing security challenges in the world such as violent extremism and pandemics are making hard power more difficult to exercise. Hard power has become politically and economically more expensive in the global security environment. The limits to the exercise of hard power led to the conceptualization of the intangible sources of power.

Other theorists from the Neoliberalism and Constructivism perspectives have challenged the intellectual predominance of the Realism concept of power. Other paradigms have introduced alternate visions of power that are oriented more toward intangible or soft power resources. Unlike the Realists, the alternate approach to the concept of power highlights soft power instead of hard power. Soft power is the ability to attract others without having to use hard power threats or enticements. The principal difference between hard and soft power is that hard power extracts compliance through tangible power resources while soft power cultivates it through non-coercive methods (Gallarotti, 2015). The differences between harder or softer forms of power are less clear and difficult to categorize into two power typologies. Therefore, it is important to move away from the simple reification of the dichotomous concept of hard and soft power to a continuous concept that examines what makes softer powers soft and what makes harder powers hard (Rothman, 2011).

### **3.2 Analysis of the Relationship between Soft and Hard Power**

The relationship between soft and hard power is complicated and interactive. The two powers are neither perfect substitutes nor perfect complements, although they do often reinforce one another (Gallarotti, 2015). The possession of hard power can make a nation a role model because large

military arsenals and successful military strategy can generate significant soft power by enhancing the attraction of other nations. Hard power or military cannot be used in ways that undermine the respect and admiration that attract other nations or protagonists. Thus, the employment of military power can only generate soft power if it is used in a way consistent with principles such as the rule of law and just war.

Hard power carries obvious disadvantages for an image if its operations are characterized as over-aggressive, abusive, or imperialist. Meanwhile, actions that enhance soft power or non-kinetic military response can be equally costly in terms of sacrificing hard power. Conversely, the use of kinetic military response can generate a positive image with nations who benefit from such actions, for example liberating Kuwait from Iraq. Additionally, the exercise of either soft (non-kinetic military) or hard (kinetic military) power alone has complex consequences (Gallarotti, 2015). The use of hard power resources can be counterproductive because it diminishes the hard power position of the actor. An excessive kinetic military measure against extremists may stiffen resistance in a manner that weakens the state security institution. Similarly, the use of soft power resources may adversely affect a state's image no matter how sincere the action is. The use of non-kinetic military measures to address illiteracy, for example, could adversely affect the state's image if it is seen as a source of state interference with Islamic education.

There is a tendency to equate hard power with tangible resources and soft power with intangible resources however their principal distinction does not depend on tangibility (Baldwin, 2002). According to Nye, tangibility is not a strict source of differentiation among the two categories (Nye, 2002). The two sources of power are interconnected and share many qualities. The real differentiation of power is in the context of its usage. Ultimately, tangible resources can deliver

both hard and soft power. Thus a military force can deliver both kinetic and non-kinetic military responses. Therefore, the military force is merely an instrument and can be better or worse depending on the manner it is used. Hard and soft power resources are complementary and not dichotomous. A nation will optimize its influences by combining the non-kinetic and kinetic military resources efficiently.

### 3.2.1 Understanding the Dichotomous Continuous Relationships between Hard and Soft Power.

Despite the stark contrast between hard and soft power, there is the potential to use hard power resources to implement soft power and vice versa (Rothman, 2011). Moreover, the distinction between hard and soft power can sometimes be arbitrary and imperfectly categorized (Sklair, 1995). Figure. 1 illustrates the empirical components derived from the concepts of soft and hard power. The two poles or extremes are defined by command power and co-opt power. As is evident in the diagram the two concepts of power are not naturally arranged dichotomously. Different types of actions or behaviors are softer or harder depending on their location within the diagram. For example, a non-kinetic military use of power falls within the attraction location in the diagram.

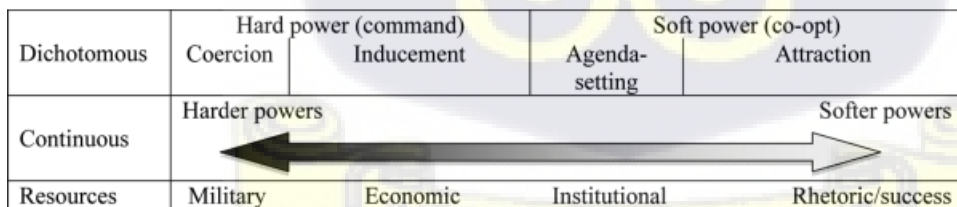


Figure 1.

In examining the two poles, the left-most ideal power is one where one actor aims at ending the life of another actor. In that hardest form of power, the choices available to the target are reduced

to only two. Either the target obeys the command of the actor with power or dies. The basic feature associated with hard power is kinetic military response. The ability to physically manipulate another actor to change his behavior is the most common way to use hard power. Physically killing and maiming violent extremists is aimed at changing their quest for political change through violence. The use of kinetic military resources limits the available choices to an opponent by creating an ultimatum in an extreme case. For example, the GWOT strategy offers violent extremist groups and countries harboring them to surrender or be eliminated. Economic forms of power are also used as a mean of hard power resource but at a lesser extreme level.

At the right-most pole, the softer power mirrors those powers that use non-kinetic means to influence the actions of others. The most non-kinetic means of changing the behavior of other actors are persuasion, dialogue and attraction. It is important to understand the mechanisms through which soft power can be used to influence another actor. One possible mechanism for attraction occurs through the replication of successful policies. For one country or institution to be attracted to another, the policy practices or political ideals must be successful or should benefit those in other institutions or countries (Nye, 2023). Improvement of economic stability, social welfare, and good governance are policies that can attract violent extremists to change their behaviors. Success in a particular policy, culture or customs increases the attractiveness of that policy or culture and the failure in culture or policy produces negative attraction (Rothman, 2011).

Norms are customs of behavior based on one's identity given a particular social environment (March & Olsen, 2004). A norm can exist at several levels of analysis such as the international system, the state, or at the institutional level. Successful implementation of the operation of institutional norms increases the prestige, credibility, and acceptance of those who implement the

norms. The positive attributes of the military such as credibility and discipline are important resources of soft power that can be used to counter violent extremism. However, negative customs, norms, and policies of the military such as viciousness, fraud, and heavy-handedness are attributes that produces repulsive attraction that is counterproductive in countering violent extremism. States and institutions rely on three important soft power resources namely, culture, political values, and foreign policy (Nye, 2023). These soft power resources are important in countering violent extremism.

According to Nye (2023), soft power resources are slower, more verbose, and more cumbersome to employ than hard power resources. Some critics argue that soft power is analytically vague and difficult to assess its effectiveness. Joffe (2006) posits that soft power is difficult to manage and instead of increasing attractiveness, it can also promote resentment and rage. As a result of these critiques, Nye and others have proposed the intersection between hard and soft power a synergy that has led to the Smart Power Theory (Nye, 2008).

### **3.3 Smart Power Theory**

According to Nye, smart power is a set of smart strategies that combine the tools of both hard and soft power (Nye, 2023). It is a strategy that combines the soft power of attraction with the hard power of coercion and payments. Wilson (2008) also defines smart power as “the capacity of an actor to combine elements of hard power and soft power in ways that are mutually reinforcing such that the actor’s purposes advance effectively and efficiently” (Ivanov, 2020). The main idea of smart power is that efficient power needs a mixture of hard and soft power (Jansson, 2018). The growing attention to smart power is a reflection of the changing landscape of international relations (Gallarotti, 2015). The international system has become less amenable

to tools of hard power like the military force. It has become more amenable to actors who are sensitive to the limitation of kinetic military force and the opportunities for soft power. Smart power is often presented as a guide for foreign policy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and it is closely linked to changes in the international system. Some of the changes in the world's political environments are the skyrocketing cost of kinetic military operations, the growth of democracy in the world system, the increase in non-state actors, socio-economic and political interdependence, and the growth of international organizations and regimes. These changes in world politics have increased the utility of smart power resources to enable nations to achieve sustainable security in the long run.

According to Nye, soft power is more important than hard power in modern-day international relations (Nye, 2011). In emphasizing soft power over hard power, the theory of smart power is more relevant to the solutions liberal theorists proposed to solve the problem of war (Gomichon, 2013).

### **3.3.1 Smart Power Theory and the Liberalism Tradition**

Liberalism dominated the international relations discipline until the post-war years when Realism emerged. Liberalism identifies war as the main problem in international politics. To solve the problem of war, the liberalists proposed three solutions. The first is to increase democracy. The liberal theorists posit that democratic nations don't go to war against each other. The second solution to war is through economic interdependence. The third solution is promoting international institutions. The theory argues that institutions enhance cooperation between states and that will make war less likely. In opposing hard power, smart power

emphasizes cooperation instead of the possibility of war. Non-kinetic military response is given more prominence than kinetic military solutions.

More precisely, smart power theory argues that democratic states enforce peaceful goals and therefore are less inclined to use hard power (Nye 2011). Democracies will not lose their soft power policies even in difficult situations because the people will criticize the use of excessive kinetic military measures. Thus, a peaceful means through the use of non-kinetic military resources will be more beneficial in countering violent extremism. Smart power theorists are of the view that modern global security issues such as global warming, cyberspace security, and violent extremism are more likely to be solved with soft power. Kinetic military force would be inefficient or insufficient to counter the modern global security challenges (Gomichon, 2013).

Excessive reliance on hard power increasingly risks becoming unproductive and causes disempowerment (Gallarotti, 2015). Furthermore, sources and application of soft power and more importantly the careful balancing of different power resources has become a priority. Although Nye associated his smart power theory with liberalism, Gallarotti builds on the idea of smart power and offers an attempt to bridge the realist and liberal paradigms of international relations (Jansson, 2018).

### **3.3.2 Smart Power Theory and the Realist Tradition**

Classical realist tradition plays an important role in the arguments of smart power theory (Jansson, 2018). Some of the originators of realism like Thucydides, Machiavelli, and Carr were well aware of soft power and had made the clear distinction of hard and soft power in their writings. However, the foundation of soft and smart power was not much elaborated by the classical realists (Nye, 2011). Machiavelli's metaphor of the lion and the fox in the book "The

Prince” indicates what the argument of the smart power theory is (Machiavelli, 1961). Machiavelli proposed that policymakers must make use of both the lion’s strength and the fox’s cunning in their political discourse. Policymakers were advised not to rely exclusively on violent force but must also be ready to attract and persuade others (Machiavelli, 1961). The idea is to consider the full range of power resources which is the central proposition of smart power theory. So the basic logic of smart power runs deep in the realist tradition (Jansson, 2018).

Arguably, a realist’s perception of international politics is inseparable from the consideration of prudence and flexibility (Lieven & Hulsman, 2008). Flexibility is about taking the whole range of policy means into consideration in an unprejudiced manner. Nye’s exposition of smart power emphasized that good judgment or prudence is a major principle in the idea of smart power. The idea of smart power is to find an efficient mix of soft and hard power resources, to achieve a successful goal. Creating a successful mixture of hard and soft power resources in any given situation depends on the qualities and capabilities of the policymakers such as flexibility, good judgment, and prudence. To properly understand smart power is to appreciate the concept of flexibility, good judgment, and prudence in international politics. These concepts are also core elements of realist traditional thoughts (Jansson, 2018). Therefore, smart power is consistent with the classical realism tradition.

Nations will attain a varying mix of hard and soft power resources depending on how they view international politics. Constructivist and Liberalist nations who are convinced hard power resources are relatively costly and less productive may favor the greater use of soft power resources. Conversely, Realist nations will adopt more hard power over soft power because they perceive the latter as relatively less productive (Gallarotti, 2015).

### 3.3.3 Key tenets of Smart Power

Some of the key tenets of smart power theory are first it provides a flexible and plausible methodological approach by analyzing the use of both hard (kinetic) and soft (non-kinetic) power separately in a case study. The understanding of smart power is that hard and soft power represents two separate forms of power and for this reason they can be studied and employed in different contexts and different spheres. Second, the smart power approach offers a two-level theoretical approach that combines soft and hard power. It is only a two-way level combined approach rather than a hard-only or a soft-only power strategy that can increase the strategic efficiency of the foreign policy-decision making process. Therefore, the smart power approach is concerned with a skillful combination of kinetic and non-kinetic approaches to obtain optimal outcomes.

Thirdly, smart power approaches postulate that over-focusing on hard or soft power is counterproductive. Thus, the smart power theory provides a strategic and constructive balance between hard and soft power. Fourth, smart power theory can be applied not only in the context of a state's foreign policy but also in the behavior of institutions and social groups. In this sense, the objective of smart power is to understand power and its forms in broad terms and in a way that we can recognize and manage both hard and soft power resources. Fifth, smart power is different from both hard and soft power but it is not a third form of power. It is the recognition of the different forms of power and the instruments that power can employ. It is an approach to the use of power that gives policymakers the chance to choose the best way to address a specific issue. A smart power approach comes with the awareness that hard and soft power constitute separate and distinct institutions and institutional cultures.

### 3.3.4 Criticisms of Smart Power

The main criticism of smart power is that it is too ambiguous (Wilson, 2008). Critics aver that smart power fails to give a conceptually stringent and empirically convincing account of the concept of soft power. The conceptual explanations of the nature of smart power are too vague and abstract to be of much analytical use. Despite the potential theoretical contribution of smart power and its attractiveness to our understanding of international politics, smart power is inherently vague and difficult to wield (Kearn, 2011).

The next major criticism of the smart power is its originality. Smart power shows similarity to other approaches in IR (Yukaruc, 2017). In the first instance, there is a similarity between Nye's approach to power and that of E.H Carr, a well-known classical realist. Carr divided political power into military power, economic power, and power over opinion (Carr, 1946). According to Carr, nations use these political powers to control others and ensure their security by changing other's actions. Carr believed that non-material concepts such as dialogue and public opinion are important. It can be said that Carr's concept of power in the 1940s is similar to Nye's smart power.

Two other power approaches, Luke's three-dimensional power theory in 1974, and the Gramscian power thesis in 1971, show a resemblance to Nye's smart power. Luke's third dimension of power is based on attraction and is compatible with Nye's soft power concept (Yukaruc, 2017). According to Gramsci, political and civil societies are equally important because the exercise of hegemony power needs a combination of force and attraction (Gramsci, 1971). These approaches demonstrate the importance of attraction rather than coercion which is the main idea of smart power. Nye, however, explains that smart power is an analytical concept

that should not be compared with other theories (Nye, 2010). Yet this is not a sufficient explanation of the originality of the smart power theory.

Another problem of the smart power concept is the inability to measure outcomes of soft power. It is difficult to prove that one country changes its behavior because of another country's soft power. It is easy to measure how the military and economic capabilities of a state can cause another state to change its behavior. However, it is difficult to prove that one country changes its behavior according to another country's image. It must be mentioned that there are some attempts to measure the soft power capabilities of countries. One of these attempts is the Global Soft Power Index which ranks countries in terms of their soft power capabilities and outcomes. Yet the attempts to measure soft power capabilities do not solve the problem and the ambiguity of smart power (Yukarus, 2017).

The next criticism of smart power is its inability to clearly distinguish between agencies and institutions. Nye claims everything can be soft power even a well-run military can be a source of soft power (Nye, 2006). It is not clear whether the state or society wields soft power (Zahran and Ramos, 2010). According to Nye, states are not the only agents who have soft power. There are other actors such as corporations, popular celebrities, and civil society groups and states do not have control over them. Soft power cannot explain the linkage between civil society sources of soft power and different states. Again Nye acknowledged the importance of institutions in the role of soft power but did not adequately explain the role they play (Kearn, 2011). This also creates ambiguity when we analyze agents that wield smart power.

Despite the criticisms the smart power theory is applicable to the study of the role of the military in CVE because the fight against violent extremism is a battle for public's heart and mind hence

relying too heavily on kinetic military capabilities may not yield the desired outcomes. It also justifies the military's involvement in social services and construction which have been in the domain of NGOs, CSOs and other government agencies.

### **3.3.5 Justifying the use of Smart Power**

The smart power theory is relevant to this study as it combines hard power (military strength, coercive measures) and soft power (diplomacy, cultural influence, and economic incentives). The theory recognizes that combating violent extremism in West Africa requires more than just militarily eliminating insurgent groups; it also requires addressing the fundamental conditions that fuel extremism. Smart Power prioritizes long-term, sustainable solutions over short-term military victories. This perspective justifies West African militaries' participation in activities such as reconstruction, development, and support for the rule of law, all of which are critical for long-term stability. Further, the smart power concept emphasizes the necessity of collaboration among various stakeholders. In West Africa, this entails the military collaborating with local, national, and international groups, such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs), civilian government agencies, and international partners, to combat the diverse nature of extremism.

Militaries in West Africa can increase their legitimacy and support among local residents by implementing a Smart Power strategy. This is critical in counterinsurgency and counterterrorism operations, when capturing the "hearts and minds" of the local populace can be just as vital as military triumphs against violent extremists. Lastly, according to smart power theory, military power alone cannot address the ideological and socioeconomic causes of extremism, especially in West Africa. The military can help address these core problems by incorporating non-combat measures and decreasing the attraction of extremist ideas. This necessitates understanding and

countering ideological narratives, addressing socioeconomic drivers through development projects, building community trust, supporting good governance, preventing radicalization, and participating in international collaborations. The role of West African militaries in rehabilitation and rebuilding operations is critical in post-conflict settings (Ferreira, 2017). By combining these disparate techniques, the military may effectively contribute to long-term solutions that reduce the attractiveness and impact of extremist ideas, thereby playing a “smart” role in maintaining the region's long-term peace and security.

In the context of the research objectives, the smart power theory is relevant. In West Africa, where violent extremism frequently has deep-seated social, economic, and political reasons, a combination of these forces is critical. The military, which has traditionally been linked with hard power, can play an important role in executing soft power measures such as relationship building with local populations, supporting governance and development projects, and participating in peace building efforts. Analyzing these strategies under the Smart Power theory highlights how effectively the military integrates these diverse elements into a cohesive counter-extremism strategy.

The smart power theory is vital in analyzing the non-kinetic potential of the militaries in the West Africa. West Africa's security situation is complicated, with varied issues such as terrorism, communal violence, and transnational crime. Smart Power theory calls for a flexible approach in which methods are tailored to individual conditions. Further, the theory highlights the significance of non-kinetic tactics including as information operations, psychological operations, and cyber capabilities. These methods can be used to undermine extremist narratives, counter propaganda, and strengthen community resilience in the face of radical beliefs. The smart power theory therefore helps to understand how the West African military use non-kinetic strategies

and provides insights into the expanded scope of military engagement. The theory sheds light on West African militaries' shift from traditional combat missions toward a more comprehensive approach to security and stability in the sub region.

The smart power theory is useful in evaluating doctrinal, operational, and training challenges of the military in West Africa in countering violent extremism. Implementing smart power in the strategy of the West African military necessitates overcoming doctrinal constraints, operational constraints, and training challenges. This goal would entail evaluating how the military modifies its doctrines to include both hard and soft power elements, how operational plans embrace these new methods, and what training is provided to soldiers to properly execute these plans. This assessment will emphasize the obstacles and opportunities associated with the transition to a smart military approach.

The smart power theory is relevant to critically examine the transformation for an effective smart military approach in West Africa. This entails a thorough examination of how the military in West Africa is modifying its tactics to effectively tackle violent extremism. It involves an examination of changes in military tactics, resource allocation shifts, intelligence and information collection adaptations, and the amount of coordination with civilian agencies and international partners. The emphasis here would be on determining the success of these transformations in attaining long-term peace and stability, as well as how well they correspond with Smart Power concepts.

### **3.4 Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT)**

The Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT) was propounded in the 1980s by Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver; proponents of the Copenhagen School. The theory defines a regional security

complex as a collection of states whose principal national security issues are so deeply interconnected that they cannot be isolated or resolved without considering the others (Buzan & Wæver 2003). The RSCT was intended to provide a conceptual framework to analyze and understand the emergent new order of international security dimensions in the aftermath of the Cold War. The theory stemmed from the belief that there was a need for a mechanism to pinpoint the core and distinct nature of international relations on a regional scale (Sadurski, 2022).

The inherent weaknesses of the prevailing security frameworks before the Cold War necessitated the conception of the RSCT. While national security was perceived as being too limited, international security, which encompassed a wider scope due to its foundation on state-to-state relations was viewed as too broad (Sadurski, 2022). In essence, the national security perspective tended to prioritize the state as the focal point of issues while the international security frameworks can be overly expansive and generic, as security challenges differ and aren't uniformly present across the globe. There was the need for an intermediate conception of security, cue the RSCT which bridges the gap between these two viewpoints, merging the interconnectedness of national and international security.

The Regional Security Complex (RSC) name has the advantage of indicating both the character of the attributes that define security and the notion of intense interdependence that distinguishes any particular set from its neighbors. Security complex emphasizes the interdependence of rivalry as well as that of shared interest (Sidra, 2016). The regional security framework under the RSCT can be observed as a group of security problems concentrated in a certain geographical area. The existence of regional security issues raises the importance of considering the framework in terms of the high interdependence of the issues in place. This approach leads to the

notion of interrelatedness of security concerns defining the security of a state as being highly dependent on that of other states in the same region (Buzan, 2003).

The regional security complex model rests on the interdependence among the key national security interests of a geographically compact group of states (Amable, 2022). RSC is a group of states whose primary security concerns link together sufficiently closely so that their national securities cannot realistically be considered apart from one another as a region (Jannatkhan, 2011). The region's security is a matter of concern to the existing states. The central idea of RSCT is how security is clustered in geographically shaped areas. The security of each actor in a region interacts with the security of other actors.

It has been a confirmed fact that regional pattern of security has become more important in global politics since decolonization. Regions and their security are now more self-directed and more influential. The countries that lie in a region confronted with a menace such as violent extremism are not only directly involved in conflict or war but would be considered as being under the threat of it just because of the correlation of anarchy and geography. The inadequate collaborative effort by the Sahelian states, for instance, has resulted in the present situation of the spread of the activities of violent extremism to other African states and the rise in coup d'états in such states (NSD-S Hub, 2022).

Further, the intrinsic interdependence of the security of states under the regional security complex model is generated in several dimensions, such as common and conflicting interests, interdependent behaviors, and interconnected perceptions, all of these have a regional geographic foundation (Buzan, 2003). The security complexes represent the way in which the sphere of concern that any state has about its environment, interacts with the linkage between the intensity

of military and political threats, and the shortness of the range over which they are perceived. Due to the fact that threats operate more potently over short distances, security interactions with neighbors will tend to have first priority (Jannatkhan, 2011).

Buzan and Wæver (2012), have defined regional security complexes, stating that the central idea in RSCT is that most threats travel more easily over short distances than long ones, and security interdependence is normally into regionally-based clusters. The process of securitization and thus the degree of security interdependence are more intense between actors inside such complexes than they are between actors outside of it (Buzan & Wæver, 2012). In other words, the regional security complexes can be seen as a group of security dilemmas concentrated into a certain geographical area, where essential threat perceptions by states (or other actors) are so interlinked and create such strong interdependence, that the security of one state cannot be easily separated from the security of another. It is instructive to note that the UN and AU have put several measures in place to counter violent extremism globally and as a continent. Yet, there is a need for the West Africa sub-region to initiate and follow up measures to address the menace of violent extremism.

### **3.4.1 Criticisms of the RSCT**

The RCST like any other theory possesses inherent weaknesses that undermine its ability to completely explain and understand the phenomenon it theorizes about. While few people have criticized the RSCT, it is important to assess the arguments presented against the theory. It will also facilitate the adaptation of the theory to the continuously evolving security landscape, ensuring its persistent relevance in the face of emerging developments in the international relations arena.

Acharya (2007) argues that the RSCT inadequately addresses the role of regional institutions in influencing changes within a specific complex. The author believes the theory emphasizes the interplay between regional and global powers, sidelining the dynamics between different regions (Acharya, 2007). He also criticizes the absence of a comprehensive definition when describing the existing regional order. While the author acknowledges the description of other forms of regional orders, such as alliances, the concert of powers, and the security community, he posits that there is no discussion of how the various forms of RSC are related to specific examples of regional orders (Acharya, 2007).

Safal Ghimire criticizes the RSCT for a lack of clear criteria in the process of creating a regional security complex, believing that the theory does not adequately describe the theoretical process of "ordering" the region from the level of the pre-complex, through the proto-complex, to the emergence of the RSC (Ghimire, 2019). He also believes that there is a lack of development regarding the possible transformation of states considered to be "isolators" and states considered to be "buffers", such as the level of regional power (Ghimire, 2019). According to the author, the theory mentions such a possibility but does not provide details about it. Further, the theory focuses on describing regional powers in isolation, rather than predicting their strategic interconnectedness. Ghimire posits that the RCST should delve deeper into global concerns that bind states and regions, including matters like the spread of weapons of mass destruction, cyber security challenges, aviation-related issues, and potential external shifts (Ghimire, 2019).

Another issue raised by the aforementioned researcher is the theory's emphasis on state-centrism. He observes that non-state players are now managing cross-border phenomena of considerable security consequences. As a result, an approach focused only on states may fall short in holistically capturing the relationships that exist within regional international relations, and thus

the complex itself. Similarly, in criticizing the RCST, Zelinka (2008), emphasizes the existence of non-state players who influence the dynamics of regional security. The author criticizes the RSC concept's creators for neglecting to adequately define such players' roles, taking them into account only when they constitute a major force in a certain region, influencing the allocation of power inside it (Zelinka, 2008).

Despite the criticisms of the RSCT, it is applicable to this study because it provides a broader understanding and acknowledgement that combatting violent extremism requires a regional security approach and thus the need to interrogate the various multinational initiatives to combat extremism such as the AI, G5-Sahel and LCBC-MNJTF.

### **3.4.2 Significance and Justification for the Use of RSCT**

The RSCT emphasizes the interconnectedness of security problems in West Africa in that the security challenges faced by one state are inexorably linked to those of its neighbors. This is evident in the transnational operations of extremist groups such as Boko Haram, which operate across borders in Nigeria, Niger, Chad, and Cameroon. Such transnational operations render isolated national initiatives ineffective, emphasizing the necessity for a coordinated regional response involving shared intelligence, cooperative military operations, and linked national security policy. To effectively counter the mobility and flexibility of these extremist groups, these efforts must be coordinated within the framework of regional security institutions such as ECOWAS and the AU. This method, however, is not without difficulties, as it must traverse concerns of national sovereignty and competing national interests. Furthermore, effective counter-extremism in the region necessitates more than just military and security measures; it necessitates an emphasis on capacity building, resource sharing, and tackling the underlying

socioeconomic drivers of extremism. This holistic approach, encouraged by regional collaboration, is critical for sustaining long-term stability and development, and it reflects the key tenets of RSCT in addressing West Africa's complex security landscape.

The RSCT is relevant to this study as it emphasizes the importance of common regional characteristics in creating security dynamics in West Africa, particularly in relation to violent extremism. The complex historical and cultural settings in the region, distinguished by colonial legacies and varied ethnic and religious compositions, has a direct influence on West Africa's susceptibility to extremist ideas. Economic underdevelopment, as manifested by poverty, the lack of education, and insufficient infrastructure, exacerbate this susceptibility, providing a conducive environment for extremist recruitment and activities. Furthermore, in the West African region, poor governance and political instability have destroyed public confidence, leaving communities vulnerable to external pressures.

Recognizing the interdependence of these components is critical for formulating effective smart military strategies. Such policies should not only be reactive, but also preventive, addressing the underlying causes of extremism through initiatives that improve government, stimulate economic development, promote social cohesion, and build regional collaboration. This approach is consistent with the RSCT's emphasis on the interconnected nature of security in the regional context. Furthermore, emphasizing the need for comprehensive and context-specific military operations in combating violent extremism in West Africa.

The RSCT underlines the potential for security challenges stemming from unilateral military interventions against extremist groups in West Africa. Efforts in one state can accidentally destabilize neighboring countries due to the spillover nature of extremism. This situation

emphasizes the importance of a regionally-coordinated security strategy to combat violent extremism. To ensure a coordinated response to extremist threats, governments would engage in joint operations, intelligence sharing, and strategic planning. The involvement of regional and international institutions such as ECOWAS and AU in promoting this collaboration becomes critical. They can serve as platforms for coordination, assisting in the balance of individual state interests with the larger goal of regional security and stability. This collaborative method is critical for properly managing West Africa's interconnected security concerns, ensuring that actions in one country do not jeopardize the safety of others.

Finally, RSCT emphasizes the role and importance of regional organizations in dealing with common security concerns. In the case of extremism in West Africa, organizations such as ECOWAS and AU play important roles in building regional cooperation and creating collective security measures in West Africa. They serve as a platform for member states in the West African sub region to coordinate policy, create collective security measures, and participate in joint military operations and peacekeeping missions aimed at fighting violent extremism. Further regional institutions play an important role in building capability, standardizing military processes, and maintaining interoperability among the militaries of different countries.

### **3.5. Conclusion**

The theoretical underpinning of the study is the smart power and the regional security complex theories. The main assumption of these theories is that violent extremism is social and transnational in nature and thus combatting the phenomenon requires a social intervention and regional security approach. The overall summation of the two theories, their key tenets and justification in the study provides a broader understanding of the intricacies in countering violent

extremism and the delicate roles both the national armies and the multinational task force has to play to counter the problem.

The two theories examined present a way of studying violent extremism in order to investigate the solutions to counter the phenomenon and the role of the military in CVE in West Africa. These theories are appropriately linked to the chosen research methodology which is interpretive qualitative approach.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### METHODOLOGY

#### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter addresses the methodology employed in examining the smart role of the military in countering violent extremism in West Africa. The previous chapter discussed the theoretical framework which is Smart Power Theory and Regional Security Complex Theory. The empirical aspect of the research bearing in mind the theoretical framework of this study is based on a qualitative methods approach. The chapter elaborates on the research paradigm, approaches, and strategies used in the study. It discusses the rationale for the selection of the research methods, data collection instruments, and the ethical considerations involved in the study. The issue of how to ensure the validity and reliability of the research is also discussed in this chapter.

#### 4.1 Research Philosophy

The study used interpretive qualitative approach in understanding the role of the military in countering violent extremism. Interpretive method is a research method in which a phenomenon or event is analyzed based on the belief, norms and values of the culture of that society in which the event occurs. It is a qualitative method used to analyze data related to human actions. The focus of this study was on understanding the experiences from the participants and the culture of the military as an institution. The philosophical stance as discussed in Chapter Three is on Smart Power Theory and RSCT. In interpretive qualitative research the researcher strives to understand the meaning people have constructed about their work and their experiences (Merriam, 2002). In the study the participants were interviewed to understand the nature of violent extremism and

how to counter the phenomenon. The analysis of the research strived for an in-depth understanding of the military's role in countering violent extremism in West Africa.

Being an interpretive research the researcher was the primary instrument for the data collection and data analysis. Since the focus of the study was to understand the phenomenon, human instrument was mainly used as the means of collecting and analyzing the data. The interpretive qualitative research approach was chosen because it allowed the researcher to expand its understanding through nonverbal as well as verbal communication. It also permitted immediate information processing by checking with participants for accuracy of interpretation and exploring unusual or unanticipated responses. The disadvantage of human instruments is the biases that might have impact on the study. To overcome the shortcomings, the researcher identified the biases and monitored how they may affect the collection and interpretation of the data.

There are many research method options to investigate a phenomenon when the primary interest is in understanding the issue. This study opted for a Case Study. A case study was used to investigate the role of some West African military forces in countering violent extremism. The methodological approach and the underpinning philosophical assumptions guided the selection of the investigative tools used to fulfill the aims of this research (Tewksbury, 2009). The ontological assumption regarding this study posits that political, social and religious reality is subjective. Thus the epistemological assumption of this research needs to focus on the subjective elements of experience and interpretivism. Subsequently, the methodological assumption with the data collection and analysis is done using qualitative scientific research principles.

## 4.2 Research Approach

Research approaches are plans and procedures for research that range from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation (Creswell, 2014). Research approaches are usually categorized into two groups: Inductive and deductive. The deductive logic which is associated with the Positivist paradigm starts with the theoretical background, and generation of hypotheses and is followed by data collection to test the hypotheses (Collis & Hussey, 2003). On the other hand, inductive logic associated with the interpretive paradigm, starts with information collection and then proceeds toward developing a theory (Bryman & Bell, 2003). The inductive and deductive research approaches are strategies of inquiry that lead to the research designs and methods of data collection (Myers, 2009). The most common research approaches are qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods.

The qualitative research method is an approach to exploring and understanding the meaning individuals attribute to a social problem. Qualitative studies essentially seek to understand social reality as a consequence of communicative and interactive processes. The key to understanding qualitative research lies in the idea that meaning is socially constructed by an individual's interaction with their world. Reality is not a fixed, agreed upon, or measurable phenomenon but there is multiple interpretation of reality according to qualitative assumptions.

Qualitative research attempts to understand and make sense of a phenomenon from the participant's perspective. All qualitative research is characterized by the search for meaning and understanding (Merriam, 2002). Qualitative research typically involves gathering multiple forms of data such as interviews, observations, documents, and audiovisual information rather than relying on a single data source (Creswell, 2009). Qualitative researchers try to develop a

complex picture of the problem or issue under study. The research process for qualitative research is emergent. This means that the initial research plan cannot be tightly prescribed and some or all the phases of the process may change after the researcher starts the collection of data. The key concept of qualitative research is to learn about the problem from respondents and to address the research to obtain that information. In qualitative research, the researcher reflects on how their role in the study and their background, culture, and experiences may potentially affect their interpretations and meaning of the data collected. An inductive investigative strategy is adopted and the end product of the qualitative research is a richly descriptive report (Creswell & Brown, 1992).

#### **4.2.1 Rationale for a Qualitative Approach**

To succeed in undertaking any meaningful research, it is essential to clarify its underlying assumptions because the researcher's beliefs and understanding of the social phenomenon outline the research design (Gill & Johnson, 2005). As discussed in Chapter Three, the philosophical underpinning of this research is largely based on subjectivism. Subjective research is founded on the assumption that the researcher and the topic under investigation are not separated or independent (Collis and Hussey, 2003). A study that mainly aims at gaining an in-depth insight into the smart military role in countering violent extremism in West Africa will be more fruitful if it is embedded in subjectivism

This study also looked at the culture of the military in West Africa, their capabilities, and the applicability of smart military power in countering violent extremism. Cultural aspects of research are associated with human beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors and these determinants are in contrast with physical laws or mathematical equations. As such this study is also embedded in

phenomenological research methods (Wender, 2004). Since the research questions of this study are qualitative, a blend of phenomenological and interpretive paradigms was adopted.

There are numerous causes and motives for people engaging in violent extremism. As such there are different views regarding the understanding, explanation, and reconciliation of violent extremists. Similarly, there are many strategies for countering violent extremism. The diverse and multi-disciplinary nature of violent extremism gravitates towards a qualitative approach as the most appropriate research method. A qualitative approach is apt because it is more tolerant of a broad-based exposition of views and solutions. According to Guba (1981), it is important to select a research approach whose assumptions are best met by the phenomenon being investigated. In this context, it was accepted that there is room for a wide range of views on the variety of de-radicalization and counter-extremist strategies.

This study explored the smart military role in countering violent extremism in West Africa. Its main aim was to develop an understanding of the appropriate role of the military in countering the phenomenon. It was deemed essential to opt for qualitative methodology because it was more effective at providing the necessary detailed insight into the military roles in countering violent extremism in West Africa. The argument in favor of qualitative research for this study was that qualitative researchers are more interested in the processes underlying the event rather than the outcomes (Thomas, 2010). This applies to the study of countering violent extremism in West Africa which is certainly intricate and multi-dimensional. Due to the qualitative nature of this study, the outcomes are more useful to politicians, the military, and security analysts because they will be better equipped to understand the phenomenon.

The flexibility provided by qualitative methods is an absolute necessity for studying sensitive topics such as violent extremism. This flexibility was intended to provide insight into a topic that could contribute to safety and security in West Africa. To further support selecting a qualitative approach, the research questions of this study were exploratory in nature. Qualitative methods are usually adopted when the research questions are exploratory in nature (Stake, 1995). Furthermore, the qualitative approach enabled the researcher to engage in the exploration of feelings or thought processes which are rarely possible to examine using quantitative methodology (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Qualitative approaches also emphasize the need for the researcher to be an active participant in the research process (Creswell, 2005). This is important because in this study the researcher who is a military officer was primarily responsible for the data collection as well as the analysis of the findings. Moreover, with one of the research objectives being critically examining the non-kinetic military capabilities in countering violent extremism in West Africa, the qualitative research approach is very appropriate for capturing the wider implications of countering violent extremism in West Africa. Using qualitative methods in answering the research questions positioned the study in a social, political, and historical perspective which is necessary for a multidimensional approach to explaining the phenomena (Rubin & Rubin, 1995).

#### **4.3. Research Design**

Primarily, this study is based on a case study research design. The case study method allows a researcher to closely examine the data within a specific context. In most cases, case study design selects a small geographical area or a small limited number of individuals or institutions as the subject of the study (Zainal, 2007). This research was based on West Africa's military strategy in

countering violent extremism. A case study explores and investigates contemporary real-life phenomena through detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of events and their relationships.

A case study enables an investigation and exploration in great detail and in great depth. To allow an investigator to explore in depth the study related to a particular aspect of the case within the research questions. Thus in this research, the focus was on the smart role of the military in countering violent extremism. The case study offered a detailed and rich source of information regarding the establishment of cause and effect (Dornyei, 2007). As such, the researcher observed cause and effect in a real context while recognizing that context is the determinant of cause and effect. In a case study, the researcher chooses the methods that suit the research, such as the type of questions to be asked and the observations to be made when interviewing or recording responses. The inquiry process focused on the object of the research than the methodology (Silverman, 2010). As a result, a variety of methods were used to capture the rich and in-depth information within the context under study (Yin, 2010).

There are numerous advantages to adopting the case study method. Firstly, the research is conducted within a specific context, and data is examined within the context of its use. That is within the environment within which the activity occurs (Yin, 1984). This enabled the researcher to observe and explore data in a real-life environment and also helped to explain complexities in real-life situations that could not be captured through survey research. Secondly, variations in terms of intrinsic and collective approaches to case studies allowed for multi-dimensional analysis of the data. Human behavior involves complex cognitive processes as such data analysis were not done in isolation but was multi-dimensional (Zainal, 2003).

Despite the advantages of the case study, it has received criticism. Case study design is based on the assumption that the cases selected represent a subsection of a specific population and context (Zikmund, 2003). However, the case study does not guarantee an obvious representative sample. As a result access to unbiased targeted respondents is not obvious and researchers rely on available respondents. The case study is criticized for its lack of robustness as a research tool. Critics argue that case study researchers often allow biased views to influence the direction of the findings and conclusions (Yin, 1984). Furthermore, the case study provides very little basis for scientific generalization since it uses a small sample size.

Ideally, research is meant to guarantee that other researchers can replicate the same type of research and get the same results but that is not a truism with case study (Tellis, 1997). Critics are skeptical about the reliability and validity of case study research because a small sample is often used. Despite the criticisms, the researcher chose the case study approach because it is the most appropriate for such a study, particularly in an inquiry into real-life phenomena involving social issues and problems such as violent extremism.

#### **4.4 Selection of Cases**

The importance of case selection cannot be overemphasized. Case selection is crucial as it must produce data that will ensure that the research question is addressed. Consequently, how a case or a small number of cases is chosen from a large number of potential cases is central to the validity of a case study research. Many case selection typologies have been proposed. For example, Gerring and Cojocar (2016) proposed four case selection strategies namely Descriptive, Exploratory, Estimating, and Diagnostic.

Using an exploratory case selection strategy, this study selected Nigeria, Mali, and Ghana as countries in West Africa for the research. An exploratory case study aims to identify a hypothesis. The researcher begins with a factor that is presumed to have fundamental influence on a range of outcomes. In this study, the main question is why the militaries in West Africa have not been successful in countering violent extremism. The specific exploratory techniques classification used in selecting the three above mentioned countries are extreme, most different and most similar.

The selection of Mali as one of the case studies is based on the fact that violent extremism has been a persistent problem in the country. Mali has been dealing with the emergence of Islamist groups since 2012, which was initially tied to the Tuareg rebellion (Kisangani, 2012). The AQIM, MUJAO, and Ansar al-Dine rose to prominence, establishing harsh Sharia law and carrying out violent crimes. Mali sought international assistance in response, most notably from France and the United Nations. Ethnic conflicts, particularly between the Dogon and Fulani ethnic groups, have exacerbated the situation, resulting in considerable civilian losses and worsening the instability.

In Nigeria, violent extremism has been a major issue, exemplified by the actions of Boko Haram, an Islamist militant group (Maiangwa et al., 2012). Boko Haram has been responsible for multiple attacks around the country, primarily in the northeast, since its inception in 2009. Suicide bombings, kidnappings, and attacks on civilian and military targets have all been carried out by the group. Inter-communal violence and criminal banditry have exacerbated the situation in Nigeria, which has been conflated with, and sometimes exacerbated by, the operations of extremist groups (Lar, 2019).

The consequences of violent extremism in Nigeria go beyond immediate security concerns. It has serious humanitarian consequences, with millions displaced and a huge impact on access to education, health care, and basic amenities in afflicted areas. The Nigerian military has been well documented in their hard power strategy in countering violent extremism since 2009. Despite the resources and the military strength, Nigeria has not been able to overcome the violent extremist groups. Nigeria which is described as a country that has the best and worst of what West Africa can offer to the World (Bouchat, 2013) needs to be part of this study. A study on the role of the military in countering violent extremism would be incomplete without the experiences of the Nigerian military.

Although Ghana has not experienced any extremist attacks, its geographical location predisposes it to extremist attacks. Thus it is logical to compare the trend of violent extremism in Nigeria, and Mali with Ghana, which has never experienced an extremist attack since independence. Further, the militaries of Nigeria, Mali and Ghana are all actors in the various sub-regional military-led response initiatives in West Africa. The individual military experiences, similarities, and differences among the three countries present a robust basis for the study and reflect to a large extent the different military approaches to countering violent extremism in West Africa.

There were many foreign military groups in Nigeria and Mali, involved in countering violent extremism. These foreign military groups were known to have mostly adopted a kinetic military strategy. Despite the presence of these foreign military groups extremism is increasing and spreading in these countries. Selecting these countries and assessing data from their military is significant and reflective of the countering violent extremism strategies in West Africa.

#### 4.5 Sampling Techniques/Methods

Sampling is the deliberate choice of several persons to represent a greater population (Anderson, 2009). In line with the qualitative methods chosen for this research, a non-probability sampling method was used. Violent extremism and military studies are a specialized field and quite sensitive. This necessitates the involvement of the most qualified and experienced in the field to give expert views for the study. Therefore, a purposive sampling technique was considered the most appropriate in the selection of the respondents. Purposive sampling method is about selecting samples from the overall sample size based on the judgment of the researcher. The sample was selected based on the characteristics or attributes that the researcher was interested in studying. It involved identifying and selecting individuals that are especially knowledgeable about or experienced with the phenomenon (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). In addition to the experience the availability and willingness to participate and ability to communicate their experiences was also very important. The researcher therefore, selected participants who have expertise in countering violent extremism in Nigeria, Mali and Ghana. The disadvantage of purposive sampling is that it is subjective and relies on the researcher's judgment which can be biased.

Again, since access to respondents was limited by practical criteria such as geographical location, availability within the time frame, and the logistical limitations of the study, another sampling method used was also based on the convenience sampling technique. Convenience sampling involves the selection of individuals that are readily available or easily accessible to the researcher. The participants were selected in terms of convenience for the researcher. The purposive and convenience sampling techniques were chosen because they suit the purpose of this study. It involved the selection of respondents based on easy accessibility and willingness of

the respondent to participate (Dornyei, 2007) and experts in the field of countering violent extremism. Both purposive and convenience sampling methods are less costly and they allowed for an in-depth data collection and they are practically efficient in comparison to other sampling methods. However, it is acknowledged that the chosen sample using these two techniques might not be an accurate representation of the target population (Zikmund, 2003).

#### **4.5.1 Sampling Size and Justification**

Sample size refers to the number of subjects or participants studied in a scientific investigation. The determination of the sample size is significant in research because it affects the accuracy of estimations, the power of statistical tests, and the confidence in the generalizability of the results (Creswell, 2014). While the sample size should be large enough to offer enough information to address the study objectives, an overly large sample size increases the possibility of data repetition (Creswell, 2014). A large sample size has the advantage of enhanced statistical power, which allows for more accurate and dependable results. However, a large sample size can reduce the likelihood of obtaining a false positive or false negative result, and can increase the ability to detect significant effects (Cohen, 1992). A major drawback of a large sample size is that it requires more resources, such as funding, personnel, and equipment, and can also require more time to recruit and test participants.

Therefore, the study employed a sample size of 30 participants, with at least 10 female experts to be interviewed. The sample size is considered adequate to satisfactorily answer the research questions due to the unique nature of the research problem. This ultimately reduced the cost and time required to collect and analyze data. Provided data saturation is attained, any extra participants would have resulted in data duplication and repetition.

#### **4.5.2 Study Population**

A population consists of all objects or events of a certain type from whom researchers seek information or knowledge (Chadwick, 2017). Every research that seeks to find an antidote to a social problem engages the participation of a section of the population to represent the entire population. The population for this study consists of all individuals, groups and or entities that are involved, affected by or has an interest in violent extremism in Nigeria, Ghana and Mali. The population included security experts, policymakers, military personnel and NGOs. The chosen population was relevant to the study. It made it possible to explore their perceptions, experiences, or reactions in relation to the broader issue of violent extremism in West Africa. The population also aligned with the research questions and objectives in countering violent extremism in West Africa. This ensured that the data collected was relevant and directly addressed the aims of the study.

The population was representative of the broader group and their first hand experiences and expert knowledge of violent extremism and means to counter it ensured that the findings of the research could be generalized. Lastly, the selected population was diverse in order to allow for the collection of data from different perspectives. This diversity offered a more holistic understanding of the phenomenon of violent extremism, its countermeasures and the implications it has for different groups.

#### **4.6 Sample Population**

The sample or target population for research is a subset of the population of interest to the researcher. According to Alvi (2016), "a target population refers to all the members who meet the criteria specified for a research investigation". The author avers that the target population

corresponds to a subset of the population about which one aims to draw conclusions, and hence a subset of the population whose features are of interest to the investigator. A target population must be exclusive enough to avoid having participants who do not meet the study's requirements and thereby misrepresent the population of interest (Castillo & Bridier, 2021). The target population for this study therefore focused specifically on individuals and groups who are directly involved, affected or have a significant interest in the countering violent extremism in West Africa. The study was based on a sample of military commanders, politicians and diplomats, security experts, and International Non-governmental Organizations and Civil Society Organizations. The targeted military commanders are mostly officers who have served in AI, MNJTF, and G-5 Sahel operations. Security experts and diplomats from the AU Secretariat, ECOWAS, and ACSRT were also target participants.

The detailed distribution of the sample population is summarized in the table below.

**Table 4.1** Distribution of sampled study population

<b>COUNTRY</b>	<b>MILITARY COMD</b>	<b>SECURITY EXPERTS</b>	<b>POLITICIANS/ DIPLOMATS</b>	<b>NGO/CSOs</b>	<b>Military Institutions</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
NIGERIA	4	2	2	1	1	10
MALI	4	2	2	1	1	10
GHANA	4	2	2	1	1	10
Total						30

**Source:** Created by Researcher 2021

Military commanders were selected based on their experience in and expertise in dealing with security situations, such as counterterrorism and anti-extremism measures. Their perspectives is

crucial in understanding the practical aspects of military operations, field problems, and the effectiveness of various military tactics. The selection of politicians from parliament and district chief executives as research participants is based on their roles as persons who make decisions and develop policies to guide the actions of governments and organizations. Politicians are responsible for making critical national security decisions, allocating resources, and establishing the legal and institutional framework within which the military operates. Understanding their perspectives provides valuable insights into the political will, limitations, and considerations that impact military counter-extremism strategies.

Security analysts were selected due to their specialized knowledge and expertise in security issues and dynamics. Specifically, they provide a broader and more theoretical perspective on violent extremism and strategies to counter the phenomenon. They provide valuable perspectives on continental and regional security trends, comparative analysis, and the long-term ramifications of military activities in the context of violent extremism. The selection of military institutions is in respect of their involvement in counter-extremism strategy implementation. They have essential operational information and experience on the obstacles and effectiveness of various military techniques targeted at violent extremism. Military institutions also have a good understanding of the security dynamics in West Africa, including the geopolitical, socio-economic, and cultural factors that influence violent extremism. Their viewpoint was critical for understanding the practical reality of military involvement in counter-extremist activities.

NGOs working in areas affected by violent extremism were selected to provide crucial on-the-ground information about the local repercussions of military operations. Some officials from the following NGOs were interviewed: Borno Women Initiative, and Center for Social Cohesion, Peace and Empowerment from Borno State; ONG Tekeltte, and Soldarite's International from

Kidal Region in Mali; Center for Sustainable Development Initiative, Action Aid and IMANI Center for Policy and Education from Upper East Region of Ghana. The NGOs are critical sources of information on humanitarian outcomes, the effectiveness of military methods in civilian protection, and the broader socioeconomic consequences of these operations. NGOs affect policy, particularly in terms of human rights and humanitarian concerns, making their viewpoints critical in analyzing the perception and impact of military strategies on civil liberties and human rights. As liaisons between military institutions and civil society, NGOs provided a balanced perspective on the military's anti-extremism role, highlighting both accomplishments and areas for improvement. Furthermore, their active involvement in de-radicalization and rehabilitation of former extremists provided important insights into the effectiveness of these initiatives and the interaction between military efforts and peace building programs.

The insights from these individuals and groups are directly relevant to the objectives of the research. The data collected from the research respondents produced findings that cannot only be generalized but was also beneficial for enhancing counter-extremism measures in West Africa.

#### **4.7 Method of Data Collection**

Creswell (2009) opines that data collection methods involve setting boundaries for the study, collecting information through unstructured and semi-structured observations and interviews, documents and visual materials, and also adopting a process for recording information. In research, data collection is critical for ensuring an evidence-based understanding of the study topic, explicitly answering research questions, and improving the study's generalizability and dependability. The rationale for the choice of a specific data collection method is necessary to establish methodological rigor and ensure that it aligns with the aims and theoretical framework

of the study. Furthermore, ethical considerations are critical in the data collection process, especially when human subjects are involved, to ensure informed consent, confidentiality, and participant safety. This approach is also critical for resource allocation, ensuring that resources are used effectively to provide new insights or enhance existing knowledge. The justification for data collection in a research is tied to the validity and accuracy of the research findings. Properly collected data ensures that the conclusions drawn from the research are based on sound evidence.

#### **4.7.1 Sources of Data Collection**

Sources of data collection in research refer to the specific origins or locations from which data is obtained to answer research questions (Taherdoost, 2021). This study collected data from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data refers to information collected directly from the source for the specific purpose of the study. It is original and collected firsthand. The study employed the use of in-depth interviews; which formed the primary data component of the study. In line with the principles of smart power theory and RSCT, a plurality of data sources and methods was essential to this research. Therefore, the study employed both primary and secondary data collection to gain insights into the phenomenon of violent extremism in West Africa and measures to combat it.

Secondary data refers to data that was collected by someone else for a different purpose but is utilized by researchers for their own analysis. In this regard, information was collected from newspaper articles, books, journals, research reports, policy documents and reputable internet sources to augment the primary data. Documents are socially constructed which means they tell more than just the data and information they contain (Matthews & Ross, 2010). The research also sourced secondary data from other academic works and existing literature on violent

extremism and countering radicalism. Although such secondary data is useful, caution is needed about its authenticity and the relevance of the data in terms of the date such document or report was issued.

The employment of both primary and secondary data collection methods provided a comprehensive approach to understanding the subject matter of the study. Due to its originality and the fact that it was acquired firsthand, primary data provided current, detailed, and relevant information that aligned well with the study objectives. The secondary data, on the other hand, supplemented the primary data by offering a broader context, helping to establish a foundational understanding of the violent extremism and counter-measures. The secondary data improved the study by combining past studies, providing a historical perspective, and saving time and resources that would be required to obtain this information from scratch. The usage of both sources allowed for a more robust, well-rounded, and thorough exploration of the research topic. This enriched the study with diverse perspectives and data points, thus enhancing the validity and depth of the research findings.

#### **4.7.2 Instruments for Data Collection**

Instruments for data collection are the tools used to collect, measure, and evaluate data related to the objectives of the study. These tools are critical for collecting information in a systematic manner that may be utilized to answer research questions, test hypotheses, and make conclusions. For this study, interview and observation guides were used as data collection tools. The interview guide guaranteed consistency between interviews while allowing for the investigation of emergent themes. Its questions were designed to extract thorough information on the military's anti-extremism strategies, efficacy, and impacts on local communities. The

observation guide, on the other hand, organized the systematic collection of observational data, with an emphasis on military activities, relationships between military personnel and civilians, and the visible consequences of military actions in communities. Both data collection instruments emphasized a methodical approach to data collection in order to ensure thorough, unbiased, and ethically sensitive information gathering, which is critical for understanding the intricacies of military responsibilities in combatting extremism in the West African sub region.

### **4.7.3 Data Collection Techniques**

Data collection techniques in research refer to the systematic methods used to gather data about a phenomenon of interest for analysis. These techniques are essential for acquiring the necessary information to answer research questions, test hypotheses, and achieve the objectives of a study. Qualitative data collection techniques such as in-depth interviews and observations were used to gather data in the study. Interview is a method of data collection or information gathering that explicitly asks a series of questions (Davis, 2006). One of the advantages of in-depth interview is that it allows direct contact between the researcher and the respondents, thus paving the way for constructive suggestions and agreed specificities (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Interview is also a useful method when detailed information is needed on a sensitive topic with limited participants available, but still sufficient rich data is required (Shneiderman & Plaisant, 2005).

The study used semi-structured interviews to facilitate data collection. The semi-structured format was chosen for its flexibility, allowing respondents to express themselves narratively within a framework of pre-determined questions. This ensured consistency across interviews while allowing for elaboration on specific topics. Concurrently, unstructured interviews were utilized, especially in initial conversations, which established a comfortable environment for

respondents, thereby easing into more directed questions. The choice of the interview setting, whether public or private, was left to the respondent, fostering a sense of ease and cooperation. The interviews included both closed and open-ended questions, with the latter playing a crucial role in building a trust relationship with respondents. This was particularly important in sensitive research areas like countering violent extremism, as it helped in gathering detailed and meaningful discussions.

In connection with the foregoing, senior military officers mainly from the armed forces of Nigeria, Mali and Ghana, both serving and retired and with counterterrorism experience and expertise were interviewed. Interviews were also conducted with security experts, politicians, military institutions and NGOs to probe into their perceptions of the role of the military in countering violent extremism in West Africa. The adoption of the interview technique allowed the researcher the opportunity to probe into issues that are considered of great importance in the view of the respondent.

#### **4.7.4 Observation of Respondents**

Observation data collection technique was also used when interviews were being conducted. This was an important part of the research process to complement the details collated in the interviews. There is limited primary data on soft (non-kinetic) power strategies in countering violent extremism in West Africa; therefore overlooking the primary data through observation would deprive the research of vital rich source of data. The observation technique was used because of its ability to systematically capture behaviors, events, or situations as they occur in their natural setting. This included observing military training, military community engagement, or the effects of military actions in affected regions. This provided a direct, real-time perspective

on events and behaviors, frequently revealing insights that would not have been easily conveyed or accurately documented in interviews.

#### **4.8 Method of Data Analysis**

In general data analysis is intended to make sense out of text from the data collected. It involves segmenting and taking apart the data as well as putting it back together to make sense of the data collected. Following the data collection phase, the concluding phase of the research design is the data analysis and interpretation. The data analysis of this research was done simultaneously with data collection. Thus, the researcher began analyzing data with the first interview, the first observation, and the first document accessed in the study. The advantage of simultaneously collecting data and analyzing allowed the researcher to make adjustments in the research process even to the point of redirecting data collection and testing emerging concepts and themes against subsequent data.

In conformity with smart power theory perspectives and qualitative methodology, the study applied a thematic data analysis technique. Thematic data analysis is a process of segmentation, categorization and relining of aspects of the data before final interpretation (Grbich 2012). The thematic analysis approach provided the opportunity to identify key themes and, given its flexibility, it will allow an extensive margin for in-depth explanation to the researcher (Dixon-Woods et al, 2006). In line with the concept of a case study, this research began with a detailed description of the data collected followed by analysis of the data for themes. After the common themes running through the data have been identified, the researcher looked at the various ways the key themes recognized are related (Matthews & Ross, 2010). The researcher then explored possible similarities and differences between the themes. Since the data collected are so dense

and rich, not all the information were used in the analysis phase. Therefore, the researcher focused on some of the data and disregard others during the thematic analysis. The study adopted a manual hand-coding method in the data analysis. In the manual coding process, the researcher read through all the data and manually developed and assigned codes and themes. The researcher combined deductive and inductive coding methods by using a predefined list of codes and inductively modifying and adding to the list. The participants responses to the questions were assigned codes.

The thematic data analysis began with the coding phase. During the coding phase, data collated was broken down into parts and given names (Bryman & Bell 2007). The data collected was coded by sorting them into descriptive and thematic categories for clarification as well as preliminary analysis. Following the coding phase, the thematic data analysis of this study went through five key steps; (i) Documentation and reading through all data collected to familiarize with the whole data set; (ii) Organization/ categorization of data into concepts and themes; (iii) Connection of the data to show how one concept may influence another; (iv) Corroboration/legitimization by evaluating alternative explanations, disconfirming evidence, and searching for negative cases; (iv) Interpreting the data set and representing the account.

#### **4.9 Ethical Considerations**

This study obtained ethical clearance from the University of Ghana Ethical Committee for Humanities at the Institute of Statistical, Social, and Economic Research (ISSER). The ethical clearance was obtained before the process of data collection commence. During the study, the researcher paid rapt attention to the ethical standards of the University of Ghana. It is imperative that any research on countering violent extremism is regarded as particularly sensitive, and thus

required a thoroughly planned theoretical framework that could effectively guide the research process in an ethical manner. The respondents were educated on the purpose of the study and were allowed to freely express their consent before the interviews were conducted. The respondents were reassured that their participation in the project would not put them into any physical or psychological harm.

The risk of being attacked or abused as a result of one expressing his/her views on such a sensitive subject is a reality. As such the principle of confidentiality and anonymity was strictly adhered to. The transcripts of the respondents were strictly kept by the researcher to protect the transcripts and their identities. All the respondents were guaranteed maximum confidentiality before, during, and after the interviews and informal interactions. All documents used for the study were sought through legitimate means. The researcher obtained an official signed letter from the Director of the Legon Center for International Affairs and Diplomacy (LECIAD) to be presented to all the institutions before any data or document was sourced.

#### **4.10 Ensuring Validity and Reliability**

Since the researcher shares same cultural background as a military officer with most of the respondents, care was taken not to be biased by not allowing my social and cultural views to shape the interpretations of the data. The researcher bore in mind the potential risk of this study, as commonalities between the researcher and the respondents can lead to issues such as lack of probing or clarification and even the potential of respondents responding solely to please the researcher. To overcome this risk, the researcher stressed that no answer was perceived as right or wrong.

The use of purposive and convenience methods in the selection of the respondents presented a challenge for reliability and validity of the study results. However, the researcher was determined to ensure the findings are accurate from the standpoint of the researcher, the respondents and readers of this study. While the aim of this study was not to generalize findings, it is important that the findings and conclusions are free from personal biases.

It is generally acknowledged that the reliability and validity of any research would improve if the researcher uses multiple procedures and different sources of data to investigate the phenomenon (De Vos, 2005). To check the validity and reliability of this study the researcher adopted Triangulation procedure to address these challenges (Creswell, 2009). Triangulation is a methodological principle and a procedure involving the use of multiple data sources to explain an event. Basically, the research used multiple qualitative instruments and different sources of data to collate and interpret the data about violent extremism and radicalism in order to converge on an accurate representation (Hilton, 2003). Thus this study used interviews, theory, previous research literature, personal observation and other data findings to compare to determine the validity of a certain theme or category.

Triangulation is predicated on the assumption that several observations of a phenomenon are better than only one (Bechhofer & Paterson, 2000). The findings become more valid than explaining from a single source or observation (Heale & Forbes 2013). Triangulation technique allowed the researcher to use diversity of information to investigate the same issue and also overcome the disadvantages of single-method studies (Patton, 2002). Again the researcher used triangulation techniques to ensure the strength of one method is used to overcome the weakness of the other (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006). This ensured the achievement of a higher degree of validity and reliability (Sarantakos, 2000).

#### 4-11. Conclusion

The study used interpretive qualitative approach in understanding the military roles in countering violent extremism in West Africa. The research explored the meaning, attitudes, values and cultures the military associate with violent extremism. The research design is a case study with a study area of West Africa, specifically the armed forces of Nigeria, Mali and Ghana. A non-probability sampling method was used and the specific techniques adopted were purposive and convenience sampling. In-depth interviews were carried out with 30 participants including 10 females. Multiple sources of information were collected and analyzed.

A thematic data analysis was carried out to distill the extensive and complex responses from the participants into themes revealing insights into the role of the military in CVE in West Africa. Since the researcher is a military officer with over 30 years of experience the analysis process was an active process of reflexivity in which the researcher's subjective experience was at the center of making logic of the participant's responses.

The data analysis centered on the smart military strategy adopted by the armed forces of Nigeria, Mali and Ghana, and the challenges in the application of smart military strategy in CVE in West Africa, It also adopted the RSCT to interrogate the various West Africa multinational initiatives to counter the phenomenon.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### SMART MILITARY STRATEGY IN COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN WEST AFRICA

#### 5.0 Introduction

Violent extremism in West Africa is a complex problem that presents multifaceted security challenges to the sub region as evidenced by activities of groups such as Boko Haram and the AQIM. These groups have wreaked havoc by carrying out crimes such as kidnappings, suicide bombings, and attacks on both civilian and military targets. In light of these security challenges, many West African countries and their militaries have adopted a variety of countermeasures to combat this menace. These countermeasures primarily focused on hard military power. However, the ineffectiveness of such strategy has necessitated the adoption of smart military tactics to combat violent extremism in the sub region.

In the post-Cold War era, issues of security in West Africa have evolved from security complex to a security community (Bah, 2005). The transnational nature of violent extremism reinforces the security interdependence of member states in the sub-region. The close cultural, historical ties and the geographical proximity of the member states qualifies the use of RCST in analyzing the role of the multinational military initiatives in countering violent extremism. The institutionalization of conflict resolution mechanisms in West Africa which is a move away from the ad hoc approach of the past ensures that one state can pursue extremist elements across borders and one can argue that neighboring states will not harbor extremist groups.

This chapter evaluates the smart military strategy adopted to counter violent extremism in West Africa. This section is specifically focused on smart military strategies adopted in the case

studies of Nigeria, Mali and Ghana. The themes are analyzed because they are consistent with the research objectives. The chapter also assesses the military strategies adopted by the ad hoc military task forces such as the AI, LCBC MNJTF and the G5 Sahel using the RSCT theory. The RSCT is used to analyze the multinational military initiatives in CVE in the sub-region because the theory promotes ownership and empowerment among the armed forces in West Africa.

### **5.1 Background to Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria**

Boko Haram is a group which started as a radical Islamist youth wing in the 1990s and has evolved over the years to become one of the deadliest terror groups in the world (Afzal, 2020). The first leader of the group Mohammed Yusif was a charismatic leader whose interpretation of the Quran was based on anti-western understanding (Walker, 2012). In July 2009 Mohammed Yusif was killed in police custody. His death instead of reducing the violence rather increased the group's attacks and sophistication. The extra-judicial killing of the founding father of Boko Haram brought about an evolution to a more coordinated attacks largely focusing on law enforcement agents, the military, politicians and religious leaders (Walker, 2012). Since 2011 the group has killed more than 20,000 people and caused the displacement of more than 2.1 million northern Nigerians (Rugutt, 2018). According to Amnesty International Boko Haram since 2014 has abducted more than 2,000 girls and boys with many used as sex slaves, fighters and suicide bombers.

*“...The socio-economic grievances, the lack of good governance structures in the northern part of Nigeria and the use of kinetic military approach to counter the extremist groups are causes of the ascendancy of Boko Haram in Nigeria according to a politician*

*interviewed....Political officer at Maiduguri Local Government Area- 2 November 2023).*

In 2013 the Nigerian Legislature passed a law that allowed the military to detain any suspected terrorist without having access to any person or medical services, confiscate property without warrant of arrest (UNODC, 2022) and this boosted the capacity of the military to attack and destroy extremist group. A special military force consisting of the Nigerian armed forces and the police was formed to mitigate the threat of Boko Haram. The Nigeria military task force was to mitigate the threat of the terror group and to liberate the towns captured by the group.

## **5.2 Nigeria's Kinetic Military CVE Strategies**

The Federal Government in its bid to fight the menace of terrorism and violent extremism deployed approximately 100,000 soldiers in the campaign against the Boko Haram insurgency (Falode, 2016). The military engaged in direct combat operations with Boko Haram rebels to disrupt and dismantle their operations, regaining territories and restored government control in areas under the control of violent extremists. Once regions had been recaptured from Boko Haram's control, the military's responsibility was to safeguard these areas to prevent the insurgents from returning (International Crisis Group, 2016). This duty entailed establishing security outposts, performing frequent patrols, and collaborating with local authorities to ensure law and order. Further, the Nigerian military conducted intelligence operations to monitor the movements and tactics of the Boko Haram to plan offensive strategies and pre-empt attacks (Udounwa, 2013).

A state of emergency was declared in the northeastern states of Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa, where Boko Haram was most active (Zenn, 2013). This state of emergency was a strategic

decision that gave the military greater authority and resources. It also permitted the adoption of stronger security measures and allowed the military to act more quickly and forcefully. The Nigerian military formed new formations and units to particularly address the unique difficulties given by Boko Haram. A new Army Division known as the 7<sup>th</sup> Division with its headquarters in Maiduguri, Borno State was established in August 2013 (Adesote & Akande, 2023). A specialized counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency Joint Task Force (JTF) was also established to deal with Boko Haram's unconventional warfare methods. The JTF was primarily a military force specially dedicated to CVE responsibilities and comprised of personnel and officers of the Nigerian Army, Nigerian Navy, Nigerian Air force and the State Security Service (SSS) (Mamman, 2020). The JTF was stationed at Maiduguri and given the mandate to neutralize the Boko Haram threat in the north-eastern region of Nigeria. The operations of the JTF focused on the use of hard power strategies including gun battles and drone attacks against militant forces of the Boko Haram. This resulted in many militant deaths, injuries and arrests.

According to Falode (2016), the JTF launched 'Operation Flush' to arrest and contain the activities of the Boko Haram in the northeast. Many of those arrested were placed in special detention centers including army barracks, the SARS detention center in Abuja, SSS detention centers and other prisons in Nigeria (Amnesty International, 2012). One of the main modes of operation of the JTF in CVE in northern Nigeria was house-to-house search and forced evictions (Sampson, 2015). In instances of Boko Haram attacks, the JTF cordon off the area and asks all residents to leave their homes, to expedite the house-to-house search operation.

In 2015, the Nigerian government solicited the expertise of Private Military Contractors (PMC) called the Special Tasks Training, Equipment and Protection (STTEP) International Ltd from South Africa to support its kinetic military initiatives (Mkandla, 2017). STTEP were involved in

offensive roles to halt the advancement of Boko Haram and to create enabling environment for the conduct of elections in Nigeria. The intervention of the STEEP helped to halt the rapid advance of Boko Haram but did not end their recruitment efforts (Mamud, 2022). The research found that most of the military strategies adopted in the early years of the fight against Boko Haram were kinetic focused.

*“...The kinetic military strategy to some extends weakened the operational capabilities of the terror group and contributed to the pushing back of Boko Haram to the rural according to a military general interviewed... **Operations Officer 7<sup>th</sup> Division HQ, Maiduguri- 2 November 2023**”.*

The Nigerian armed forces however were accused of using excessive force and the alleged excesses have undermined the overly kinetic military approach. According to a politician interviewed

*“...the kinetic military response to Boko Haram provided a platform in which the group further agitated for their local grievances and attracted civilians who were bitter about the unfair extra-judicial killings...**Political Officer at Damaturu-Yobe State- 3 November 2023**”.*

A research by Serrano and Pieri (2014) showed that 62% of the casualties of the fight against Boko Haram were civilians, 25% of the victims were Boko Haram activists and 13% were military personnel. This is an indication the kinetic military approach negatively affected the civilian-military relations. According to a security analyst interviewed

*“...the military brutalities have been ineffective in managing violent extremism in northern Nigeria ...Security Analyst, Center for Social Cohesion, Peace and Empowerment at Maiduguri -10 November 2023”.*

### **5.2.1 Nigeria’s Non-kinetic Military CVE Strategies**

Aside the hard power approach to fighting violent extremism, the Nigerian military also resorted to soft power strategies. One of such military-run operation was “Operation Safe Corridor” (OPSC) which started in 2016, a rehabilitation initiative designed to reintegrate Boko Haram fighters who had surrounded back into society (Adebayo & Matsilele, 2019). The primary aim of the operation was to provide ex-combatants with post-war psychotherapy while also giving them rudimentary vocational training skills, with the goal of providing them with a means of life outside the Boko Haram camps. According to Bukarti (2019), the ex-Boko Haram combatants were enrolled into skill acquisitions and trades such as carpentry, tailoring, welding, poultry, shoemaking etc. According to Felbab-Brown (2018), the military also introduced a defector program for repentant "low-risk" Boko Haram militants in 2015. The program targeted Boko Haram insurgents in selected prisons across Nigeria and with an individualized approach the military identified each prisoner's extremism risk-related needs (Adebayo & Matsilele, 2019). This was done to implement interventions to reduce their risk of engaging in or advocating violent activities.

The Federal Government of Nigeria also inaugurated the Amnesty Program in 2009 to supplement the implementation of the Niger Delta Peace Plan (Ubhenin, 2013). The Program which was implemented under the auspices of the Nigerian Armed Forces, granted amnesty to Niger Delta militants willing to lay down their arms. It also aimed to build the human capacity of

ex-combatants and ultimately re-integrate them into society. By 2016, 23 ex-militants had been trained as electrical engineers, and around 38 graduated from the Royal Jordanian Air Academy's 83rd Pilot Course (Mokaddem, 2019). Others went on to study in the United Kingdom, Russia, South Africa, and the United States.

The Nigerian military, with support from the European Union Technical Assistance to Nigeria's Evolving Security Challenges (EUTANS), implemented the CVE and De-Radicalization Program (Mokaddem, 2019). The program aimed to tackle the root causes of violent extremism, including social, cultural, religious, and economic factors. To address the ideological motivations behind violent extremism, the military implemented plans to provide solutions and convey effective messages through strategic communication and training for imams and other religious leaders (Moaddem, 2019). To tackle the socio-cultural aspects, the military's de-radicalization program also provided mass housing, infrastructural development, agricultural revitalization and the safe school initiative. Some of the communities for the de-radicalization program were Ngala and Konduga in the Borno State and Gulani in the Yobe State. The non-kinetic military activities of the military is confirmed by Babatunde (2023) who avers that the role of the Nigerian military in counter-insurgency and combating violent perpetrators cannot be overstated. According to the author, the Nigerian armed forces dialogued with warring factions, built infrastructure and provided amenities such as medical supplies and water to win the trust of belligerent parties (Babatunde, 2023).

President Bola Ahmed Tinubu since taking power in May 2023, resolved to adopt a non-kinetic approach to address violent extremism in his country. The Vice-President Kashim Shettima while responding to newsmen in Kano on 15 July 2023 explained that kinetic-only military solution could not end insecurity and extremism in the country (Babatunda, 2023). Mr. Shettima

in another forum revealed the government intention to unveil the “Pulaku” Strategy to address violent extremism and poverty. The “Pulaku” strategy is a smart power approach to the eradication of violent extremism. This is another official confirmation of the inadequacy of kinetic military strategy that has been pursued and the need to adopt smart power strategies. This led to the armed forces of Nigeria to strengthen their non-kinetic capabilities by improving on their civil-military relationships (Babatunde, 2023).

### **5.2.2. Analysis of Nigeria’s Non-kinetic Military Strategy**

In a Nigeria military press release on 17 October 2023, the Commander of “Operation Safe Haven” (OPSH) and the General Officer Commanding (GOC) 7<sup>th</sup> Division Nigeria Army maintained that robust non-kinetic military measures have been employed by OPSH to address the violent extremism in the Plateau, Benue, Kaduna, Katsina, and the South-East States. The robust non-kinetic military measures have been successful according to the GOC (Military General GOC, 7<sup>th</sup> Division HQ, Maiduguri).

In analyzing the non-kinetic military strategy of the Nigerian armed forces the GOC of the 7<sup>th</sup> Division stated that the first mission was to engage in a robust communication campaign to counter the Boko Haram narrative. The syllabus of the Nigerian Defence Academy in Kaduna was modified to give military cadets training in non-kinetic military approaches and procedures (Nigerian Defense Academy, n.d.). The military in 2014 led in the negotiation efforts and the presidential amnesty agreement with some rebel groups in Borno State which identified ways of convincing the Boko Haram members to embrace dialogue and disarmament.

On 19 February 2018, 111 female students of Government Secondary School in Dapchi in Yobe state were kidnapped by Boko Haram (International Crisis Group, 2018). The military’s

negotiations led to the release of the girls on 21 March 2018 except for five girls who were said to have died. According to a retired military general interviewed

*“...the non-kinetic military initiatives led to hundreds of militants to surrender. A military facility in Gombe state has a program designed and run by the Nigerian non-combat military units (Imams, medical, education and engineer units) to rehabilitate low-risk repentant Boko Haram fighters through religious re-education, psychological support and vocational training. This program has not only brought back hundreds of militant into normal society but also given them employment skills and capital to start their business ... Retired Maj General Nigeria Army at Gombe State- 10 November 2023”*

There is also a military facility in Bulumkutu, Maiduguri mostly for women, children and the elderly that organizes Disarmament, Disengagement and Reintegration (DDR) programs (Brechenmacher, 2018). According to a military psychologist interviewed at the facility most of the people who have gone through the DDR program have become advocates for peace and opinion leaders in the communities.

The Presidential Initiative on northeast (PINE) is an intervention plan which is designed to mobilize targeted resources to jumpstart the economies of the North-Eastern States (Gado & Wasiu, 2019). The armed forces of Nigeria led the PINE's Economic Reconstruction and Redevelopment Plan to meet basic human needs and improve social service delivery in the susceptible violent extremist communities. The military through the non-kinetic initiatives encouraged social orientation, improved capacity building and skill acquisition, improved the education system, promoted ethnic and religious harmony and provided leadership training and

facilitated private sector and infrastructure development particularly in the North-East (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2016). Some of the areas for the PINE are Dikwa and Chibok in the Borno State, Madagali in the Adamawa State and Fika in the Yobe State. These programs greatly facilitated the reduction in extremist attacks in the northeastern Nigeria.

The Nigerian non-combat military units were also involved in the Safe Schools Initiative (SSI) which began in 2015 and contributed to the transfer of students from the northeast states of Borno (NILDS, 2021). Adamawa and Yobe to safer Federal Unity Schools in Gombe, Bauchi and Taraba cities in the northeast and north-central and north western political zones. By 2019 a total of 2360 students had been placed in 43 secondary schools outside Borno, Adamawa and Yobe states. According to a politician at the SSI office in Damaturu the capital city of Yobe State

*“... the SSI program with the leadership of the military helped to reduce the Boko Haram recruitment drive in the Yobe State... Political Officer, Yobe Local Government Area-  
12 November 202”*

The armed forces of Nigeria through the Victim Support Fund (VSF) initiative which was led by General TY Danjuma as chairman was started in 2014 and engaged selected communities to provide cash support to households with fostering children (Victims Support Fund, n.d). The project provided children with enhanced access to education and protected them from violence, provided psycho-social support and parental care, nutrition, healthcare and case management. According to a politician in Yola the capital of Adamawa state, more than 4200 orphans have benefited from the VSF project and the project led by the non-combat military personnel has greatly helped in addressing some of the root causes of extremism which is mainly poverty, social exclusion and marginalization.

Despite the many successes chalked with the non-kinetic military initiatives which greatly helped in countering threat from Boko Haram and their recruitment drive, there are challenges of utilizing non-kinetic military approaches in Nigeria. The main problems in implementing non-kinetic military strategy in countering violent extremism in Nigeria according to a security expert at CDD in Abuja is the poor conceptualization of non-kinetic military strategy, absence of grass root participation and non-prioritization of women and children in the non-kinetic military initiatives to counter the Boko Haram threats. These problems of non-kinetic military approaches negatively affect the effective application of smart military strategy not only in Nigeria but Mali and other West Africa militaries.

### **5.3 Background to the Mali Insurgency**

During the Cold War, Mali was one of the peaceful countries in Africa (Soares, 2006). Mali was hailed by the West as a geographical barrier against Islamic radicalism in Africa since its borders is shared with Algeria and Mauritania. However, after the 2012 Coup and the Libya crisis, Mali began to experience violent extremist attacks in the northern part of the country from AQIM and other extremist groups. A security analyst interviewed traced how Mali became an enclave of violent extremism within a short period of time to three interrelated factors. The factors are the Tuareg's nationalism, an increase in radical Islam and the nature of the post-independence Mali state.

In March 2012, a Malian army captain Amadou Sanogo staged a successful coup to overthrow President Amadou Toumani Toure (Hagberg, & Körling, 2012). The power vacuum created by the transitional government after the coup aided the MNLA and later AQIM extremist groups to seize control of Kidal and Gao, major cities in the Timbuktu region and other northern towns in

Mali (Stewart, 2013). The Islamic groups took advantage of the 2012 coup to destabilize the region. Fifteen UN troops were killed in a UN facility in Kidal in 2016 and there were repeated terrorist attacks against the government and the civilian population.

The escalation of violent extremism in Mali since 2012 can be attributed to the widespread corruption, weak state capacity, dysfunctional institutions, and the ill-equipped and weak military (Hagberg, & Körling, 2012). These predicaments stem from longstanding problems of governance which have not been addressed for decades. Failure of successive governments to improve the living standards of the people led to grievances against the governments and support for the extremist groups who were advocating for the Tuareg's independence state in the north.

The Tuareg ethnic groups who are nomadic pastoralist have long called for a separate independent state as they identify northern Mali as Azawad (Asfura-Heim, 2013). The northern region of Mali has been economically, politically and socially marginalized. The marginalization has led to high level of poverty and unemployment in the north compared to the south. Many Tuareg young men looking for job opportunity outside their country were recruited into the Libya military command under Muammar Gadhafi. When Gadhafi was killed and his regime overthrown by the NATO military intervention in 2011, the Tuaregs fled from Libya with large ammunition and military equipment into northern Mali (Kisangani, 2012). This led to the birth of the Tuareg Azaawad National Liberation Movement (MNLA) which took over northern Mali towns of Niafunke, Menake and Tessalite (Olawunmi, 2023). The MNLA defeated the Mali army and forced thousands of civilians to flee to other countries. The violent extremist groups while conquering the northern part of Mali killed non-Muslims and imposed strict form of Sharia laws. A coalition of Tuareg rebels and Islamist militants with links to al-Qaeda pushed the Malian army out of the north of the country (Lacher, 2012).

The Mali government in December 2012 invited the UN, the French, the US and the EU to assist in combating the extremists in Mali. However, the threat from the extremist groups in Mali continued to escalate despite the many military interventions. The Mali military and other international security partners established a military coalition to counter the extremist groups with an initial focus on kinetic military strategy.

#### **5.4 Mali's Kinetic Military Strategies in CVE**

The Mali Armed Forces has been at the forefront of CVE efforts, especially the Malian National Guard Gendarmerie and the antiterrorism unit referred to as “Forces Speciales Antiterroristes” (FORSAT). The operations are mostly concentrated on Mali's northern and central regions, which have historically been hotbeds of extremism. Key operational zones include the Gao, Kidal, and Timbuktu regions, where terrorists like AQIM have developed bases (Bøås, 2019). As part of efforts to counter violent extremism, the American Special Forces trained the Malian Armed Forces on the Anti-terrorism Assistance Program to prevent and response to terrorist and extremist attacks. The Malian armed forces were trained on how to strategize on planning counterattacks and carried out exercises and battle simulations. This helped Mali's 33rd Airborne Regiment in defeating some elements of AQIM in 2016 (Traore, 2018). Further, as part of an overhaul in the security sector to counter violent extremism, the Malian Armed Forces and gendarmerie added 5,000 and 1,500 new recruits respectively (representing increases of 30% and 18%) (Le Roux, 2019).

In 2017, the Malian Armed Forces launched “Operation Dambe”, deploying 4,000 soldiers to 8 zones, covering northern and central Mali in an effort to counter activities of the violent extremist groups (Le Roux, 2019). The operation, updated in 2019, was a kinetic military action

intended at combatting the expansion of extremist groups in Mali, notably in the central and northern regions where the AQIM and Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM) were very active. It was launched to neutralize extremist threats, reassert state authority and military control and rebuild social and economic life (Africa Defence Forum, 2020). Operation Dambe consisted of a series of strategic military activities including ground offensives, aerial surveillance, and targeted strikes on insurgent strongholds. These efforts were complemented by mobile units deployed to disrupt militant Islamist group activities through increased patrols. Some of the areas the military engaged the militants were Tessalit, Gao, Menaka and Kidal. It led to the mass arrests, detention and killing of many extremist combatants, which ultimately led to the dismantlement of many burgeoning jihadist cells in Northern Mali (Traore, 2018). Even though the threats posed in extremist groups in central Mali continued, the increased presence of the Mali Armed Forces undoubtedly curbed their influence in key population centers in the region.

#### **5.4.1 Mali's Military Non-Kinetic Strategies in CVE**

The Mali Military also adopted comprehensive non-kinetic strategies in countering violent extremism. This was aimed at creating trust with local communities through outreach initiatives, which are critical for bridging the gap between the military and civilians, as well as gathering intelligence and undermining extremist propaganda. The Malian government in conjunction with the Armed Forces decided to integrate Tuareg rebels into the national Army (Pezard & Shurkin, 2015). This marked a critical step towards post-conflict stabilization in the region. This policy of reintegration was particularly key since grievances related to marginalization and political exclusion fueled the uprising (Pezard & Shurkin, 2015). The integration process was implemented through joint training programs and cultural sensitivity sessions which facilitated the demilitarization of the Tuareg communities (Francis, 2013). This policy addressed immediate

security threats and historical issues behind the rebellion thereby promoting national unity and reducing regional tensions. The reintegration policy granted the military control over once-contested areas which minimized the risk of renewed hostilities and contributed to regional stability. For instance in 2017 in Aguelhok and Menaka the reintegration program assisted more than 50 militants to join the Malian Army (Francis, 2013).

The Mali military's non-kinetic CVE operations were also complemented by their involvement in Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) to foster a positive relationship with local communities. The Mali armed forces conducted counter-narrative campaigns through local media, social media, and community forums, while encouraging national unity and cohesiveness to oppose extremist groups' divisive tactics (Traore, 2018). Active collaboration among locals in Gao, Bourem, Gourma and Mopti enabled the consistent delivery of precise and responsive intelligence, which was crucial for good military planning, effective operations, and a successful legal prosecution (Traore, 2018). The decision to control and monitor the access to local markets in surrounding villages dealt a bigger blow to the jihadist group than kinetic operations. Furthermore, the military's ability to acquire food from locals in areas such as Menaka and Kidal rather than relying on a logistical chain strengthened the bonds of trust with the community, allowing for the fluidity of operations, and lowered threats to the mission (Traore, 2018).

This non-kinetic military approach was aimed at tackling the endogenous causes of violence through strategic information campaigns, community engagement and community collaboration. For the civilian in the north, the Malian government lacked legitimacy and did not provide any meaningful development. Northern Mali is the least developed region of the country. Pave roads do not exist in major road network such as from Kidal to Gao and outside of Timbuktu. Most homes in this region are constructed from mud and few fields are irrigated. Clinics and schools

are sparsely distributed and the issue of corruption in governance is the bases for analyzing Mali military strategy in CVE.

#### **5.4.2. Analysis of the Mali Military Strategy for Countering Violent Extremism**

The Mali government invited international partners to assist in combating the extremist threat in 2012. The UNSCR 2085 authorized the deployment of an “African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA)”. The resolution called on other interested bilateral partners and international organizations to provide support for AFISMA. On 9 Jan 2013 an extremist offensive captured a town called Konna and this made the French who initially had indicated not to deploy combat soldiers to take direct kinetic military action against the extremist groups. Thus, France became the main military force to partner with the Malian military to counter the extremist threat from 2012 (Jesse, 2019).

The French military deployed about 4000 troops in Mali in 2013 (Erforth, 2020). The main strategy was purely kinetic military with ground forces being backed by troop transport vehicles, tanks and Gazelle helicopters. The French had their forces from the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Marine Infantry Regiment and detached commandos. The tactical HQ was based in Bamako with forces based in mainly Bamako, Mopti, Sevare, Timbuktu and Gao (Erforth, 2020). The French Rafale and Mirage 2000D fighter jet aircraft was deployed to carry out multiple airstrikes against the terrorist groups. The target included training camps, rear base infrastructure and logistic depots.

On 21 January 2013, Malian forces with French air support re-took the cities of Diabaly, and Duentza which along with Mopti and Sevare represented the main strategic routes towards the capital Bamako. Following a continuous period of air attacks in and around Gao and Timbuktu

on 24 January 2014, Malian and French forces took the airport and a strategic bridge at GAO. Several extremist groups were killed during the offensive, while others were driven further north.

The French, Malian and African forces took the city of Timbuktu and entered the town of Kidal in the northern part of Mali on 29 January 2013 (Flood, 2013). Kidal was the last major town left to be secured. The extremist militants fled to the mountain region north of Kidal an area which had been the target of French air strikes in an effort to destroy the insurgent bases and supply depots. On 26 February 2013, the Malian and French troops killed several armed militants including AQIM Commander Abou Zeid and Mokhtar Belmokhtar (Lebovich, 2013). Other international partners provided logistic support to Mali through the French military to combat the insurgents.

The UK in January 2013 agreed to provide logistic assistance to Mali (Baron, 2013). On 25 January 2013 the MOD confirmed the UK's deployment of a Sentinel Surveillance aircraft to Mali and the aircraft was based at Dakar in Senegal. The UK provided transport aircraft assistance to Ghana in the deployment of 120 engineer personnel, vehicles and equipment for the AFISMA force in Mali (BBC News, 2013). The US provided unmanned surveillance drones to support French aircraft conducting air attacks in northern Mali. Other countries like Canada, Russia, Germany, Denmark, Italy and Hungary all provided France with logistic support. About 6,300 African soldiers from Nigeria, Niger, Burkina Faso, Togo, Senegal, Benin, and Chad were deployed as part of AFISMA by 11 March 2013 (Africa Union, 2013). Ivory Coast, Ghana, Liberia and Sierra Leone also sent troops by September 2013. The ability of both the Malian armed forces and other regional troops to work together and conduct the type of operations required in northern Mali including holding the grounds after the French airstrikes had been a

challenge. The extremist groups appeared to be well trained and better equipped than initially thought and are more experienced in operating in the north Mali terrain.

The success of the coalition strategy in Mali was dependent on the France air attacks degrading the extremist military capabilities and the ability of the Mali's troop to occupy the towns and communities where the extremists have been defeated (Spet, 2015). The problem was that the airstrikes and the excessive kinetic military strategy employed killed several innocent civilians which made the populace resentful of the military. The French and other international military partners were not prepared to deploy out of the big cities to the small towns where insecurity is rampant (Francis, 2013). The Mali troops were also not well trained and equipped to hold the grounds or communities following up on the French airstrikes. Therefore, the extremist groups are able to return to the towns after persistent airstrikes, bombing and other kinetic military measures. For instance, Tessalit is a rural community in the Kidal Region which is an Oasis in the Sahara Desert with lot of economic potential. The Malian army captured the community in late 2016 but had to retreat outside the community in early 2017 because the Tuareg group succeeded in their counter attacks. The kinetic military strategy adopted from 2012 until 2021 could not defeat the violent extremist groups. Although there were some recorded successes in the degrading of the extremist infrastructure and the recapture of some cities, the militant groups succeeded in coming back to the communities because the Malian military could not hold the ground.

Another problem with the kinetic military strategy in Mali was the abuse of human rights and humanitarian law. In a press conference on 22 January 2016, the UN Secretary-General expressed concern about the worsening and deteriorating situation in Mali in terms of safety and security for the people in Mali and humanitarian workers (OCHA, 2016). He emphasized that

any UN support has to comply with human-right rules. There were reports of Malian forces abusing human rights. For instance, Malian soldiers were accused of illegal arrests, interrogation and torture of suspected terrorists (Nozawa, & Lefas, 2018). On 24 January 2014, the Paris-based International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) expressed its concern about the increasing number of summary executions and other human right abuses being committed by the Malian troops (Mali Human Rights Association, 2017). The ICRC press released on 25 March 2016, reminded all parties to the conflict in Mali of their obligation to respect international humanitarian law and stressed the rule that protect the civilian population and people no longer taking part in the fight.

A senior military diplomat interviewed noted that

“... the US Africa Command, the EU Training team and other western military partners never trained the Malian troops about values, ethics and the military ethos but rather concentrated on hard power tactics in countering extremism...**Malian Military Diplomat in Cairo, 16 December 2023**”.

In August 2020 and May 2021 Mali experienced two coups carried out by Colonel Assimi Goita, which overthrew President Ibrahim Bonbacar Keita and the transitional President Bah N'Daw respectively (World Watch Research, 2022). The new military leaders claimed their take-over was due to the inability of the past government to defeat the violent extremists in the country. The new military leaders complained about the presence of the external military partners and the strategy adopted in countering the violent extremist groups (World Watch Research, 2022). The military leaders demanded the withdrawal of ECOWAS, France and MINUSMA with the French completing their withdrawal in August 2022 (Sauter, 2024). The new Mali military junta in May

2022 left the G5 Sahel security partnership and invited the Wagner group to support its military campaign against the extremist groups (Africa Center for Strategic Studies, 2023).

Although some analysts argue that the threat from the militant extremists has escalated since the military junta seized power in 2021, others argue that foreign military partner's kinetic strategy was the problem in CVE in Mali since 2012. Approximately 6,150km square of Malian territory have been captured by militant groups by 2023 (ACSS, 2023). Much of the north of the country is under the rule of the militant extremists. The military government in Mali has made progress in the professionalization of the military According to a diplomat from Mali

*“...the military government is taking seriously the issue of non-kinetic military approaches and there have seen progress in CVE in recent times. In December 2023, the Malian military was able to recapture the Tessalit district from the extremist militants. For the first time since 2017 the Tessalit district is under the control of the military. Tessalit is an oasis and a stopover for trans-Saharan travellers. It has a gypsum deposit and a plaster factory which contributed for the local economy. The economic activities in recent decade have been disrupted by the Tuareg rebellion. However, the military in December 2023 were able to combine kinetic and non-kinetic military operations to take over the community. The Malian military leveraged on socio-economic interventions in the Tessalit district by providing funding to help local business and constructed a feeder road from Tessalit to Aguelhok. The French and other military foreign partners never provided socio-economic interventions to remote areas such as Tessalit. These socio-economic interventions by the Malian military in 2023 contributed greatly to the local economy and brought social cohesion to defeat the Tuareg rebels...Malian Colonel and Military Diplomat in Cairo”.*

The Malian army is being reformed into combined arms battle groups each with one light mechanized company, three motorized infantry company and additional recce, and non-kinetic military units. The reformation is preparing them for the effective application of smart military strategy.

### **5.5 Ghana's Readiness to Counter Violent Extremism**

Ghana's neighbors Ivory Coast and Togo were both attacked by extremist groups in 2016 and 2021 respectively (Prah, & Chanimbe, 2021). Although Ghana has not yet experienced any extremist attacks the exposure of Ghana is confirmed by the deteriorating security situation in Burkina Faso and Mali. The extremist activities in the Sahel have made the northern part of Ghana the new front line against violent extremism (Aubyn, 2021). Ghana remains among the few counties in the sub-region that have not experienced extremist attacks. However, its geographical location predisposes it to extremist attacks. Furthermore, Ghana's cordial relations with the US leading to accepting two former Guantanamo Bay detainees and the signing of military agreement with the US in 2018 for the establishment of a military unit in Accra brought Ghana ever closer to the attention of extremist groups both in the sub-region and beyond (Anim, 2016). Again, Ghana is also engulfed in poor economic conditions, porous borders, proliferation of small and light weapons, inter-ethnic conflicts and illegal mining. All these issues are common precipitant of violent extremism in West Africa (Prah & Chanimba, 2021).

The establishment of extremist groups in Burkina Faso has allowed these groups to recruit from Ghana. In 2015 five Ghanaian youth were recruited by ISIS (Zulkarnain, 2020). It is estimated that over 200 Ghanaian youth have been integrated into various extremist groups after undergoing training in camps inside the Sahel. In 2020, some Ghanaian youth were trained in

Gourma region of Mali and one of these recruits from Karaga in northern part of Ghana carried out the suicide attack on the Barkhane force on 21 June 2021 in Mali (Promediation, 2022). Intelligence report indicates that there is evidence of frequent movement of the youth in northern part of Ghana to Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger. These young people normally travel to these countries and return to their locality of origin after six months. The fact that these extremist groups can easily recruit from Ghana shows how vulnerable the country is exposed to violent extremist attacks.

Having recognized the eminent threat of extremist attacks, the Ghana authorities have put in place a holistic strategy. Ghana's CTS is based on four pillars: prevention, anticipation, protection and response (National Framework for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism and Terrorism, 2019). The strategy involves both hard and soft power approaches. It emphasizes the need to reduce vulnerabilities, improving governance, protecting human rights and training state and non-state actors (NAFPCVET, 2019). In the northern part of the country, the government is strengthening the networks and control of the area and a special economic program has been initiated.

According to a Ghanaian Member of Parliament (MP) interviewed

*“...at the sub-regional level, Ghana advocated a comprehensive, coordinated and supportive approach among states to counter violent extremism. This is the reason why in 2017 the Ghana authorities initiated the creation of the Accra Initiative whose secretariat is based in Accra...”* **MP Member of Defence Select Committee 28 November 2023)**

The military in Ghana has been preparing to deal with the threat of radicalism by re-structuring, re-deploying, modernization and training to counter the menace (ADF, 2023) The Ghana Armed

Forces (GAF) is building capability and capacity to deal with radicalism and extremism. The concept of operation is to use kinetic military approach against active threats as well as leveraging on socio-economic interventions in vulnerable areas to address some of the drivers of extremism.

## **5.6. Ghana's Military Strategy in Countering Violent Extremism**

The southward drift of violent extremist groups from the Sahel region to the littoral regions in West Africa (Center for Preventive Action, 2024) has engaged the attention of the military in Ghana. The threat of violent extremism ranks high in Ghana due to the evolution of extremist activities in its neighboring countries. Ghana's government in 2019 developed the NAFPCVET. The Framework is an all-inclusive and holistic approach to counter violent extremism. The Ghana Armed Forces in response to NAFPCVET has also devised a well-thought-out military strategy and implementation plan to effectively deal with violent extremism (NAFPCVET, 2019). The Ghana military strategy involves both kinetic and non-kinetic military activities.

### **5.6.1. Ghana Armed Forces Kinetic Activities**

The main objective of the Ghana military strategy is to sustain quick response capabilities through mobility, firepower, communication, intelligence, and force protection (Ghana Peace Journal, 2022). The military has therefore established fortified Defensive Positions across the northern borders of the country. Some of the activities involve the deployment of appropriate intelligence surveillance assets for preemptive detection (Ghana Peace Journal, 2022). The Ghana Armed Forces have established air surveillance, effective offensive capabilities, and a network of logistics bases to support military operations against violent extremist groups (NAFPCVET, 2019).

The military in Ghana has established new Units in the Northern Sector of the country where the threat of extremism is imminent. The GAF since 2019 have established three new units along the Ghana border with Burkina Faso to specifically deal with extremist activities in the Northern part of the country. (Africa Defence Forum, 2021). The three units are the 10, 11, and 12 Mechanized Battalions in Wa, Bolgatanga and Sandema respectively. There is also the 155 armored regiment that provides support to these battalions. The 69 Airborne Force under the Command of the Ghana Army Special Operations Brigade is deployed with responsibility for the Northeast Region (Ghana Peace Journal, 2022). The Ghana Air Force maintains a fighter squadron in Tamale with a Forward Operating/Logistics bases in Wa in the Upper West Region and Bui in the Savannah Regions (Ghana Air Force, n.d). The Ghana Navy has established the Special Boat Squadron and a Training Command to effectively deal with violent extremism.

The new establishments are to help dominate the area and as a show of force to deter the extremist groups. The Forward Operating Bases (FOBs) were established to extend the military footprints to isolated places and to increase the reaction time of troops. There are currently 17 permanent FOBs under construction across the 5 northern regions (Yeboah, 2022). Some of areas the military is dominating are Garu, Binduri and Tempene in the Pusiga district. The presence of these military units has helped in building trust between the government and the citizens and community resilience which is necessary in countering the extremist narratives.

The Ghana Armed Forces (GAF) launched the “Operation Conquered Fist” in 2020 to preemptively deal with violent extremists (Africa Defence Forum, 2021). “Conquered Fist” is a multi-agency operation led by the Ghana Armed Forces to locate and destroy violent extremist groups and their infrastructure. Operation Conquered Fist covers Ghana’s Savannah, Northern, North-East, Upper East, and Upper West regions (Africa Defence Forum, 2021). In 2021, the

GAF in collaboration with sister security agencies including the Ghana Police Service, Ghana National Fire Service, National Ambulance Service, and other intelligence agencies were trained in Operation Eagle Claws. The exercise was designed to equip troops with the capacity to respond rapidly and effectively to terrorists and contemporary threats in the ‘Operation Conquered Fist’ Area of Operation as well as other parts of the country (Africa Defense Forum, 2021). It is quite clear that Ghana’s Military Strategy in countering violence is mainly focused on kinetic response. However, the military has adopted non-kinetic approaches to security through the building of resilience and national cohesion.

### **5.6.2. Ghana Armed Forces Non-Kinetic Activities**

Ghana’s strategy to counter violent extremism has centered on efficient awareness creation. The Ministry of National Security in 2022, launched a project called “See Something, Say Something”, to bring citizens on board in the fight against violent extremism (Abbey, 2022). This campaign is part of the ministry's overarching border counter-terrorism strategy. It includes a public awareness campaign designed to educate the population on the risks of terrorism and extremism. It aims to foster collaboration between citizens and state security agencies, ultimately working to mitigate the threat of terrorism within Ghana (Abbey, 2022). The Government has increased state presence across the country and has decentralized development and the presence of the security and intelligence agencies across all parts of the country.

The Ghana Armed Forces has complemented its kinetic operations with non-kinetic enablers to build national resilience within the framework of the National Security Strategy and the National Defence Policy and Strategy (NAFPCVET, 2019). The non-kinetic military activities of the military are concentrated on local community development in the extremist-prone areas of the

country. According to the Ghana Peace Journal (2022), the Ghana Armed Forces (GAF) is using the 48 and 49 Engineer Regiments to develop Quick Impact Projects (QIP) including building bridges, boreholes, schools, medical facilities, and creating access roads to remote areas of the country. Areas such as Biduri, Sapeliga and Talensi have benefited from such QIP construction by the military. These developments have improved the economic activities and have helped the population resolute in supporting the government against suspected extremist attractions.

The GAF is also supporting the Government's Poverty Alleviation Programs and has increased Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) in various aspects of society. Particularly, the Imams of the Religious Directorate have been involved in religious education, religious dialogue, and countering false narratives and ideologies in Pusiga and Timpane districts. The Medical Directorate has also embarked on medical outreach to remote and vulnerable areas. The GAF's Education Directorate and the Department of Public Relations (DPR) have been involved in education to undermine the extremist-generated narratives at Sapeliga and other cities in the Bawku districts.

### **5.6.3 Analysis of Ghana Armed Forces Non-kinetic Strategy**

In respect to the non-kinetic military CVE operations, the GAF targeted at winning the hearts and minds of the people and to help alleviate the suffering of deprived communities who are vulnerable to radicalism. As part of efforts to make feeder roads motor- able and allow access to remote areas, the Engineer Unit of the 10 Mechanized Battalion has constructed Box culverts in Jeffisi in the Sissala West District and Kasana Nankana in the Sissala East Municipality (A1 Radio, 2023). The military in conjunction with the Ministry of National Security constructed an access road from Bole, Ntreso and Dollar Power as well as Sapeliga boundary road in the Upper

East Region (Ghana Peace Journal, 2024). These constructions facilitate easy access to remote areas during the rainy season. The 12 Mechanized Battalion have completed 42 boreholes in the Pusiga District, Binduri District, Bawku Municipality, Sissala West District, Nadowli-Kaleo District and Wa District. This has helped alleviate the water crisis in the mentioned areas (Ghana Peace Journal, 2024). In December 2022 a 24-seater toilet facility was constructed at Zuarungu Senior High School.

Military operations have also included key leader engagement with traditional leaders and opinion leaders. Several Key Leader engagements have been conducted in Bawku, Tumu, Gwollu and Hamile. The engagements are aimed at driving home government anti-terrorism and extremism campaigns and winning the hearts and minds of the local populace. It has also served as a platform for intelligence gathering as well as involving the locals in their community development.

Military Units in northern Ghana embarked on community cleaning, civic education and medical outreach programs. Medical outreach was conducted by the Ghana Armed Forces with USA partners in Yendi, Bole, Daboya and Savelugu. The outreach provided medical care such as Blood pressure and sugar screening, eye screening, prostate screening and general medical consultation. The GAF have embarked on community cleaning campaigns in Bawku Municipality, Tamale Metropolis and other areas. Civic education exercises have been carried out in conjunction with civil authorities in communities along the border with Burkina Faso. The effort is also aimed at alleviating the suffering of deprived communities.

#### 5.6.4 Impact of GAF Military Strategy on Violent Extremism

The success of military operations in the country has largely contributed to peace and security in northern part of the country. The provision of social amenities and some basic services have helped win the hearts and minds of the local populace. According to an Operations Officer of the Northern Command

*“...the people in the areas of the new military units don't feel marginalized anymore and hence difficult to be indoctrinated. The locals are now confident and feel safe to go about their normal routine. This has improved the local economies which hitherto had collapsed because of insecurity and downward migration of border communities. Locals are now vigilant and report on any activity of strangers in their communities for prompt action...Operations Officer, Northern Command HQ, -20 December 2023”*

The establishment of the forward operating bases has also helped with quick response to insecurity challenges. For example, in February 2023, local communities along the Ghana-Burkina border in the Upper East Region reported an unusual influx of illegal migrants into Ghana through unapproved routes (UNODC, n.d). Operation “Dessert Rock” was initiated to repatriate all illegal immigrants. On 17 December 2023, locals in Bawku reported a suspect syndicate in an uncompleted building who were strangers (GNA, 2024). An operation was conducted to arrest the syndicate and further flown to Accra for interrogation. Between March and May 2023 the locals reported cases of an unusual influx of mentally ill persons who were strangers in Bawku. The report was handled professionally by placing surveillance on them to ascertain where they had come from and whether they were truly mentally challenged. This was another benefit derived from Military cooperation with the locals.

The CIMIC and the Medical outreach in some cases have also boosted the confidence of the locals, helped in advancing the National anti-terrorist slogan of ‘See something say something’ (ADF, 2022). The Counter Extremist deployments of troops along the borders has also brought in some amount of good luck to the locals. Roads have been constructed; bore holes constructed in some communities and KVIP toilets in others. These non-kinetic military activities have won government support of the local population and have negatively affected the recruitment drive of the extremist groups. According to a District Chief Executive interviewed

*“...the number of young men leaving the community for greener pastures in the Sahel has reduced drastically since the establishment of the FOBs and the CIMIC activities in the district... District Officer in Sissala- 20 December 2023”*

### **5.7 Accra Initiative (AI)**

The Accra Initiative (AI) Multinational Joint Task Force is a cooperative security mechanism launched in 2017 to respond to the growing insecurity linked to violent extremism and cross-border security challenges in the region (Africa Defense Forum, 2022). The initiative focuses on three areas: training, cross-border military operations, and information and intelligence sharing. The seven-member states agreed to develop and expand security operations to strengthen cooperation and intensify security coordination and collaboration among member states in addressing the challenges of violent extremism (ADF, 2022). The Military Headquarters of Accra Initiative Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF/AI) is established in Tamale Ghana.

The MNJTF/AI comprises 10,000 soldiers most of whom will be based in Tamale, Ghana, with an intelligence component in Ouagadougou (ADF, 2022). The administrative and coordinating

body of AI is headed by an Executive Secretary with the headquarters of the Permanent Secretariat located in Accra, Ghana.

### **5.7.1 AI Kinetic Military Operations**

The AI task force conducts bilateral and multilateral kinetic military joint operations to identify and combat violent extremist elements (Africa Defense Forum, 2022). The specific kinetic military activities involve joint intelligence-led pursuit patrols, interdiction, drone-assisted target killing, and bombing of terrorist infrastructure and safe havens. The task force also engages in surprise cordon, search, and destroy operations.

The AI task force has conducted four operations since its inception. Operation Koudanlgou I was conducted in May 2018 and addressed cross-border security among Burkina Faso, Ghana, and Togo (ADF, 2022). Operation Koudanlgou II was conducted in November 2018 and was a multilateral military operation among Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana. The third one, Operation Kondanlgou III was a bilateral military operation conducted in November 2019 between Togo and Ghana. Operation Koudanlgou IV was conducted in 2020 (Mottet & Inkesha, 2022). These joint cross-border military operations led to the arrest of over 700 suspected violent extremists and the confiscation of weapons and destruction of some violent extremist logistic bases.

While the Accra Initiative favors a military-oriented regional response, it is complemented by non-kinetic interventions by members at the national level. The national armies of the AI member states have established localized programs, committees, and toolkits to prevent radicalization and promote community resilience.

### 5.7.2 AI Non-Kinetic Military Operations

Though AI was developed as a security and defense mechanism, it demonstrated need to work on community development aspects in line with the security/development nexus. The member states have initiated non-kinetic military interventions to deliver basic services including health services, education, energy, and security along their borders. Benin's border management agency is tackling vulnerabilities in border areas by implementing development projects in affected localities. The military in Benin were involved in roads and markets construction in the Djongou and Diapaga areas (Research Respondent, 2023). The preventive aspects of countering violent extremism require the development of cross-border projects to reinforce the link between the people.

The specific non-kinetic military projects have been the construction of Bridges between villages to improve connectivity. The AI task force undertook medical outreach including a cross-border vaccination campaign. The armed forces also conducted developmental projects to transform unsecured and porous cross-border regions into safe, dynamic, and attractive places. During Operation Koudanlgou I and II, the Ghana Contingent undertook the drilling of Bore-holes and provided water reservoir projects for the communities in Pusiga, Binduri and Garu districts (ADF, 2022). The Burkina Faso military during Koudanlgou II provided national identification cards to its citizens in border areas to help them have easy access to social services. The Burkinabe military provided such services in the Leo, Gaoua and Debongou townships (ADF, 2022).

Operations Koudanlgou I, II, III, and IV despite leading to arrests of several militants, have been ad hoc, limited in duration (four to Six-day deployments) and geographical reach. The Operations temporarily halted extremist activities and movements but did not ensure continuity.

### **5.8. (LCBC) Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) Strategy in Countering Violent Extremism**

In January 2015, the AU authorized the MNJTF as a regional security arrangement of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) to deal with the threat of Boko Haram in the Lake Chad region (Onuoha et al., 2023). Its mandate includes the responsibility to ensure a safe and secure environment in the areas affected by Boko Haran, reducing extremist attacks against civilians, facilitating stabilization programs and humanitarian operations, and the provision of assistance to affected populations in the Lake Chad region. To achieve its mandate, the MNJTF conducts both kinetic and non-kinetic military operations (Onuoha et al., 2023).

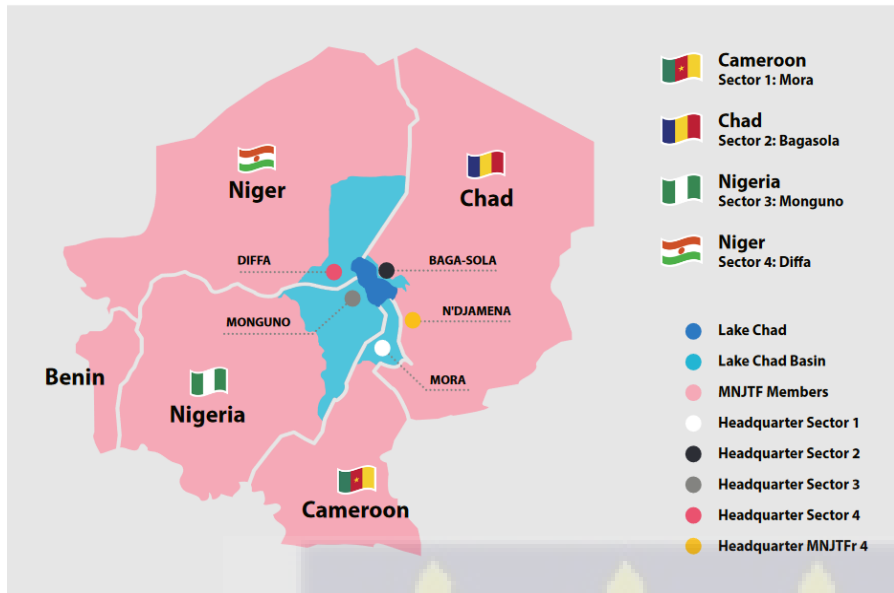
In line with its mandate, the MNJTF has undertaken Operation Yancin Tafki (OpYT) since 2019 (MNJTF, 2020). OpYT which involves all the armed forces of the five countries (Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Benin) is an offensive operation aimed at defeating VEOs operating in the fringes of the Lake Chad Islands (Nathaniel, 2019). The operational concept of OpYT was reviewed in 2020 to restructure the processes and procedures for enhanced air operations, employment of improved amphibious capabilities, and adoption of tactics, techniques, and procedures for optimal operational outcomes (MNJTF, 2020). The review included the implementation of the framework of the Regional Stabilization Strategy (RSS) that emphasized the need for enhanced non-kinetic military operations.

### 5.8.1 LCBC-MNJTF Kinetic Activities

The MNJTF operations have been successful in reclaiming key terrain previously held by extremist groups, degrading their combat power, and capturing their logistics and combatants (MNJTF, 2020). Specific kinetic military activities of OpYT include conducting several interdictions by air and artillery against the terrorist positions; fighting patrols to clear terrorists in the area; and identification, and destruction of logistic bases (Onuoha et al., 2023). MNJTF also conducts patrols to search for and free abductees and disrupt terrorist infrastructure. These kinetic military activities were based on credible intelligence provided by the intelligence community and MNJTF strategic partners.

The MNJTF has four Command Sectors and they conduct various combined and sub-operations tailored in the framework of OpTY. One of the notable operations was Operation Rufe Kofa (Shut the Door) which was conducted by Sector One from December 2019 to January 2020. The aim of that operation was to track down Boko Haram elements in their sanctuaries around the Mandara Mountains and the outskirts of Sambisa Forest (MNJTF, 2020). Operation Colere Bohoma conducted by Sector Two was triggered by the attack on Chadian troops at Bohoma on 23 March 2020. The Operations which lasted from the end of March to 15 April 2020 led to the capture of a major terrorist stronghold in Tumbun Madayi while scores of militants were killed and equipment captured (Onuoha et al., 2023). Other Operations such as Operation Long TIGER and Operation ARU-KABI were all conducted at the Sector levels to track and neutralize the violent extremist groups.

Figure 5.1 Map showing the Four Sectors of the MNJTF in the Lake Chad region.



Source: EPON 2023

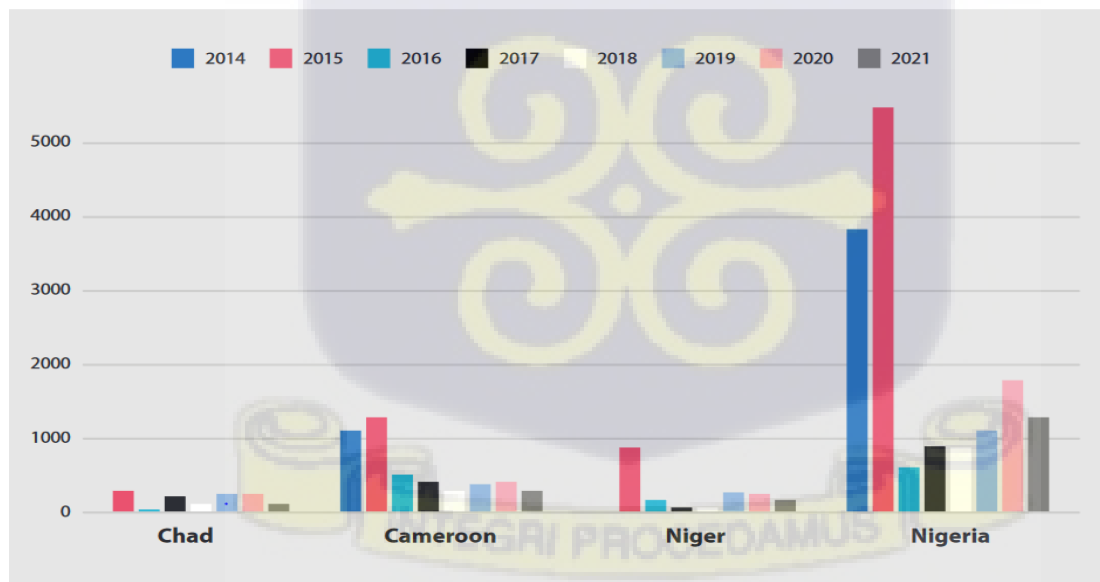
The successes of these operations led to a decline in extremist attacks between 2016 and 2018 (Table 5.1). Attacks increased in 2019 with a total of 6,777 incidents across the affected areas. Notwithstanding the relatively high number of extremist attacks in the region between 2019 and 2021, the level of fatalities significantly reduced (Figure 5.2). This is an indication that attacks by the extremists have become less successful partly due to the smart military strategy of the MNJTF. Table 5.1 and Figure 5.2 below show the number of attacks and fatalities from 2014 to 2021 respectively in the Lake Chad region.

Table 1: Number of Boko Haram Attacks in the Lake Chad Region<sup>27</sup>

Year	Chad	Cameroon	Niger	Nigeria
2014	1	69	1	235
2015	21	92	45	213
2016	4	192	42	64
2017	4	206	10	143
2018	7	156	29	161
2019	35	290	138	214
2020	28	478	179	378
2021	12	313	100	286

Source: EPON 2023

Figure 5.2 Fatalities from Boko Haram’s Attacks in the Lake Chad Region



Source: EPON, 2023

Based on the conviction that kinetic military approach alone cannot solve the violent extremism problem the MNJTF has enhanced its non-kinetic military operations by carrying out several programs to win the heart and mind of the populace.

### **5.8.2 (LCDC) MNJTF Non-Kinetic Activities**

The conduct of kinetic military operations alone is not enough to completely defeat violent extremism. This therefore underscores the importance of the conduct of non-kinetic military operations by providing humanitarian support to the affected civilian population. The MNJTF has enhanced its non-kinetic activities through information operation and community outreach programs (MNJTF, 2020). The non-kinetic aspect of the operation primarily aims at stifling the recruitment and retention drive of the VEOs and encouraging the defection of members of the extremist elements. MNJTF has formulated a Standard Operating Procedure for the handling of Persons Affected by Boko Haram and other VEOs. Additionally, MNJTF conduct CIMIC activities geared towards winning the hearts and minds of the people (MNJTF, 2020).

The MNJTF created a Civil-Military (CIMIC) Cooperative Cell in 2020 within the RSS to bridge interaction between military actors and civilian entities in the MNJTF area of responsibility. The purpose of the CIMIC Cell is to create an enabling environment for the delivery of humanitarian assistance, cross-border economic activities and addressing Boko Haram propaganda through civil- military interactions and coordination. A coordinated approach between humanitarian actors, communities and the military has contributed to recovery and resilience of affected areas. The conduct of non-kinetic military activities has helped to endear the civilian population to the military and assisted the military to acquire intelligence and other forms of support from the civilians.

Some of the specific non-kinetic military operations include disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration of surrendered violent extremist members. The smart military approach adopted by MNJTF has resulted in a growing number of extremists who are surrendering in the region. In 2021, some 1,711 extremists surrendered while 2,225 surrendered in 2022 (Zabala, 2023). Two commanders of the Boko Haram faction of Bakoura Buduma Ibrahim Muhammed and Auwal Muhammed surrendered to the troops of sector 3 as a result of the non-kinetic and CIMIC activities in the area. There is a high rate of surrendered extremists with hundreds of fighters and civilians who escaped from extremist captivity submitting to MNJTF. The MNJTF smart military operations facilitated the return of 217,166 Refugees/IDPs back to their ancestral homes across the four Lake Chad Basin countries from September 2021 to April 2022 as shown in Table 5.2 below.

**Table 5.2 Number of Refugees and IDPs returned to their Ancestral Homes: 2021**

Sector	Country	Total Number of Villages/Locality	Number of Returned IDPs
1	Cameroon	18	117 193
2	Chad	20	22 112
3	Nigeria	5	47 126
4	Niger	22	30 735
<b>Total</b>		<b>65</b>	<b>217 166</b>

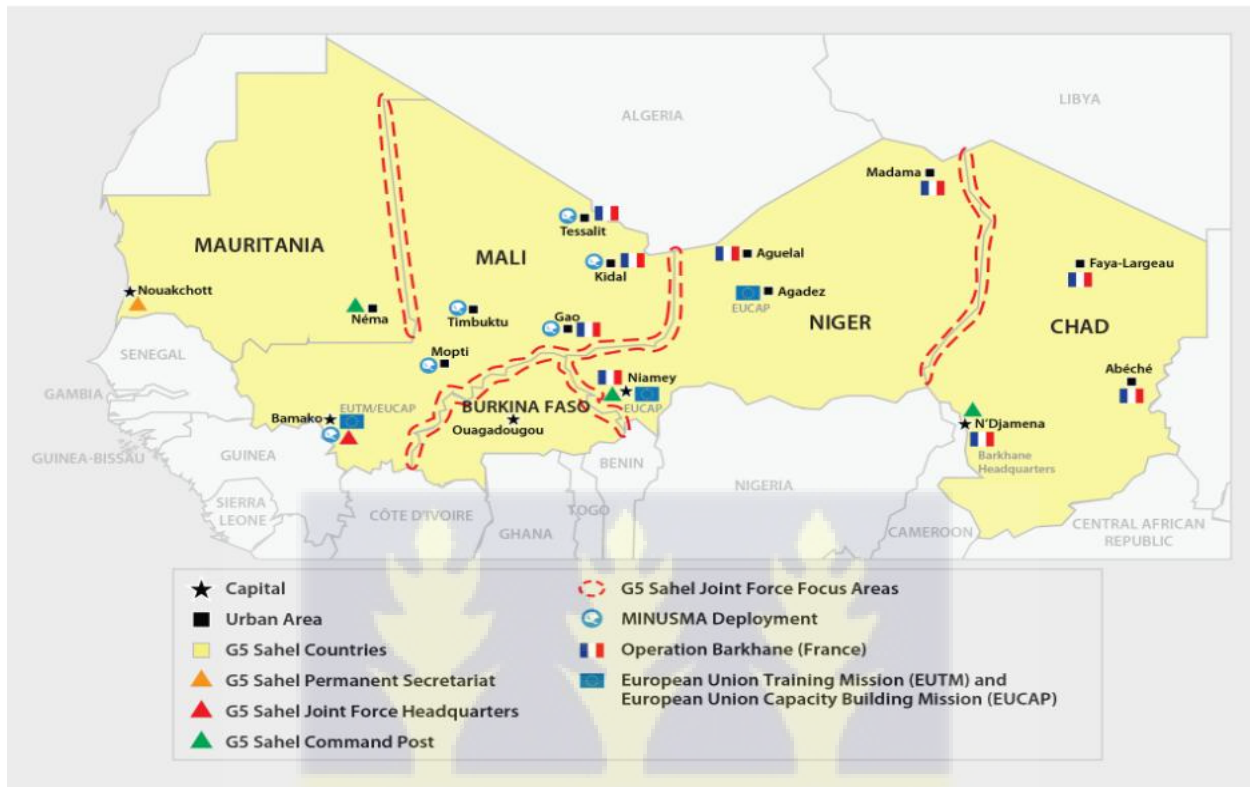
Source: EPON 2023

## 5.9 The G5 Sahel CVE Measures

The G5 Sahel is a multinational organization that was created in 2014 between Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger. The G5 Sahel was formed to enhance cross-border security and development cooperation (Cold-Ravnkilde, 2018). In July 2017, heads of the G5 states, with the support of France, launched the Joint anti-Jihadist Force (JF G5S) of 5,000 troops. The JF-G5S was to counter terrorism, migration and organized crime in their shared cross-border regions. The force was authorized by the Africa Union Peace and Security Council in April 2017 and supported by the UN Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 2359 in June 2017 (U.N, 2017). The mission was to secure the boundaries of the Sahel region, which included Niger and Chad in the east, Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger in the center, and Mauritania and Mali in the west. According to Buket and Oumar (2021), the G5 Sahel Joint Taskforce seeks to improve security along the shared borders of member countries, through improved cooperation and deployment of joint patrols to interdict the flow of terror groups and traffickers that currently cross these porous national boundaries with ease. Dieng et al (2020) aver that the role of the G5 Sahel include combating terrorism and drug trafficking, contribute to the restoration of state authority and the return of displaced persons and refugees, facilitate humanitarian operations and the delivery of aid to affected populations. The G5 Sahel Joint Force's first military operation, Operation Hawbi, took place in November 2017 along the border of Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso (Camara, 2020). The second operation, known as Pagnali, was carried out in January 2018 in the border zone between Mali and Burkina Faso with the goal of eliminating terrorist armed organizations' supply routes and restricting their movements (Camara, 2020). The unified force has 5,000 personnel in full operational capacity, with seven battalions distributed among three spindles: west, central, and east. It intervenes in a 50-kilometer strip on both sides of the common borders.

The figure below shows the map of G5 Sahel in West Africa.

**Figure 5.3 Map of G5 Sahel, West, Central and East Sectors (Situation as of 2021)**



**Source:** Africa Centre for Strategic Studies (2022)

However, the G-5 Sahel forces effectiveness have been hampered by an inadequate mandate to fight insurgencies, inadequate resources and limited capabilities in an extensive area with little state control (Buket et al., 2021). The other issue is the correlation (or lack thereof) between the nature of the force and the characteristics of the instability in that region. For instance, in Liptako Gourma, the border region between Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso, has experienced an increase in insecurity, with attacks against the security forces, border posts and local leaders. Attacks in the area have always emanated from al-Qaeda and ISIS affiliated groups (Buket et al., 2021). Along the Niger–Mali borders the threat consists mainly of Ansar Dine and the Islamic State in

the Greater Sahara, while Hamadou Kouffa's Katiba Macina and Malam Ibrahim Dicko's Ansaru Islamist groups are active along the Mali–Burkina Faso border (Ndiaye, 2020). The major concern of the G-Sahel group is the withdrawal of Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger in 2023 to form their own Alliance of Sahel States (AES). The breakaway will have a major effect on the fight against violent extremism in West Africa.

#### **5.10. Is the West Africa CVE Military Strategy Smart?**

There is clearly a range of kinetic and non-kinetic military approaches being used to counter violent extremism in West Africa. This research has shown that in both the national and multinational initiatives to counter violent extremism, the armed forces in West Africa apply both kinetic and non-kinetic action with partner nations to influence, neutralize or defeat the extremist groups by shaping the physical and psychological environment. Despite the use of combined kinetic and non-kinetic military strategy to combat violent extremism in West Africa the menace of the phenomenon persists and is increasing. The ACSRT records indicate that between January 2019 and December 2021, West Africa recorded the highest number of terrorist attacks in Africa. In this time frame the region recorded 2,602 attacks resulting in 10,899 deaths. This has led some security and military analysts to challenge the “smartness” of the military strategy used in countering violent extremism in West Africa. As discussed earlier, Turkey successfully utilized smart military strategy in Somalia, and Egypt has also used smart military strategy to manage violent extremism in their country.

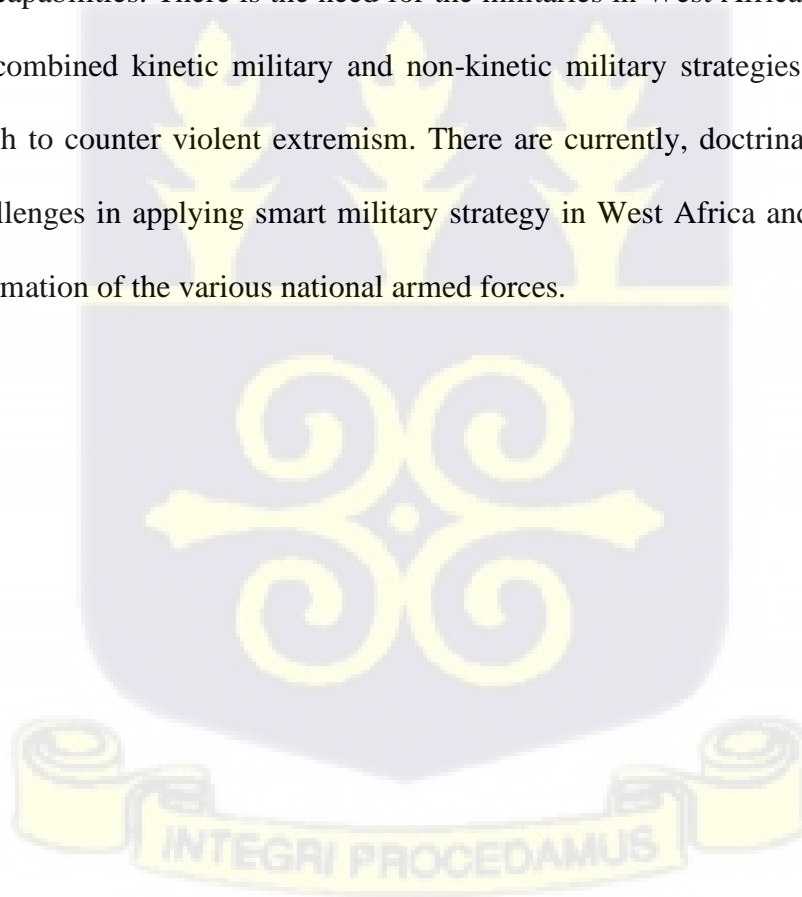
Smart military strategy is the optimal use of combined kinetic and non-kinetic military capabilities to achieve the strategic objectives. Even though in West Africa most military commanders acknowledge that smart military strategy can promote the optimization of national

security objectives, harnessing the benefits of smart military capabilities will depend on decision maker's abilities to appreciate the benefits of diversification among kinetic and non-kinetic approaches. To carefully balance kinetic and non-kinetic military capabilities to achieve a successful smart military strategy remains an elusive venture in combating violent extremism in West Africa. There are operational and structural challenges in integrating kinetic and non-kinetic military approaches to achieve smart military strategy in West Africa. Hence there is a need to take a second look at the smart military strategy used to counter extremism. Countries such as Egypt who understand the value of effectively using hard and soft power approaches in interaction to achieve smart power have been successful particularly in the realms of countering extremism. The armed forces in West Africa and the various multinational initiatives such as the AI and MNJTF must have a core system of values such as those in Egypt and Turkey that allows for the credible use of non-kinetic military capabilities. This requires a cultural and organizational transformation of the military in West Africa.

According to a security expert, for an effective smart military strategy, the best hard-soft power ratio is 90:10 (Harley, 2021). However, currently in West Africa the average ratio is the opposite. Most of the military in West Africa are currently using 90% kinetic military capabilities and 10% non-kinetic military capabilities to counter violent extremism. To be effective the military in West Africa must adjust to the changing environment and strive to at least a 50/50 hard-soft power ratio depending on the local conditions and the level of the security imperative.

### 5.11. Conclusion

The integrated use of kinetic and non-kinetic military resources to achieve smart military power remains the exception rather than the rule in West Africa. This is because of the continuing predominance of kinetic military proponents in positions of influence and in-charge of large budgets. Although most of the military intervention initiatives in West Africa have non-kinetic military components they are not well structured and consistent. The lack of understanding of what non-kinetic military operation constitutes is gradually being addressed, but few militaries in West Africa actually audit their non-kinetic military potential in the same way they do their kinetic military capabilities. There is the need for the militaries in West Africa to understand the value of using combined kinetic military and non-kinetic military strategies to achieve smart military approach to counter violent extremism. There are currently, doctrinal, operational and institutional challenges in applying smart military strategy in West Africa and thus there is the need for transformation of the various national armed forces.



## CHAPTER SIX

### CHALLENGES AND TRANSFORMATION FOR EFFECTIVE SMART MILITARY

#### STRATEGY APPLICATION IN WEST AFRICA

##### 6.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses how countering violent extremism can move beyond the limitations of kinetic and non-kinetic approaches toward a smarter military conception of countering the phenomenon in West Africa. Countering violent extremism in West Africa has been associated with non-kinetic approaches, yet the relationship between the traditional kinetic military and non-kinetic military strategies remains unresolved. Consequently, the military strategy in countering violent extremism has been driven by top-down approaches that inherently favor kinetic approaches. The purpose of the chapter is to examine how West African states with their predominantly kinetic-minded military can respond to the institutional, organizational, operational, and training challenges of smart military strategy. It is also to analyze how the armed forces of West Africa ought to transform in order to effectively apply smart military strategy in countering violent extremism.

##### 6.1 Challenges in the Application of Smart Military Strategy in West Africa.

The armed forces of West Africa commonly referred to as the military, comprise of armed soldiers and officers organized in military units in type and size and appointed by the state to safeguard the territorial integrity of the state. The armed forces were mainly formed to defend the state against external aggression or other state actors (Geneva Center for Democratic Control, 2015). As a result, the state-run armed forces in the past adopted a homogeneous organizational structure, training system, centralized command and strictly defined kinetic military principles.

This research revealed that the military in West Africa were structured for inter-state wars and therefore has fundamental short-comings in their capabilities for dealing with unconventional or asymmetric warfare such as countering violent extremism. To be effective in countering violent extremism the West Africa armed forces must be transformed to adopt smart military strategy. However, the ability of the military in West Africa to effectively combine kinetic and non-kinetic military approaches has its inherent institutional challenges. The challenges identified are the doctrinal, cultural and institutional, organizational and operational, and training and capabilities challenges. These challenges are discussed below.

#### **6.1.1. Doctrine Challenges in the Application of Smart Military Strategy in West Africa**

Kinetic and non-kinetic military capabilities are rarely equitable in their level of resourcing, power and influence (Aly, et al, 2015). The challenges of developing a smart military strategy that effectively combines combat and non-combat military elements are located within the traditional organizational structure of the military. Smart military doctrine requires the armed forces to enact policy that supports, coordinates, and structures non-kinetic resources to balance with kinetic military capabilities.

According to a military analyst interviewed

*“... the armed forces in West Africa do not simultaneously think about kinetic and non-kinetic military resources and how one might affect the other. Since non-kinetic military elements generally exist outside the higher echelon of the strategic military command, strategic plans are conducted without the involvement of the non-kinetic military elements... Security Analyst at KAIPTC- 19 December 2023”.*

The armed forces must understand that the tools to counter violent extremism reside in the non-combat or support military units not in the fighting units. The armed forces in West Africa have a traditional culture that prefers kinetic approaches as such it is difficult to ensure that non-kinetic military approaches flourish and succeed. The securitization of violent extremism effectively limits the range of responses to kinetic military approaches. Securitizing violent extremism presuppose that the extremist groups are enemy combatant individuals who are to be eliminated and not to be reformed. In such an environment, non-kinetic military operatives are faced with the challenge of implementing their mandate. The doctrinal challenge is more pronounced with less democratic countries. The research identified that the military in Mali with its recent military coups are more reluctant to allow the non-combat units to flourish compared to that in Ghana and Nigeria. Conducting an effective smart military strategy requires a transformation of the organizational and operational structures of the West African militaries. The transformation is needed to change the traditional masculine and hard power posture of the militaries in West Africa.

### **6.1.2. Cultural and Institutional Challenges in the Application of Smart Military Strategy**

The military in general is paid, trained, and equipped for kinetic military operations (DCAF, 2015). The military in West Africa places high value on command and control, clear lines of authority, discipline, and accountability (Ouédraogo, 2014). The institutional culture of the military is characterized by considerable investments in human resource management and well-rehearsed responses in battlefield training. By contrast, the institutional culture of non-kinetic military warfare tends to be less hierarchical and places higher priority on how objectives are accomplished (Bucher et al, 2009). Personnel of non-kinetic warfare see themselves as

nonviolent who are dedicated to saving lives and assisting the less fortunate. These cultural differences are dilemmas in conducting smart military operations.

Kinetic military warfare is focused on short-term, non-participatory, and decisive actions and is primarily informed by security rather than by the long-term development considerations that shape non-kinetic warfare (Gourlay, 2000). Kinetic military units, by their nature, are trained to respond to and operate in a “low context culture” that relies on directives, specific orders, and standard operating procedures communicated from higher command (Franke, 2006). This approach is in contrast to “high context” cultural and operational requirements of complex operations such as countering violent extremism where tribal status, gender, ethnic differences, social roles, and expectations carry a lot of meaning. According to some military analysts interviewed, an effective smart military approach requires a thorough intercultural understanding of non-kinetic and kinetic warfare.

### **6.1.3. Organizational Structures and Operational Challenges in the Application of Smart Strategy**

Command structures in the military in West Africa are centralized and vertical with clear and well-defined lines of authority that flow hierarchically from top to bottom (Sanders, 2010). The chain of command is typically structured so that it can respond quickly and promote fast and efficient decision-making. However, in countering violent extremism there is much involvement of higher echelons and the many layers of bureaucracy is a challenge to smart military operations. By contrast, the organizational structure of a non-kinetic force is horizontal and fluid. Their decision-making is based on a consensus approach and allows for field operatives to make major decisions. Non-kinetic or non-combat units commonly promote participatory and

collaborative working relationships that assume informal management and the ability to quickly adjust objectives.

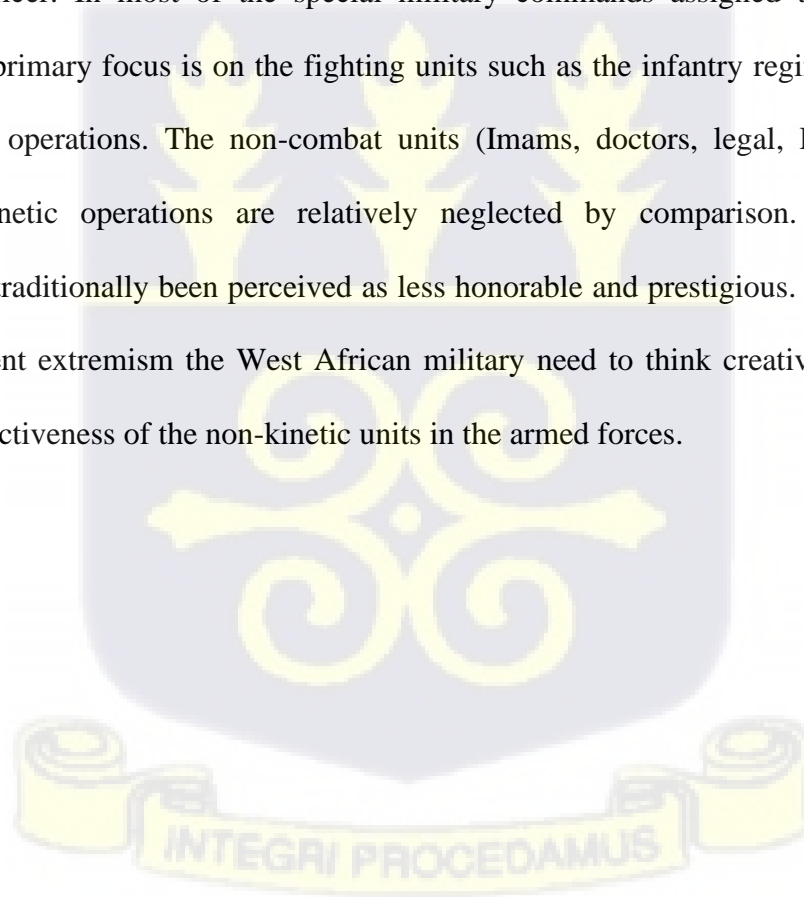
Non-kinetic military approaches do not usually strive for “unity of command” but rather for “camaraderie of command” (Gourlay, 2000). Instead of operating a highly bureaucratized organization that assigns well-defined tasks and responsibilities to individuals, non-kinetic units require all to get involved regardless of the structural definition of their rank or position (Rubinstein,2003).

In a typical military establishment, the personnel are grouped into the combat units, the combat-support units and the non-combat units (Moran, 2006). The combat units of the army are made up of officers and soldiers of the infantry, artillery, armor, combat engineers and signals. Some of the combat-support units are personnel from the supply and transport, ordnance, and electrical and mechanical engineers (Moran, 2006). The non-combat units are made up of personnel from units such as public relations, legal, education, medical, religious affairs, and defence information and technology. The non-combat unit personnel are those responsible for non-kinetic operations in CVE.

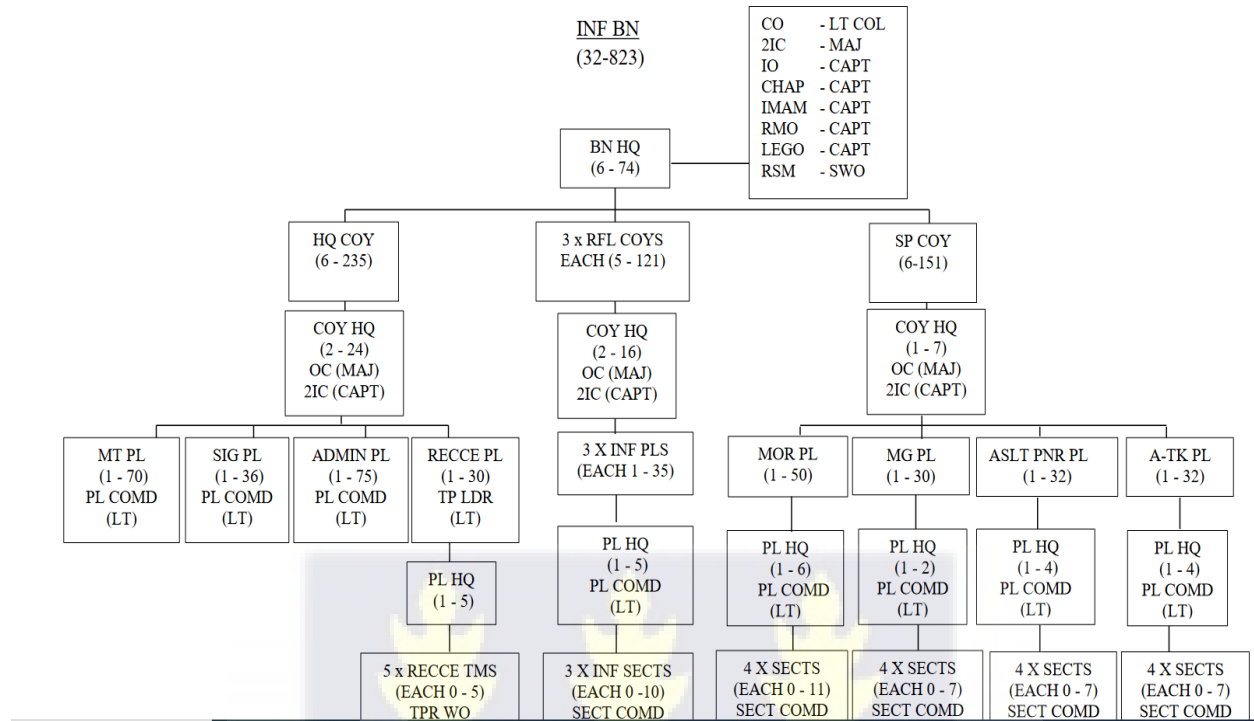
An organizational structure of a typical Infantry Battalion is as shown in Figure 6.1. It depicts the infantry battalion consists of five companies these are the Headquarters company (HQ COY), the 3x Rifle companies (3x RLF COYs), and the Support company (SP COY). These five companies which are the combat and combat-support units are the fighting force that implements the military strategy at the tactical level. The non-combat personnel unlike their combat counterpart do not have executive powers and their roles are mainly advisory. In the infantry organizational

structure, the Chaplain, Imam, Regimental Medical Officer (RMO) and the Legal Officer (LEGO) are the non-combat personnel who only advise the battalion Commanding Officer (CO).

The non-combat personnel of a typical fighting force are the main resource center for the non-kinetic military capabilities of the infantry battalion (Banach, 2023). Unfortunately, the non-kinetic Unit (non-combat unit) is hardly involved at the strategic level. For instance, in the Ghana Armed Forces the Director of the Public Relations (DPR), the Director Religious Affairs (DRA) and Medical report to the Chief of Staff (COS) who is a combat unit officer . Thus the most senior officer who represents the non-combat unit at the strategic planning level is usually a combat unit officer. In most of the special military commands assigned to combat violent extremism, the primary focus is on the fighting units such as the infantry regiment that conduct kinetic military operations. The non-combat units (Imams, doctors, legal, DPR) who are to conduct non-kinetic operations are relatively neglected by comparison. The non-kinetic personnel have traditionally been perceived as less honorable and prestigious. To be effective in countering violent extremism the West African military need to think creatively about how to enhance the effectiveness of the non-kinetic units in the armed forces.



**Figure 6.1: Ghana Infantry Battalion Organizational structure**



Source: SOHB (Land) 2022

The military command structure limits the influence of non-combat units in strategic decision-making. The difficulty of implementing a smart military strategy to counter violent extremism in West Africa is the continuing dominance of kinetic military tools in terms of budget, personnel, and capabilities. The militaries of West Africa must transition to non-kinetic warfare by giving precedence to human intelligence, humanitarian assistance, and civil-military cooperation (CIMIC) instead of giving precedence to increasing firepower and high-intensity combat training.

According to a military analyst interviewed

*“... to be successful in the application of smart military strategy in countering violent extremism, the non-combat military units must have meaningful participation. The non-kinetic military personnel are able to participate meaningfully when they contribute to and are included in all aspects of operational and mission planning and decision- making processes; when they hold operational command and leadership positions; when they have access to the same training, promotion and career advancement opportunities as their colleagues with the combat units...*

**Security Analyst at GAFSC -19 December 2023”**

Most of the militaries in West Africa are mainly kinetic focused as such there are imbalances both in power relations and opportunities as well as prejudices against the non-combat unit personnel.

#### **6.1.4. Training and Capabilities Challenges in the Application of Smart Military Strategy**

The militaries in West Africa mostly receive training in high-intensity combat training aimed at defeating a conventional enemy. There is little training and education on non-kinetic operations which are “Operations Other Than War” (OOTW). The training for non-kinetic military operations focuses on the soft power aspects of conflict such as intelligence gathering, negotiations, psychosocial and specialist training in languages and culture. While kinetic military training gives precedence to technology and firepower, non-kinetic military training gives precedence to “culture-centric warfare” training. Culture-centric warfare involves conducting effective information operations, humanitarian operations, CIMIC, and stabilization operations.

Kinetic military capabilities in countering violent extremism are physical aggressive actions and law enforcement arrest that involves bombings, rockets, killing, capturing, attacking the

extremist groups. On the other-hand non-kinetic military capabilities are nonlethal resources (such as civil-military operations, information support operations, and psychological operations) and the use of weapons that are not intended to be lethal (Ducheine, 2014). The non-kinetic resources mainly aim at combating recruiting online, preventing the creation of more terrorists, or frustrating the movement of extremists across national borders in West Africa. Countering and contesting extremist ideologies and offering more attractive positive alternatives to their diabolic ideas are capabilities of a non-kinetic military approach that needs promotion and investments.

#### **6.1.5 Challenges of Utilizing Non-kinetic Military Strategy in Countering Violent Extremism in West Africa**

Most of the non-kinetic military approaches in West Africa have been ad hoc arrangement that were not guided by any holistic philosophy. The concept behind the strategic plans is often narrow, poorly conceptualized and based on ad hoc provision of limited resources (Mamud, 2022). There is lack of consistency and strategic direction in the implementation of non-kinetic policies to counter violent extremism in West Africa. For instance, in Nigeria, the Office of National Security Adviser (ONSA) launched two major non-kinetic initiatives, the North-East Economic Transformation (NEET) program and the Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) program to tackle the tenacious insecurity issues in the Northeast in 2013 (Babatunde & Thovoethin, 2017). In that same year President Goodluck Jonathan also launched the PINE to supposedly complement the NEET and CVE programs (Augé, 2015). However, funding for these programs was limited and these programs were developed with little consultation with other stakeholders. When the government of President Buhari took over power in 2015, it liquidated PINE and transferred all its assets and liabilities to a newly created Presidential Committee on Northeast Initiatives (PCNI) (Tukur, 2019).

According to a military commander interviewed

*“... since the concept of non-kinetic military approaches are poorly conceived, implementation becomes a major issue. Most of the non-kinetic military approaches are poorly conceptualized it becomes difficult to really understand the strategy that drives them... Brig General Operation Officer at 7<sup>th</sup> Division HQ in Maiduguri- 9 November 2023”*

As a result of the culture of secrecy in the military there is often lack of local involvement in the military strategy design and planning. The absence of grass root participation in the strategy design and implementation are challenges which affect the effectiveness of most of the non-kinetic military strategies in CVE in West Africa. According to a security analyst interviewed

*“...mobilizing the people for support against extremism is crucial and therefore the military should involve the grass root people and community elders in the planning process and implementation of non-kinetic military initiatives. The people must take ownership of the non-combat military programs initiated by the armed forces...Security Analyst at IMANI Center for Policy and Education- 16 December 2023”*

According to a policy analyst interviewed

*“... most of the non-kinetic military initiatives in Nigeria did not take into consideration the empowerment of the people. Empowerment of the people is crucial to building resilience against extremism. Winning the hearts and minds of the people must not be limited to providing social services but should be driven by a philosophy that empowers the people to become change agents... Policy Analyst at Nigeria Economic Summit Group (NESG) in Abuja- 10 November 2023”*

Another challenge in utilizing non-kinetic military capabilities in CVE is the non-prioritization of women and children. Women and children should be the center of gravity of every non-combat military initiative. The military non-kinetic initiatives to counter violent extremism must be designed to emphasize on financial literacy and social empowerment of the women and children. Most of the non-combat military operations in West Africa did not promote inclusion which is crucial for cutting off recruitment supply for the violent extremist groups. According to a security analyst with the Institute for Strategic Studies, prioritizing women and children would win their heart and minds and this will enable closer relationships with them in the areas of obtaining actionable intelligence which is required to deny extremist groups the recruitment freedom from the population.

## **6.2. Transformation for Effective Smart Military Strategy in West Africa**

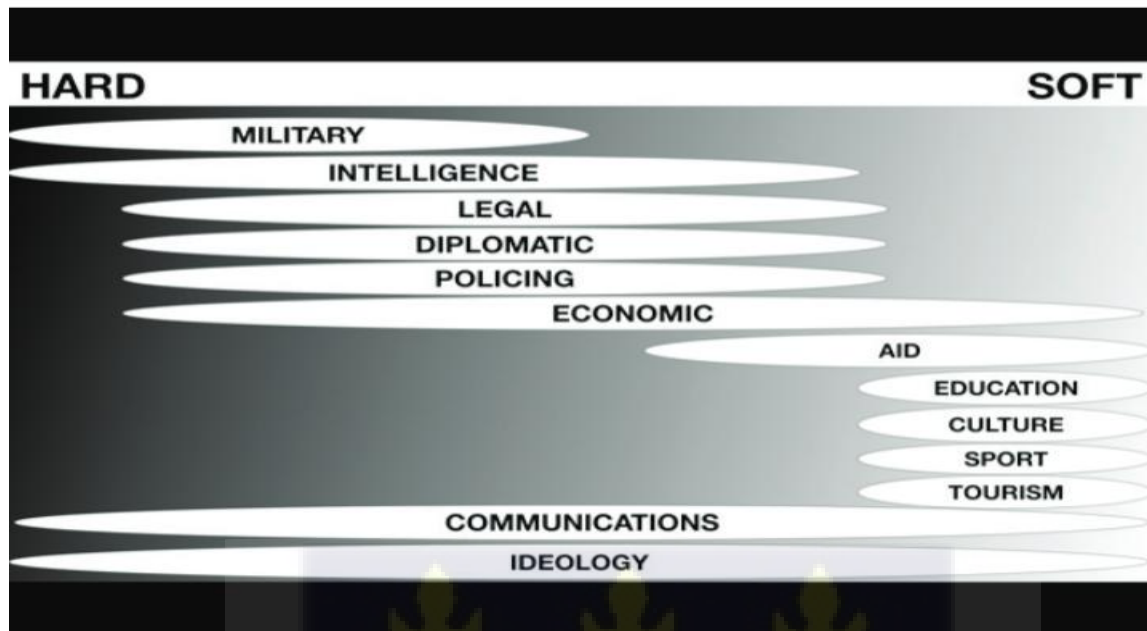
Transforming the militaries in West Africa to be effective in smart military operations should be a priority if they are to be successful in countering violent extremism. The process of transformation will entail understanding the differences between non-kinetic and kinetic military warfare and how their capabilities are complementary in smart military strategy. To transform the military in West Africa to address violent extremism should not be a matter of spending money on expensive weapons systems. Instead, it will take organizational, cultural, training, and equipping changes that will make the armed forces efficient in conducting smart military operations. The focus of transformation is to prepare the military to be efficient for smart military strategy to counter extremism, including peacekeeping, humanitarian, stabilization, and reconstruction operations.

### 6.2.1. On-Going Military Transformation in West Africa

Interacting with some senior military commanders from West Africa, they acknowledge the importance of adopting smart military strategy in countering violent extremism. They confirmed there are modest efforts being made to transform the armed forces to be efficient in conducting non-kinetic operations. For instance, since the formation of the Ghana Armed Force in 1957 it was only in 2023 that commanders of the Directorate of Public Relations (DPR) and the Religious Affairs (DRA) have risen to the rank of Brigadier Generals (One Star General). The research found out that in all the armed forces in West Africa the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) is appointed from the combat units of the Army, Navy and Air Force. In the Command and Staff Instructions and Procedures (CSIP) volume 13 of the Ghana Armed Forces, the top echelon of the military hierarchy must be chosen from the Infantry, Armor, Artillery, Combat Engineers and Signal Regiment in the Army, Executive in the Navy or Aircrew in the Air Force. Thus while the military personnel from the combat units can rise to the rank of a 3 Star General, those from the supporting units can only rise to a 1 or 2 Star General. However, the smart military strategy doctrine insists that the non-combat units should lead if the military is to be effective in adapting smart military strategy.



**Figure 6.2: Spectrum of Hard (Kinetic) and Soft (non-kinetic) Power Activities**



Source: COE-DAT, 2021

Figure 6.2 above shows that communication and ideology is the most important capability that covers the entire spectrum of the smart military strategy. In that respect it is expected that the military units with communication/information and ideological/religious capability are to be the leaders at the strategic level. Thus the armed forces in West Africa must accelerate their transformation process by involving personnel from the non-combat units such as the DPR, DRA and the medical units at the strategic level.

In response to the jihadist activities in West Africa most of the armed forces are pursuing military professionalism and modernization efforts. There is a major expansion and recruitment process in the armed forces in West Africa with the aim to counter violent extremism. The expansion process involves an increase in the recruitment and enlistment of professionals such as medical doctors, psychologists, engineers, imams and bilingual officers. For instant in Ghana the

military is doing special enlistment for medical personnel with a shortened duration of physical training to encourage more medical professional to join the military to conduct non-kinetic military operations. In Mali, there is special enlistment and recruitment process that recruit teachers into the armed forces to facilitate education in areas abandon by teachers because of security concerns. Special effort is being made to encourage the recruitment of non-kinetic military personnel in West Africa in recognition of their role in smart military strategy.

### **6.2.2. Military Training Institution's Transformation in West Africa**

All the military institutions in West Africa have incorporated smart military strategy in countering violent extremism in their curriculum. The importance of non-kinetic military operations is seriously being inculcated into military officers. Conferring with the instructors, directing staff and lecturers of the three ECOWAS Peacekeeping schools in Accra, Bamako and Abuja, they indicated these schools were mainly established to train military personnel on how to conduct military OOTW. The emphasis in their training course is on smart military approaches.

There is a shift from purely kinetic military approach towards combining non-kinetic and kinetic military approaches. At the ECOWAS Peacekeeping School in Abuja, the “Counter-Terrorism Course” run by the school has been renamed “Countering Violent Extremism Course”. The course package since 2019 has been adjusted to reflect the importance of military soft power in countering violent extremism. In the 6 weeks course package the CT takes only one week while the last 5 weeks is dedicated to non-kinetic military approaches in countering violent extremism. In the Ghana Armed Forces Command and Staff College (GAFSC) a whole course package is dedicated for the Civil- Military Cooperation (CIMIC) training. All these relatively new course

packages introduced in the military institutions in West Africa are part of the on-going process of transforming the military personnel towards smart military strategy.

In 2021 the Alioune Blondin Beye Peacekeeping Center in Bamako developed a new module specifically for military personnel in their fight against violent extremism. The title of the module is “Human factors in countering violent extremism”. The program aims to give the military personnel another understanding of the fight against violent extremism. The program seeks to educate the military personnel on importance of non-kinetic approaches and the understanding of the non-combat capabilities of the armed forces.

The armed forces as an institution is gradually transforming towards greater cooperation between the kinetic and non-kinetic military units. Discussing with some senior military commanders they recognized the importance of non-kinetic unit commanders and the need for them to be part of the military planning at the strategic level. The non-combat military personnel such as the Medical, Religious Affairs and Public Relation personnel were often seen as “second class citizens” in the military compared to the combat unit personnel. As part of the on-going transformation towards smart military approach in West Africa, most of the military institutions are allowing non-kinetic military officers to attend strategic military courses together with their kinetic military counterparts. In the past only senior officers of the combat units of the armed forces were allowed to participate in strategic military courses. At GAFSC, Military Imams, Public Relation Officers and Medical military officers were allowed to join the Senior Division Course in 2016 (GAFSC, n.d).

### **6.2.3 Military Gender Sensitivity Transformation in West Africa**

Gender aspect of countering violent extremism is one of the least addressed area in global politics (Sutalan, 2020). The UNSCR 1325 stresses the importance of women's equal and full participation as agents in the prevention and resolution of conflicts. It calls on member states to ensure women's equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security. NATO established the Gender Advisors appointment at the NATO Headquarters and operations in 2009 (NATO, 2024). The aim of establishing the Gender Advisors role is to integrate gender perspective in planning, operations, missions, education and training. According to a security analyst acknowledging women's role and agency is important in the application of smart military strategy (Sutalan, 2020).

The lack of gender-sensitive approach in CVE has been identified by the military in West Africa and efforts are being made to overcome the gender blindness in the armed forces. Most military commanders interviewed admit that increasing and meaningful inclusion of women both in the design and implementation of CVE strategies is important to success. Women in the military have differing roles in CVE such as being counter-terrorists and as Gender Advisors.

Most of the military in West Africa (Ghana, Nigeria and Senegal) have recently established Female Engagement Teams (FETs) in their respective armed forces (Nsengimana, 2018). The role of the FETs is to gather intelligence and information by engaging with the women in the community. The FETs are part of the fighting force and are usually tasked to conduct patrols and to provide mobile medical services for women and children in the rural communities prone to violent extremism (Klingler, 2022). In Ghana the female military personnel are involved in sensitization and intelligence gathering in the Pusiga and Bawku districts. The FETs in the armed

forces are trained to conduct reconnaissance and battlefield visualization by engaging with the women and children and developing friendship. According to a military commander interviewed

*“... the experiences of FETs has shown that female soldiers have deescalating properties and are respected for being soldiers and being women. Both men and women in the communities experiencing insecurity admire the female soldiers and are more willing to cooperate with them than the male soldiers...Ghanaian Military Colonel at the Northern Command HQ- 16 December 2023”*

The armed forces in Mali acknowledging that the innate maternal instincts and ability of women to be able to identify radicalization and fight against it, began promoting female personnel in the Defence and Security Forces (DSFs) (International Organization for Peace building, 2018). The participation of women in the DSFs has increased the population’s acceptance of the armed forces. The female military personnel in Mali have been engaging in trust-building measures by distributing medical and school supplies, sitting and talking with local women. They also visit schools and hospitals and lead community discussions on topics such as hygiene, childbirth and breastfeeding (International Organization for Peace building, 2018). Between April and August 2023 the female military personnel in Mali undertook several trust-building operations in the Tessalit and Aguelhok in the Kidal region and Menaka in the Gao district.

The Ghana Armed Forces (GAF) established the Gender Policy Unit and appointed the first Gender Policy Advisor (GPA) on 18 June 2020 (Ghana Armed Forces, 2024). The GPA is a personal staff officer to the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) and responsible for all gender policy matters in GAF with regards to the advancement of gender equality and the Women Peace and Security Agenda (Ghana Armed Forces, 2024). The recommended rank for this appointment is a

Brigadier-General (One Star General). The GAF in July 2021 appointed gender advisors for Service Headquarters, Commands and departments as well as focal persons for smaller units (Ghana Peace Journal, 2023). This is to create awareness of the importance of the female military personnel in security and CVE in particular. The percentage of female military personnel in the GAF has risen from 4% in 1980 to 15% in 2020. Since 2021 the GAF have been celebrating the “International Women’s Day” on 8 March each year to sensitize young women to join the GAF and to encourage them to aspire to leadership and command positions in the GAF and UN Peacekeeping.

Ghana is currently the largest contributor of women in military peacekeeping in the UN with 375 now deployed (UN, 2023). GAF reached 19% female deployment in 2022 exceeding the 9% UN set target (Asante, 2023). The Nigerian Army reached 27.9% female participation in peace operations in 2022 from 10% in 2010 (Aregbesola, 2023). The militaries in West Africa in acknowledging the women’s role in smart military strategy are adapting representative gender power and moving towards gender parity in recruitment although the pace of movement is slow.

According to a retired military general interviewed

*“... smart military strategy involves properly harnessing, integrating and balancing potential capabilities in the military including the minority groups to achieve the main objectives. Although the Ghana Armed Forces is a male dominated institutions there are efforts to expand the role and involvement of female military operatives in CVE. The issue of giving equal access to both male and female in terms of resources and opportunities is being addressed... former CDS of the Ghana Armed Forces- 18 December 2023”*

#### 6.2.4. What Should Not Change in the Military?

Although most military commanders interviewed agree on the need to transform the military in West Africa, they emphasized the need to maintain the fundamental doctrine and organizational structures. They argued that for the transformation of the military to be successful the armed forces in West Africa need to identify and retain certain fundamentals. The military high command should reinforce unchanged core values and communicate them to the military personnel. The military commanders interviewed argued that the core values of discipline, unity of command and centralized command should be maintained. They contend that the military in West Africa should still maintain high intensity training despite acknowledging the importance of non-kinetic warfare.

The argument is that a high intensity trained military personnel can easily adapt to low-intensity operations while low-intensity trained personnel cannot cope with high intensity situation. The military analysts interviewed argue that a well-trained military officer is capable of adapting to both kinetic and non-kinetic without much difficulty as such there is no need to change the command structure of the military. A retired military general interviewed stated that

*“...the armed forces should maintain the fighting unit commanders as the leading commanders of any military operation. Despite the fact that this goes against the smart military approach doctrine which advocates for the non-combat unit’s commanders to lead the operations to counter violent extremism...”***Retired Ghana Military General and Diplomat- 2 November 2023”**

### **6.3. Transforming Military Personnel for Smart Military Application in West Africa**

People are the main factors in determining the success of organizational transformation. Military personnel in West Africa are categorized into four groups. These are the Non-Commission Officers (NCO) (Private Soldier to Corporal rank), Senior Non-Commission Officers (SNCO) (Sergeant to Warrant Officers rank), Junior Officers (Lieutenant to Major rank) and Senior Officers (Lieutenant Colonel to General rank). According to security analysts interviewed, each category group of the military personnel exhibits unique culture, social circle and responsibilities. To effectively transform the military in West Africa, higher command should understand the culture and mindset of each category group to enable them formulate different change strategies to tackle the change resistance of the different categories.

For instance, the Warrant Officer (WO) has the longest career life in the armed forces and their technical expertise, experience culture and mindset have the highest inertia against transformation. A Private soldier spends about 20 years to attain the rank of a WO. WOs stay in a unit for a much longer time as compared to an officer who will normally stay in one appointment for two or three years. The WO's are both leaders and role model of NCOs and have great influence on their development. Senior WOs also play an important part in the early years of the Junior Officer's development. The SNCOs and WOs are the most experienced military personnel but the most resistance to change. With the understanding of the WO's strong mindset and their resistance to change much efforts should be channeled towards training the WO's to see the need for the application of smart military strategies in countering violent extremism in West Africa.

Senior Officers and Commanders in the armed forces are one of the categories that may impede transformation according to a security analyst. The military in West Africa is a hierarchical and authoritative institution as such the senior military commanders have a lot of power and influence. The senior commanders who are used to the old culture will find it difficult to adjust to new culture. The commanders are to suppress their instincts based on the old paradigm of purely kinetic approaches otherwise they will risk contradicting themselves in espousing the smart military paradigm.

Interacting with senior military commanders and security analysts they argue that a growing number of military commanders in West Africa seem to accept the military's emerging dual role of engaging in combat and non-combat operations simultaneously. However, the senior commanders and WOs are finding it difficult to adjust to the cultural and perceptual differences between the kinetic and non-kinetic operations. While the purely combat operations have top-down centralized command culture, the non-combat operation has a decentralized command and allows participatory decision making. The success of the military in transforming for the effective application of smart military strategy in West Africa will depend on how the senior commanders and the WOs acknowledge the need for smart military approach and their ability to discard their old kinetic approach mindset.

A security analyst interviewed opined that though the traditional notions of the military profession, ethics and its associated organization would still work in a changing security environment there are elements that need to change. The entry requirements of the military profession in West Africa developed over the years identified intellectual, moral and physical aspects as the standards to meet the needs of kinetic warfare. However, the kinetic warfare model

of the military profession is no longer adequate for the current security environment, particularly in countering violent extremism in West Africa. A military analyst interviewed stated

*“...I believe that the military profession will need different skills and mindset to deal with the increase complexity of warfare. Some of these skills set required for effective application of smart military strategy include psychological acuity, cross cultural empathy, mental adaptability, ability to grasp new technology and increasing risk tolerance. These skills set are what will be essential for the effective application of smart military strategy... Security Analyst at KAIPTC- 17 December 2023”*

#### **6.4 Equipping for Smart Military Application in West Africa**

According to the Military Balance (2023), the average defence budget in West Africa has increased significantly in recent time rising to an average of 1.5% of GDP in 2022. Most of the armed forces in West Africa are acquiring additional equipment to augment their inventory to counter violent extremism. Airlift capacity has been increased; reconnaissance and attack capabilities have been boosted and protected patrol vehicles have been acquired. In August 2022 Mali armed forces received L-39 and SU-25 ground-attack from Russia. They also acquired a range of military equipment from armored vehicles and helicopters to CASA 295 light transport aircraft from Airbus in December 2021. In pursuant of military modernization and transformation the Nigerian government is acquiring 12 AH-Z Viper attack helicopters from the USA, and CCS/VP3 protected patrol vehicles and ZSD-89 tracked armored personnel carrier from China. The Nigeria armed forces in 2022 made final payment for the purchased of three JF-17 Thunder aircraft, three AW 139 helicopters and a landing ship tank.

Looking at the type of military equipment acquired by the armed forces in West Africa as discussed above it is obvious that the acquisition is focused on kinetic military operations. Research has shown that fighter ground attack aircraft such as SU-25 and JF-17 Thunder aircraft are not suitable in fighting intrastate war because of collateral damage and the negative impact on the civilian population. According to a security analyst, the increase in defence budget in West Africa has not halted the spread of extremism because the military acquisitions have concentrated on kinetic operations. Although non-kinetic military equipment is less expensive and more effective in countering violent extremism, procurement of such equipment has not been a priority.

Non-kinetic military equipment is non-lethal weapons which do not kill but neutralize the enemy. The armed forces in West Africa must focus their military acquisitions on equipment that are useful in information warfare, cyber warfare and psychological operations. According to a security analyst, winning the hearts and minds of the population to counter extremism depends on military equipment that can quickly translate knowledge and information into application action in the battlefield. To be effective in applying smart military strategy, the military must transform their acquisition process by focusing on non-kinetic military equipment. The non-kinetic military capabilities are most useful in conducting CIMIC and OOTW operations.

#### **6.5. Establishing CIMIC Commands in West Africa**

Research has shown that there are no known established CIMIC units in the armed forces in West Africa. The EU mandated its members to establish CIMIC Commands at the strategic level equivalent to the combat units to facilitate affairs of the non-kinetic military units. Most of the European armed forces acknowledging the importance of smart military operations have

established CIMIC command units. The Hungarian Defence Forces (HDF) Civil-Military Cooperation and Psychological Operation Centre (HDF CMCPOC) was established on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2003 in Budapest, Hungary. The Centre provides INFO OPS related professional support to non-kinetic operations. The Multinational CIMIC Command Nienburg is the Competence Centre for Civil-Military Cooperation for the German Armed Forces. The Multinational CIMIC Group (MNCG) is the NATO CIMIC specialized unit for conducting non-kinetic military operations at a tactical and operational level.

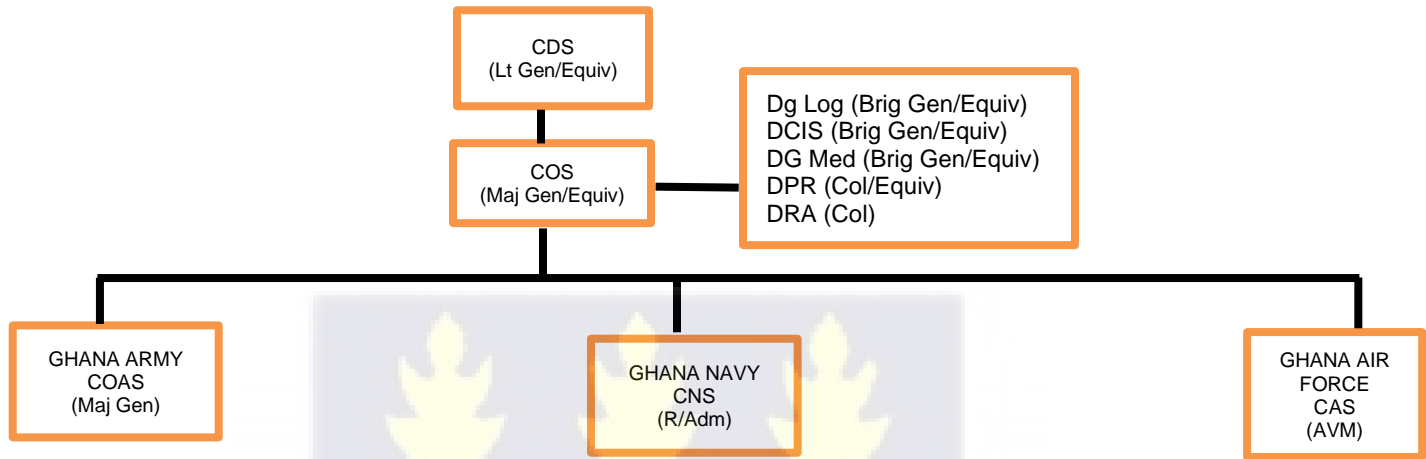
In the Ghana Armed Forces there is a CIMIC unit attached to the UN Ghana Battalion in Lebanon, however there is no established CIMIC Command in the GAF. To be effective in conducting smart military strategy to counter violent extremism a security analyst interviewed suggests that

*“...the national armies in West Africa should establishment CIMIC Commands. Establishing these CIMIC Commands in the various national armed forces will facilitate the operations of the non-combat units and reinforce all non-kinetic actions in the fight against the violent extremist groups ...Security Analyst at KAIPTC- 17 December 2023”*

A military analyst interviewed argued that there is an urgent need for all the military intervention initiatives in countering violent extremism in West Africa to establish CIMIC Operations Centers (CMOCs). The Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF LCB) and the Accra Initiative should increase their non-kinetic activities by establishing CMOCs at all the sector levels. CMOCs at all the sector level will help to increase trust, early warning and early response and strengthen the work of non-combat units officers in the fight against violent extremism in West Africa. The

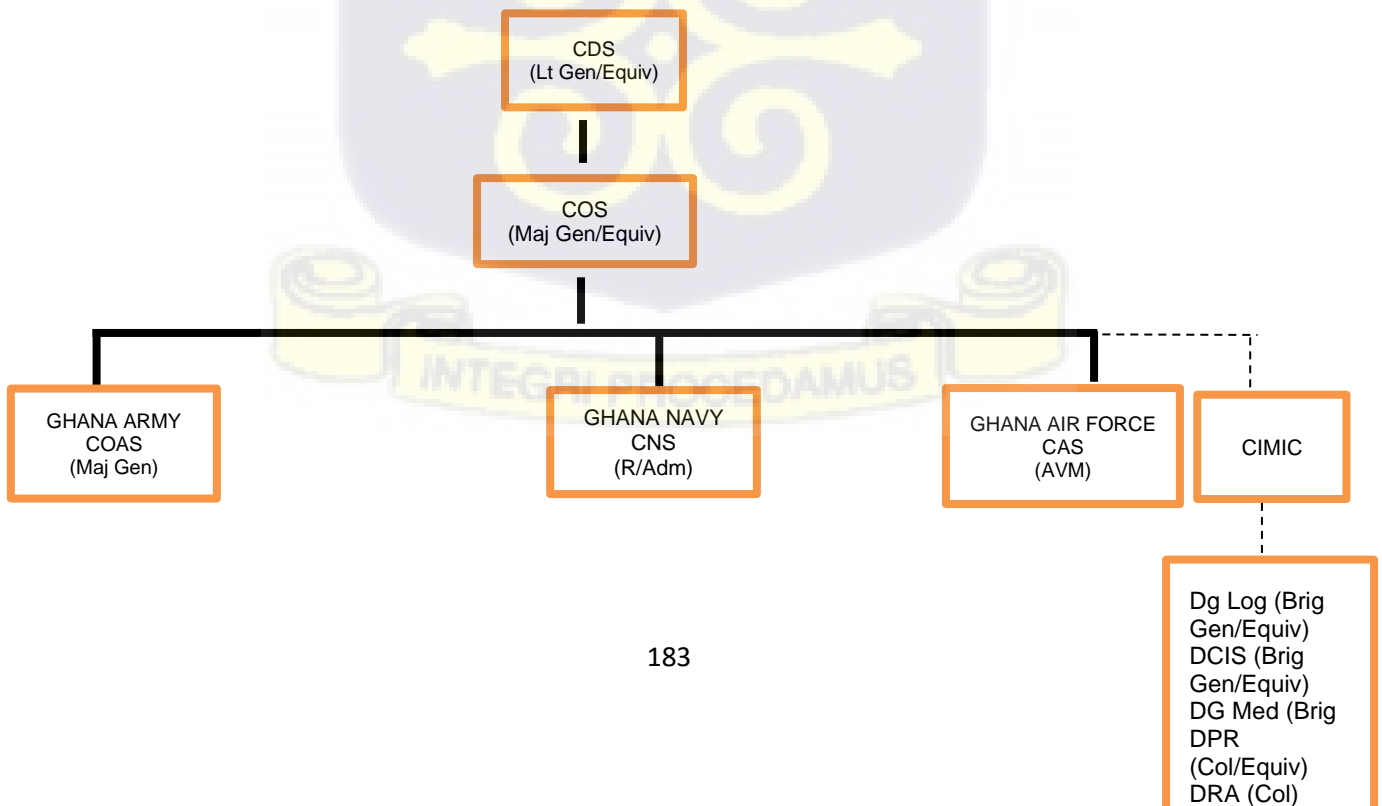
establishment of the military CIMIC Commands in West Africa will enhance the transformation effort for the effective application of smart military strategy. Figure 6.3 and Figure 6.4 are the current Ghana Armed Forces Organizational Structure and a proposed one respectively.

**Figure 6.3 CURRENT GHANA ARMED FORCES ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**



Source: SOHB(Land)

**Figure 6.4 PROPOSED GHANA ARMED FORCES ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**



Source: Researcher 2023

### 6.6. Towards an Effective Smart Military Application in West Africa

An effective smart military approach requires utilizing the combined strengths of the kinetic and non-kinetic military capabilities in unison to counter violent extremism. Table 6.1 below shows how the advantages of both kinetic and non-kinetic military structures can be harnessed into an effective smart military structure.

**Table 6.1 Combining the Advantages of Kinetic and Non-kinetic Military Structures for Smart Military Strategy**

	<b>Non-Kinetic Military</b>	<b>Kinetic Military</b>	<b>Smart Military</b>
Cultural	non-violent long-term high culture transparent	Management of violence Short-term, quick-impact Low-culture Limited transparency	Management of violence Long-term High culture Limited Transparency
Organizational	Decentralized fluid horizontal wide accountability	Centralized Hierarchical Vertical Narrow accountability	Centralized Hierarchical Horizontal Wide accountability
Operational	“camaraderie of command”	Unity of command	Unity of command

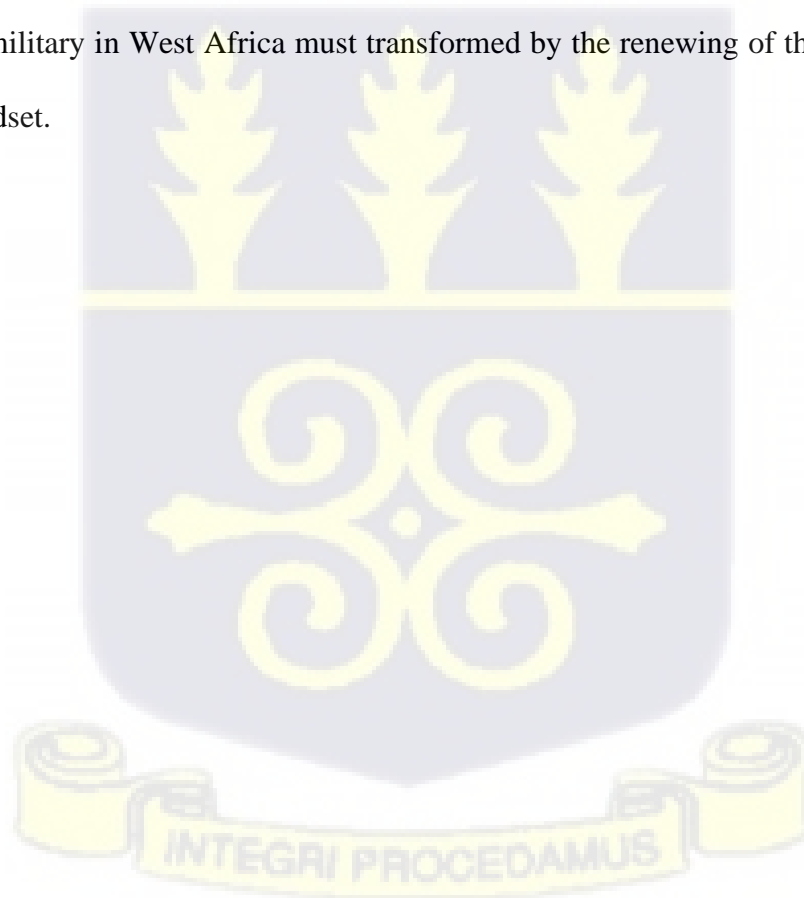
	Participatory Often vague scope of action	Directive and coercive Clearly defined rules of engagement	Participatory Clear rules of engagement
Training	Culture-centric Humanitarian,	high intensity technology Peacekeeping	High intensity, Joint doctrine, technology, culture-centric, humanitarian, Peacekeeping
Capabilities	CIMIC Psychological Negotiation reconstruction	Firepower law enforcement	Firepower Law enforcement CIMIC Psychological Negotiation

Source: Researcher 2023

### 6.7. Conclusion

At this point, it is worth emphasizing that this research does not suggest that a kinetic military approach or strong kinetic military capability is not relevant. This study points out that power consists of kinetic as well as non-kinetic elements. Furthermore, non-kinetic elements are becoming more important in recent times, while conditions are becoming progressively less favorable for the use of kinetic options. Unfortunately, non-kinetic approaches are underrated in the military. Compared to kinetic approaches, non-kinetic approaches tend to be indirect and therefore sometimes do not produce immediate observable effects.

Kinetic military approaches usually provide short-term solutions at the expense of the long-term goals a dangerous recipe that is affecting the West Africa strategy in countering violent extremism. A greater grasp of non-kinetic domain of warfare and conflict is essential if leaders in West Africa are to find the correct combination of kinetic and non-kinetic resources to counter violent extremism. A smart military strategy involves the amalgamation of kinetic and non-kinetic resources into a single framework. An effective smart military approach utilizes complementary kinetic and non-kinetic military measures and eliminates opposition between these two forms of power. However, the general overview of smart military strategy is perceived through a non-kinetic power lens and only when necessary augmented by kinetic power measures. The military in West Africa must transformed by the renewing of their masculine and hard power mindset.



## CHAPTER SEVEN

### ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

#### 7.0. Introduction

The increase in the spate of violent extremist attacks across West Africa despite several deployment of the military forces, unilaterally and multilaterally reveals ineffectiveness of the use of force in resolving the phenomenon. This research is about analyzing the smart role of the military in countering violent extremism in West Africa. The purpose of the research is to bridge the gap between the considerable bodies of literature on what constitutes an effective interaction of kinetic (combat) and non-kinetic (non-combat) military approaches. The research analyzed the potential role for integrated smart military approach in achieving the objectives of countering violent extremism in West Africa.

The study of the interaction of kinetic and non-kinetic military approaches (referred to when combined as smart military strategy) is still a subject of academic discussion. This research used Joseph Nye's Smart Power theory and the RSCT to investigate the role of the military in countering violent extremism. The questions at the heart of this study are; (i) what is the smart military strategy for countering violent extremism in West Africa; (ii) how has the military utilized its non-kinetic capabilities in countering violent extremism; (iii) what are the doctrinal, operational and training challenges of smart military strategy; (iv) how should the armed forces be transformed to effectively employ smart military strategy in West Africa.

Based on the background information, this chapter discusses the findings after analyzing the questions at the heart of the study. Views from security experts, retired and serving experienced

military officers, diplomats, NGOs as well as instructors from military institutions were sought. These views were put together into themes to analyze the data,

### **7.1. Analyzing the Smart Military Strategy for countering violent extremism in West Africa**

Smart military approach is where non-kinetic and kinetic military approaches are combined to achieve a common objective. Smart military strategy is not a mix or a blend of fixed proportions but an assembly of the different components of kinetic and non-kinetic military approaches depending on the security environment. Thus, a context specific solution strategy is required. The effective smart military strategy is the appropriate mix of kinetic and non-kinetic military capabilities and this balance is the debate for most military commanders. According to the security experts interviewed, combining kinetic and non-kinetic military approaches to achieve strategic goals is not a new military doctrine in West Africa. However, the level of importance attached to non-kinetic military operations has been lower as compared to kinetic military approaches. The concept of combining combat and non-combat military operations was employed by the ECOMOG force in the 1990s war in Liberia and Sierra Leone (Howe, 1996). The ECOMOG forces engaged the rebels with kinetic force while providing medical and humanitarian assistance to the civilian population (Howe, 1996).

The US under President Bush initiated the smart military strategy in Afghanistan and Iraq when they realized the negative implications of the use of hard power strategies (Shammari, 2021). Most of the military commanders interviewed acknowledged that the experiences in Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya demonstrated the need to combine combat and non-combat military approaches to deal with violent extremism in West Africa. The research participants agreed that

using kinetic or non-kinetic military approach exclusively cannot exhaustively combat violent extremism in West Africa. The problem is finding the right mix of kinetic and non-kinetic military capabilities for an effective smart strategy. Most participants of the study agreed that the armed forces in West Africa have not adequately projected non-kinetic military approaches as compared to the kinetic approaches.

In-depth interviews with military commanders and analysis of military documents indicate that armed forces in West Africa employ a combination of kinetic and non-kinetic approach to combat extremism. However, whether the right combination of kinetic and non-kinetic approaches has been applied in the fight against violent extremism is the bone of contention. During the interview, experts expressed divergent views on whether the kinetic military capabilities should lead the fight against violent extremism in West Africa or the strategy should be led by non-kinetic military capabilities. Some military analysts argue that the military strategy in countering violent extremism is not smart enough because the non-kinetic military capabilities have been relegated to the background. Most of the military strategy adopted for countering violent extremism has concentrated on hard power elements such as direct combat operations using bombs, bullets and rockets with the aim of neutralizing, capturing, or eliminating the extremist groups.

*“...in applying smart military strategy, the idea is that the kinetic military approaches should differ from the conventional kinetic actions in the level of physical and political risk, operational techniques, and the degree of indiscriminate attacks to counter the extremist groups. As such the new concept plan for kinetic operation in terrorist areas are mostly measurable, non-discriminatory fighting missions to interdict, kill or capture*

*terrorists, and their facilities” (Senior military commander in Mali -30 October 2023).*

*“...we understood the concept of kinetic and non-kinetic military approaches through the studies of Sun Tzu, Clausewitz and Liddell Hart during my training days at the military academy. However, most of the military operations during my career concentrated on either kinetic or non-kinetic according to the security environment. The military combining kinetic and non-kinetic approaches at the same time as smart military strategy is necessary for the 21st Century security environment but requires a multidisciplinary planning and execution” (Retired Ghana Military General and Diplomat- 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2023).*

*“... as a commander in the North-East geo-political zone in Nigeria particularly at the Adamawa state, we undertook both kinetic and non-kinetic operations to curtail the Boko Haram insurgency. However the military interventions were not successful to defeat the extremist group because of inept political leadership, corruption and lack of strong political will” (Retired Nigerian Military General- 33 years- 10 November 2023).*

From the above quotes it is clear that the military in West Africa have been combining kinetic and non-kinetic military capabilities in the effort to counter violent extremism. The problem is despite the different approaches used to counter the menace the success rate has been abysmal. In other words the right mixes of kinetic and non-kinetic military capabilities have not been utilized.

The smart power theory argues that violent extremism is a social problem which must be blamed on societal deficiencies as such countering the phenomenon should have empathy and human

touch (Borum, 2011). Therefore, smart military strategy must be human centered and should be led by the non-combat units of the military. Unfortunately, the armed forces in West Africa are traditionally kinetic oriented that makes it difficult to quickly adjust to non-kinetic military approaches.

## **7.2 Analysis of Utilization of the Non-kinetic Capabilities of the military in West Africa**

The overly military-centric approach in countering violent extremism in West Africa has not yielded the expected results (Prislan et al, 2019). As such most of the recent military interventions to counter the phenomenon are incorporating more non-kinetic military elements. A more holistic approach that targets the basic needs of the population is the main focus of the strategy. The armed forces in West Africa are playing an active part in national development agenda in rural development, providing social amenities to the susceptible extremist communities. In Mali the Education units of the armed forces are engaged in education and teaching initiatives in Tessalit in the Kidal region where civilian teachers are unwilling to operate because of insecurity (UNHCR, 2018). The Malian armed forces also engaged in regular military interactions with chiefs and community elders in the Menaka in the Gao region. Furthermore, in Nigeria military imams and psychologists in Ngala and Konduga in the Borno State and Jada and Madagali in the Adamawa State have been engaged in training of the youth against extremist ideologies. The military has also been involved in negotiation and dialogue with extremist groups to settle disputes and injustices.

In Ghana having realized that AQIM and other al Qaeda affiliates are recruiting on-line the 10 Mechanized Battalion DCIS detached (Signal Unit) in Wa with collaboration with international partners developed counter strategy. This includes making phony al-Qaeda websites that redirect

people who accessed it to a website that talked about how dangerous it was to join those extremist groups. The 12 Mechanized Battalion in Sandama used the Public Relation officers in collaboration with the local radio stations wrote and planted media stories chronicling the good developmental initiatives that the military was doing for the various communities in the Upper East Region (A1 Radio, 2023). These non-kinetic military activities helped to reduce and contain the people who had grievances with the government. The military command in Sandama interacting with the local community through the use of suitable communication channels were able to identify the local recruiters and the financiers of some of the extremist groups.

According to a military public relations officer interviewed

*“...the extremist groups in the Borno State use soft power to win people to their cause. They use the media to generate anger and motivate those who are already angry with the Federal Government of Nigeria. To counter the extremist narrative the Nigeria 7<sup>th</sup> Division employs non-kinetic strategy including the media. The non-kinetic approaches have the capacity of limiting the space of operation of the extremist groups since it deny them of the use of the community which has been their sanctuary for their operations...Public Relations Officer at 7 Division HQ in Maiduguri- 9 November 2023”*

To project the use of non-kinetic military capabilities, most of the national armies and the multinational task forces are improving civil-military relations, engaging in sport activities with local communities, dialoguing with warring factions and mediating in disputes to win the confidence of the population. Personnel of the 10 Mechanized Battalion in Wa in the Upper West Region of Ghana and the various FOBs engage in football and other sporting activities with the

youth of their communities on Fridays after prayers. The armed forces in West Africa have dedicated units and personnel trained to conduct non-kinetic military operations to counter violent extremism.

*“...the military will not stop using non-kinetic approaches that has been making many extremists and families surrender in droves. All efforts are being made to improve the civil- military relations to win the hearts and minds of the population” (Nigerian Defence Intelligence General – 4 December 2023)*

*“... in all the military operations of the Accra Initiative, CIMIC operations are incorporated to win the hearts and mind of the population. Each of the national armies undertook non-kinetic activities at their side of the border during Operation KUNDAGO. The Ghana Army was engaged in the provision of potable water and health services in the Pusiga and Garu districts, while the Togolese Army concentrated on education and vaccination in the Dapaong, Mango and Kara communities. The non-kinetic strategy was to conduct developmental projects to transform unsecured and porous cross-border regions into safe, dynamic and attractive locality” (Official of Accra Initiative Secretariat- 5 July 2023).*

*“... my country established a military regiment for agricultural production in 1984 and this unit has been providing seedlings, fertilizer and other agricultural technical support to people in the areas susceptible to extremism. The Burkina Faso army has been assisting civilian documentation in the rural and border areas. The provision of identity cards to the rural folks is an important exercise because most of the people cannot access*

*medical and other social amenities because they don't have national identification”*  
**(Senior military officer and diplomat from Burkina Faso- 29 October 2023).**

*“....the military-run Operation Safe Corridor (OPSC) was a non-kinetic approach program which targeted ex-Boko Haram members, youth and other vulnerable groups through social programs that provided them livelihood as an alternate to violent extremism. Through the OPSC many former militants voluntarily surrendered and have successfully undergone rehabilitation”* **(Nigerian military psychologist officer with OPSC- 11 November 2023).**

*“...since the establishment of the Joint Task Force we have been collaborating with other government agencies to undertake “quick impact” projects including drilling wells, constructing schools and health facilities, and repairing roads and bridges in the Northern part of Ghana”* **(Senior military commander of the JTF OPS Enhanced Koudanlguo in Ghana- 12 December 2023)**

The above quotes are indication that the armed forces in West Africa have been utilizing their non-kinetic military capabilities in countering violent extremism. The use of non-kinetic military approaches became more prominent following the inability of the purely kinetic approach to effectively curtail the extremist activities. However the non-kinetic military approaches were adopted in conjunction with the kinetic approaches. Combining the kinetic and non-kinetic military capabilities has also failed to fully address the problem of extremism in West Africa. This has lead security analyst to question the whether the right combination mix of kinetic and non-kinetic military approaches have been adopted in West Africa.

### **7.3. Evaluating the Doctrinal, Operational and Training Challenges in Applying Smart Military Strategy**

Combining kinetic and non-kinetic military capabilities means recognizing their interrelationships as well as their distinctiveness. The major challenge for military commanders in West Africa is the capacity to recognize when to use either kinetic or non-kinetic military approaches to achieve operational goals. According to security analysts there are cultural and institutional differences between the kinetic and non-kinetic military units which are a challenge for the application of smart military strategy. The combat units in most of the armed forces are disproportionately larger, better funded and more influential than the non-combat units. For instance the non-combat unit of the GAF is about 1/7<sup>th</sup> of the total military population. The non-kinetic units play second fiddle to the combat units. However, the smart power doctrine advocates the non-combat units lead the smart military strategy. The non-combat military units like the medical and religious affairs units have their own norms, values and rigidities which are quite different from the combat units. According to a senior military commander the current institutional arrangement in the armed forces constitutes a major stumbling block for applying smart military strategy in countering violent extremism in West Africa.

According to officials of some NGO and some diplomats the cultural, organizational, and operational differences between the kinetic and non-kinetic institutions makes it difficult for the military to effectively apply smart military strategy. The military commanders interviewed admit to the doctrinal, operational and training challenges in applying smart military strategy in

countering violent extremism. How to effectively integrate kinetic and non-kinetic military approaches in the mission area without compromising security is a major challenge.

Military commanders interviewed acknowledge the operational difference between the combat and non-combat units however they insist that a high-intensity military training is necessary to prepare soldiers and officers for both kinetic and non-kinetic military operations. This explains the priority given to the fighting and motorized personnel at the command structure as opposed to the non-combat units.

*“...military commanders are trained to be flexible to know when and how to apply both kinetic and non-kinetic strategies without the military changing its core values and ethics. The high-intensity military training should not be compromised for future non-combat operations because a high-intensity trained soldier can perform effectively in a non-kinetic operations but a low-intensity trained soldier cannot cope within a high operational tempo environment”* **(Retired Ghana military General and Diplomat- 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2023).**

*“...training soldiers for smart military operation is not an easy task given the cultural differences and recruitment practices between the combat and non-combat units in the armed forces. The combat and non-combat tasks in countering violent extremism ought to be complementary but they become less so when performed by the same individual under combat condition”* **(Senior Mali Military officer at the Alioune Blondin BEYE Peacekeeping School- 12 December 2023).**

*“... It is difficult for the armed forces to balance the kinetic and non-kinetic approaches when fighting terrorism. The balancing occurs not just among the military capabilities,*

*resources, and NGOs but also among competing perspectives on military operation within the kinetic and non-kinetic unit military commanders” (Senior Ghana military officer at the HQ North Command- 7 December 2023).*

From the above quotes there are organizational, cultures and training differences between the kinetic and non-kinetic units. Part of smart military strategy is therefore getting all parties involved to work together to design an appropriate chain of command which will allow an effective implementation of the combine strategy.

#### **7.4. Examining the Military Transformation for Effective Smart Military Application in West Africa**

In the EU 2009 ratified Lisbon Treaty, it described how its member’s national armed forces should be transformed to effectively conduct smart military strategy to counter violent extremism (Renard, 2012). Policymakers and the military high command in West Africa have acknowledged that the purely kinetic military approaches used in countering violent extremism have not achieved the desired end state. The limitations of purely kinetic military approach have prompted the need for the transformation of armed forces in West Africa for a smart military approach. The military commanders interviewed acknowledge the need for transformation of the culture, command and organizational structure of the militaries in West Africa to be effective in the utilization of smart military capabilities. The military high command understands that the key to success in countering violent extremism in West Africa is through the non-kinetic military approach. For an effective smart military strategy the non-combat aspects of the military should be elevated to be at par with the fighting and motorized unit at the top of the strategic and command level structure.

The military commanders interviewed argued that the national armies in West Africa are gradually transforming their culture and structures to be effective in the application of smart military strategy. For instance, non-combat unit officers such as medical personnel, chaplains, communication experts and lawyers are now allowed to undertake strategic military courses in most military training institutions in West Africa. Courses on human rights, CIMIC education and rule of law are now a major part of the body of courses undertaken at the strategic-level military institutions.

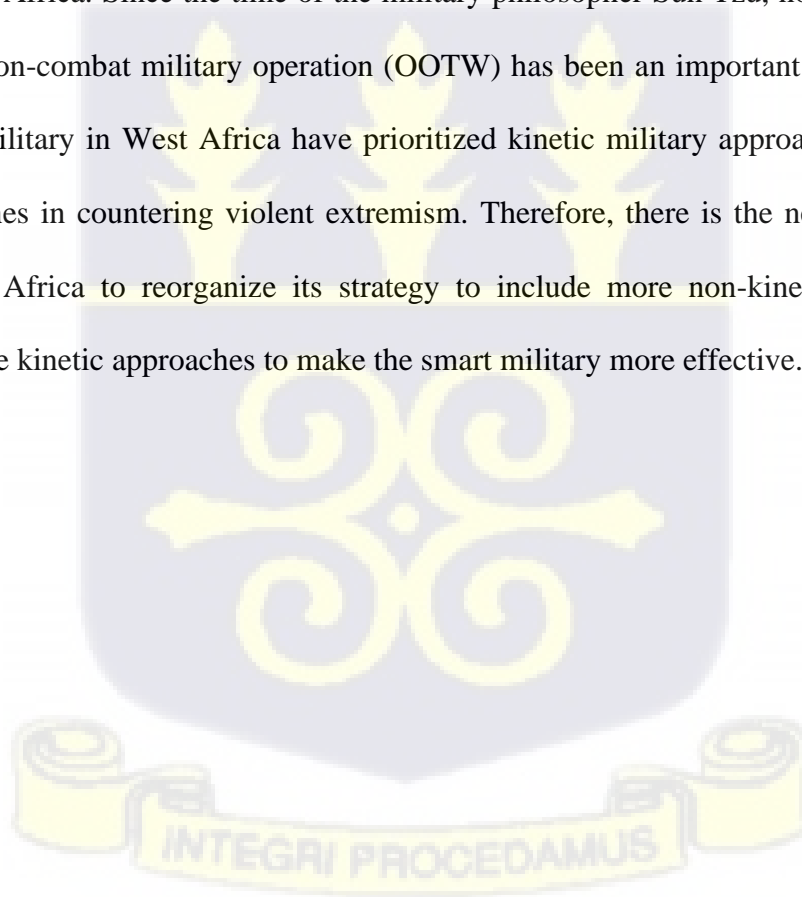
*“... to be effective in applying smart military strategy policymakers and the military high command must recognize that non-kinetic military capability is as strategically important as kinetic military capabilities. The military must be transformed from the traditional way of thinking to increase and firm up the non-kinetic units’ institutional position, roles, mission, and budgets”* ( **Security expert at the KAIPTC- 5 December 2023**).

*“...the armed forces must be transform through proper recruitment, assessment, selection and arduous training of personnel to enable them to be effective in the application of smart strategy to counter violent extremism in West Africa”* (**Senior military officer at the Nigeria National Defence College Abuja- 13 December 2023**)

*“... the national armies in West Africa must be transformed and trained for the military commanders to intuitively understand the balance between kinetic and non-kinetic military capabilities, and to possess the judgment to determine which actions are most appropriate in any given situation”* ( **Retired Ghana military general- 16 December 2023**).

## 7.5. Conclusion

Most security analysts accept that neither kinetic nor non-kinetic military approaches alone can win the war against violent extremism in West Africa. The analysts believe combining combat and non-combat approaches as smart military strategy is the most appropriate strategy in countering violent extremism in West Africa. The NGOs and CSOs are of the view that the military should concentrate on the traditional military kinetic aspects of CVE and leave the non-kinetic military part to other institutions. The military commanders however are of the view that the military has the capability to effectively combine kinetic and non-kinetic military approaches in CVE in West Africa. Since the time of the military philosopher Sun Tzu, non-kinetic military approaches or non-combat military operation (OOTW) has been an important military doctrine. However, the military in West Africa have prioritized kinetic military approaches against non-kinetic approaches in countering violent extremism. Therefore, there is the need for the armed forces in West Africa to reorganize its strategy to include more non-kinetic approaches to combine with the kinetic approaches to make the smart military more effective.



## CHAPTER EIGHT

### SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 8.0. Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the findings made by the study, draws conclusions and inferences and makes recommendations to guide policymaking and future studies on the smart role of the military in countering violent extremism in West Africa. This research examined the complexities of violent extremism in the West Africa, including its underlying causes, manifestations, and broader security ramifications for the region. The strategies used by some West African military forces such as Mali, Nigeria, Ghana and other Multinational Joint Task Force such as MNJTF-LCD and MNJTF-AI in combatting violent extremism have been examined. These strategies were analyzed through the lens of kinetic and non-kinetic approaches to combatting violent extremism and juxtaposed to other examples outside the West African sub-region. The study draws sharp focus on the efficacy, adaptability and challenges encountered by West African militaries in effectively countering violent extremism in the pursuance of long lasting peace. The summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations presented, are drawn from the outcomes of chapter five, six and seven of the research.

#### 8.1 Summary of Research Findings

The objective of the study is to assess the military role in countering violent extremism in West Africa. The study delved into the non-kinetic capabilities of the armed forces in West Africa and how to transform the militaries to be effective in the application of smart military strategy in countering violent extremism.

The study used an exploratory research design to conduct in-depth interviews and used available data to gain more insight into the kinetic and non-kinetic military capabilities in CVE. To achieve the objectives, the study interviewed retired and serving military commanders, diplomats, directing staff of military training institutions, security analysts and non-governmental organization officials particularly from Nigeria, Mali and Ghana.

The findings of the study are summarized below according to the objectives set for the research.

### **8.1.1 Examining the Smart Military Strategy in Countering Violent Extremism in West Africa**

The study found that smart military strategy is a balanced integrated strategy that combines non-kinetic and kinetic military strategies to achieve the desired objectives. Both the national militaries and multinational military initiatives in West Africa have used a combination of kinetic (combat military action) and non-kinetic (non-combat military actions) strategy in combatting violent extremism. Kinetic military operations, which are critical for disrupting and dismantling extremist networks, are supplemented by non-kinetic military measures to counter the underlying causes and ideologies that give rise to extremism in the first place.

The non-kinetic military operations address the socioeconomic drivers of extremism, and promote community resilience. These include attempts to encourage defections from extremist groups, humanitarian aid to ameliorate conditions conducive for extremism. Access to education and health, women empowerment and active involvement with communities to foster trust and social unity are other policies for non-kinetic operations. This approach emphasizes the military's evolving role, not just as a combat force, but as a crucial component in a holistic strategy that includes peacekeeping, development, and human security. This strategy provides a path to long-

term peace and security in West Africa by combining the strengths of military capabilities with diplomatic, humanitarian, and community-based interventions, recognizing that the fight against extremism is as much about winning hearts and minds as it is about tactical victories on the battlefield.

The study revealed that kinetic military strategy alone most likely will not be the deciding factor in countering extremism in West Africa. The militaries in West Africa although have been combining both kinetic and non-kinetic military capabilities to counter extremism, the average ratio of kinetic to non-kinetic military operations is currently 9:1. This ratio is inadequate for an effective application of smart military strategy to counter violent extremism. In terms of budget allocation, manpower and career advancement the research found that the combat units are far ahead of their non-combat counterparts.

The study found out that there are many NGOs and CSOs involved in non-kinetic activities who operate along side the military in countering extremism in West Africa. However, in intense unstable security environment the non-military actors are not capable of operating and thus the need for the military to be trained and equipped adequately to undertake the operations of the NGOs and CSOs. Creating a vacuum by not undertaking non-kinetic military operations in unstable security environment prolong the conflict and gives the extremist groups the opportunity to recruit and infiltrate the community.

The study revealed that the right mix of kinetic and non-kinetic military capabilities for effective “smart” military strategy depends on the intelligent and proper diagnosis of the cultural, social, economic and the security’s environmental context. A context specific solution which emphasizes the need to tailor interventions based on local conditions rather than applying

universal approaches is very necessary. Thus, selecting the right mix of kinetic and non-kinetic military capabilities should be informed by understanding the local conditions, values and the security dynamics and not the “smart” military theory of 9:1 ratio.

The study found that the current CVE strategies adopted by West African militaries are not effective, as there are gaps in the integration and applications of kinetic and non-kinetic techniques. It contends that a smart military strategy, which combines direct kinetic operations with non-kinetic strategies have not been completely fulfilled. This deficiency is due to inconsistent application and lack of context specific solutions because of the challenge of balancing local knowledge with external expertise.

### **8.1.2 Analyzing the West Africa Military’s Utilization of Non-kinetic Military Capabilities in Countering Violent Extremism**

The study found that the battle to win the hearts and mind of the population is crucial in ensuring that the overall strategy in countering violent extremism in West Africa is successful. Therefore, the military has to adopt a comprehensive and nuanced approach that treats non-kinetic military measures as core elements in the military intervention initiatives. To win the hearts and minds of the people the armed forces in West Africa are complementing their anti-terror kinetic operations with non-kinetic military operations geared towards civilian protection and projects that support the developmental agenda of the state and to provide social services. The non-combat units of the armed forces in West Africa are actively involved in the operations to counter violent extremism in West Africa.

The study found that the non-combat units of the armed forces like the medical unit, the department of religious affairs, the department of public relations and the Education units are

integrated with the combat units in the fight against violent extremism. The capabilities of the military non-combat units are used to conduct non-kinetic operations in the area of operation to win the hearts and minds of the people.

The study found that the armed forces in West Africa have been involved in developmental projects and have been supporting their governments in Poverty Alleviation Programs in areas susceptible to violent extremism. The military are involved with quick-impact-projects including building of roads, schools, medical centers and providing social services. However, most of the non-kinetic military operations are mostly ad hoc and poorly conceptualized so it becomes difficult to achieve the desired goals.

### **8.1.3 Evaluating the Challenges of Smart Military Strategy**

The study found that a genuinely sophisticated smart military strategy comes with the awareness that kinetic and non-kinetic military capabilities constitute separate and distinct institutions and institutional cultures within the military that exert their own normative influences over their personnel. The military personnel in the combat and non-combat units have their own attitudes, incentives and anticipated career paths that are a challenge for effective integration.

The study found that there is an urgent need for a revolutionary shift in the military approaches to successfully combat the complex challenge of violent extremism. This necessitates a considerable cultural and organizational shift toward valuing and integrating kinetic and non-kinetic solutions appropriately. Culturally, the military must cultivate an environment that recognizes the effectiveness of soft power methods such as community participation and socioeconomic measures in eroding extremist ideology. Organizationally, it demands structural adjustments, such as the formation of specialist units and training programs focused at improving

personnel's non-kinetic capabilities. Furthermore, a comprehensive examination and update of military doctrines is required to ensure that they reflect the integrated approach and incorporate flexibility and adaptability into operational guidelines.

The study found that there are major doctrinal, operational, and institutional problems in implementing a smart military strategy that aims to balance the use of kinetic and non-kinetic strategies. Doctrinally, the established preference for kinetic operations over non-kinetic techniques impedes the development and prioritization of non-combat operations. Operational problems include a lack of training, resources, and expertise dedicated to non-kinetic methods, as well as command and planning systems that are unprepared for integration. Institutionally, resistance to change, insufficient interagency coordination, and established biases all limit the implementation of a smart military strategy. At the heart of these concerns is the disproportionate emphasis on kinetic strategies, which overshadows the critical, systematic incorporation of non-kinetic components. This not only limits the effectiveness of military operations against violent extremism, but also ignores the need of addressing the underlying causes.

#### **8.1.4 Examining the Transformation of the West Africa Military for the Application of Smart Military Strategy**

The study found that both the national armies and the various multinational military interventions to counter violent extremism have long emphasized hard power measures. Most of the militaries in West Africa are kinetic focus, enemy-centric and reluctant to change. The national armies must turn their focus more on training and equipping their personnel for non-kinetic operations in CVE. The military should be transformed into a general-purpose force that can easily combine kinetic and non-kinetic approaches. In equipping the military, the emphasis should shift from expensive kinetic military equipment to non-lethal weapons such as advanced

bulletproof vests, rubber bullets, megaphones that emit excruciating noise and portable computer communication.

The study revealed that the militaries in West Africa are already making some efforts to transform towards smart military operations but more has to be done. The national militaries in West Africa are undergoing varying transformation towards smart military strategy because their roles have become increasingly linked to civilian protection, peace operations, state –building and the promotion and defence of human security. The military have seen the development of more nuanced operational approaches to counter violent extremism because the existing conceptual and physical tools are insufficient to successfully conduct smart military strategy.

The study found that there is a need for a significant shift in the culture, orientation and organization of the military force in West Africa in order for them to be effective in conducting smart military strategy to counter violent extremism. The kinetic-centric perception of the military needs to change and the organizational structure must recognize importance of the non-combat units and their personnel. The study found that the non-combat unit personnel such as the public relation, religious affairs and medical who are responsible for non-kinetic military operations are often neglected at the strategy planning level.

## **8.2. Other Findings**

The study revealed that the military in West Africa has been trained and equipped mostly for conventional warfare but have fundamental short-comings in their capabilities for dealing with unconventional threats such as violent extremism.

The study found that sharing intelligence between the national armies in West Africa is very important if the military will be effective in countering violent extremism. Relying on foreign military initiatives to combat violent extremism in West Africa has not been successful.

The study found that Information support operations and psychological operations are critical in opposing the narratives and ideas pushed by extremist groups, providing positive alternatives that can diminish extreme power and appeal.

The study found that violent extremism in West Africa is a social and transnational problem and does not have a straightforward solution. Countering violent extremism therefore should focus on local based action with human touch. Close engagement with local population to shape the conduct of military operations would be important for a successful CVE in West Africa.

The study found that acknowledging military women's role and agency is important to develop an effective smart military strategy to counter violent extremism.

### **8.3 Conclusion**

The objective of the study was to interrogate the military role in countering violent extremism in West Africa. The study evaluated the effectiveness of the West Africa armed forces against violent extremism through the lens of Joseph Nye's "Smart Power" and Regional Security Complex theories. Many scholars have attributed the failure of the US strategy in countering violent extremism in Afghanistan and Iraq to their emphasis on hard power or kinetic military approaches. These scholars argue that a nuanced approach that focuses on non-kinetic military intervention is key to countering violent extremism. The armed forces must therefore recalibrate their tactic to ensure that effective non-kinetic military initiatives are not relegated to the background. There is no illusion that non-kinetic military approaches alone can overcome violent extremism. The best practice is a smart military strategy that effectively combines kinetic and non-kinetic military strategies.

Smart military strategy is a balance integrated strategy that combines non-kinetic and kinetic military strategies to achieve the desired objectives. There are concerns of whether smart military

strategy can really work. But recent examples in Egypt, Lebanon and Somalia have shown that smart military strategy is very effective. The problem is how policymakers and military commanders can understand the value of combining kinetic and non-kinetic military capabilities in interaction to apply smart military strategy and achieve national objectives. The right combination of kinetic and non-kinetic military capabilities should be based on the proper assessment and understanding of local conditions rather than applying a one-size fit all method.

The increase and spread of extremist attacks in West Africa despite the many military interventions necessitate having a closer examination of the appropriateness of the military strategy being employed. Most of the military interventions to counter extremism in West Africa have combined non-kinetic and kinetic military approaches. The military have undertaken non-combat military operations such as drilling wells, construction of schools, and health facilities and repairing roads and bridges in addition to the kinetic operations. Both the national armies and the multi-national joint task forces in West Africa have initiated smart military strategy to counter violent extremism but the level of importance attached to the non-kinetic military capabilities has been low.

To be effective in applying smart military strategy the armed forces must be able to recognize that the over emphasis on kinetic military capabilities will not be able to defeat extremism and therefore efforts should be made to improve the non-kinetic capabilities. The cultural, organizational and operational difference of the kinetic and non-kinetic military units is a challenge for the armed forces to be effective in applying smart military strategy. The armed forces in West Africa have to be transformed to enable the non-combat units to lead in the fight against violent extremism. Although there are recent efforts by the military to project the non-combat units the process has been slow. There is an urgent need for the armed forces in West

Africa to enhance the training and capabilities of the non-kinetic units in the fight against violent extremism. The non-combat units are to be encouraged to lead the fight against violent extremism based on a context specific solution approach if the military will be effective in applying smart military strategy.

#### **8.4 Contribution to Knowledge**

The research contributes significantly to the academic and practical understanding of combating violent extremism in West Africa with a focus on the application of smart power. The research advances knowledge in several key areas:

- **Smart Military Strategy**

Most military theorists are focused on fire power and kinetic military capabilities. This study brings out the nuance military strategy that projects the importance of non-kinetic military capabilities. It provides a thorough examination of how a balanced, integrated strategy combining both kinetic (direct action) and non-kinetic (nonviolent means such as development projects, education, and so on) military strategies can be effectively used to combat violent extremism in West Africa. The study emphasizes that reliance solely on kinetic military strategy is insufficient and often counterproductive in addressing the multifaceted nature of violent extremism.

- **Utilization of non-kinetic capabilities**

The research highlights the under-explored aspect of military operations in countering violent extremism, namely, the utilization of non-kinetic capabilities. By demonstrating how non-combat units of the Armed Forces are integrated with combat units in the fight against violent extremism, the study presents a deeper understanding of military operations beyond traditional combat roles. It points out that these non-kinetic strategies,

including development projects and poverty alleviation programs in areas susceptible to violent extremism, play a crucial role in winning the hearts and minds of the population.

- **Challenges and Transformation Needs**

The research identifies and discusses the doctrinal, operational, and training challenges faced by West African militaries in applying smart military strategies. It critically examines the need for a revolutionary shift in military approaches to combat violent extremism effectively. The findings highlight the necessity for organizational, cultural, and structural transformations within the military to enhance the balance and integration of kinetic and non-kinetic strategies.

- **Existing Literature Gaps**

The study adds to the existing literature on the military roles in countering violent extremism. Most of the literature on military interventions in countering violent extremism has been euro-centric and not much primary data research has been done in the West Africa context. The existing literature on West Africa mostly concentrates on either kinetic or non-kinetic military national initiatives but very few examine the “smart” regional military approaches in countering violent extremism. The study generates interest in the effective application of “smart” military strategies in countering violent extremism.

#### **8.4. Recommendations**

The recommendations of the study are as follows:

- Most of the military in West Africa are kinetic military-centric as such they are not effective in applying smart military strategy. The military should recruit and enlist more non-kinetic military personnel and give them equal opportunity in career development

and training as the combat military personnel. The military in West Africa must enhance the emphasis on non-kinetic military capabilities as a key approach in the fight against violent extremism. This necessitates a major investment in intelligence gathering and public relations to better understand the complex dynamics of extremist groups and their hold on local populations. It also underlines the need of providing military personnel with specialized training in local languages and cultures in order to promote confidence and collaboration with civilian populations.

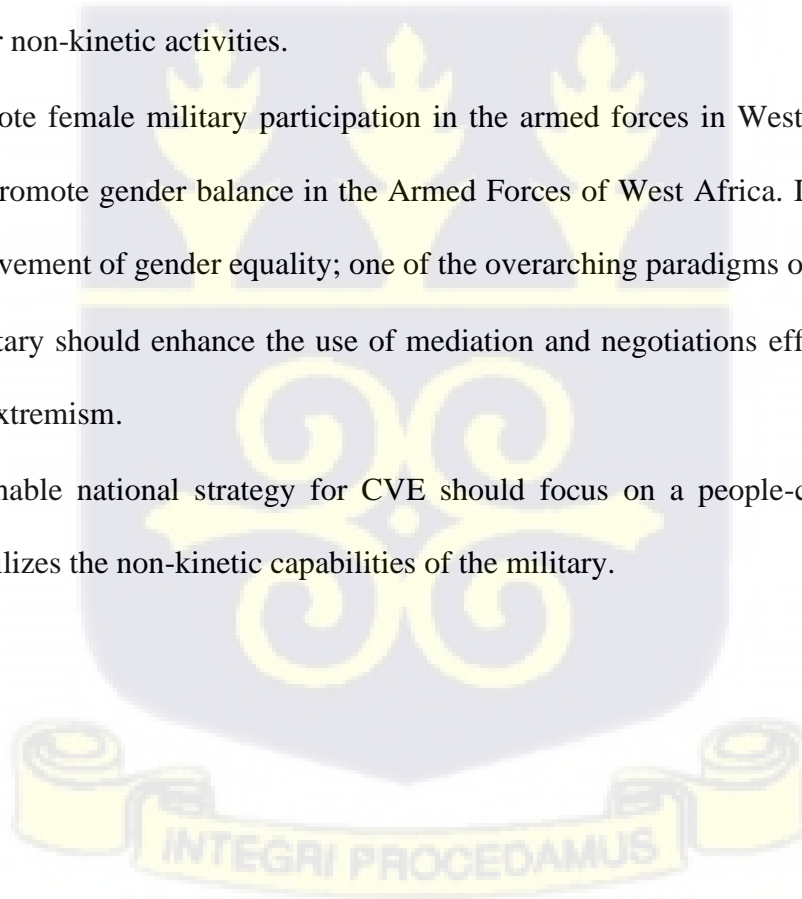
- The military in West Africa must encourage and intensify their CIMIC operations. Civil-military operations are emphasized as an important link between military efforts and civilian requirements, ensuring that military actions promote rather than hinder community stability. West African militaries should adopt a more holistic approach to counter-extremism, one that not only targets the immediate threats but also addresses the underlying issues fueling extremism, thereby contributing to a sustainable peace and security landscape in the region.
- The military must establish CIMIC commands. The national armed forces in West Africa should establish CIMIC Commands at the strategic level at par with the combat unit commands to facilitate the operations of non-combat military units and reinforce all non-kinetic actions in the fight against violent extremism.
- The various MNJTF should establish CIMIC Operation Centers to coordinate non-kinetic military operation.
- The military must restructure their command structure. To strategically restructure the military commands in West Africa so that non-combat units play a more prominent role in strategic decision-making processes. This recommendation advocates for a paradigm

shift in how military operations are planned and carried out, proposing a more inclusive approach that incorporates the expertise of support service personnel, such as medical professionals, engineers, and communication specialists, into strategic planning. This allows the military to draw on a broader set of perspectives that increases operational effectiveness. This method not only provides multiple viewpoints to the operational planning phase, but it also ensures that logistical, health, infrastructure, and communication issues are smoothly integrated into the execution of military operations.

- The armed forces must be transformed by renewing their masculine and hard power cultural mindset. To transform West African militaries to effectively implement smart military strategies. This transformation includes organizational reform, cultural transformations within the military, increased training programs, and equipment upgrading and diversity, all of which are designed to improve non-kinetic operations efficiency. These activities cover a wide range of missions, including counter-extremism, peacekeeping, and humanitarian assistance. To support this change, the research recommends increasing military professionalism and modernization activities. This involves a strategic emphasis on recruitment and expansion processes targeted at attracting people from diverse sectors of the military such as medical, psychology, computer-engineering, and multilingualism. Incorporating such individuals into the highest military ranks is expected to greatly boost its non-kinetic capabilities, allowing for a more effective and holistic response to security concerns.
- There should be more curriculum reforms to highlight the importance of non-kinetic military approaches. To implement significant curriculum reforms in military educational institutions throughout West Africa in order to effectively include smart military

operations. This recommendation is geared towards shifting the focus away from traditional, exclusively kinetic military strategies, toward a more balanced strategy that incorporates both kinetic and non-kinetic methods. These institutions can foster better knowledge and appreciation for the difficulties of current conflict resolution and counter-extremism operations by incorporating the ideas and practices of smart military strategies into the educational foundations of future military commanders. These curriculum changes would not only broaden military personnel's tactical and strategic horizons, but also ensure that they are better prepared to engage in operations that require a balanced combination of force and diplomacy, psychological operations, community engagement, and other non-kinetic activities.

- To promote female military participation in the armed forces in West Africa. This will help to promote gender balance in the Armed Forces of West Africa. It will also help in the achievement of gender equality; one of the overarching paradigms of the UN.
- The military should enhance the use of mediation and negotiations efforts in countering violent extremism.
- A sustainable national strategy for CVE should focus on a people-centered approach which utilizes the non-kinetic capabilities of the military.



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### A. Books

- Anderson, V. (2009). *Research methods in Human Resource Management*. London: CIPD.
- Annan, K. (2012). *Interventions: A life in war and peace*. New York: Penguin Books.
- Archer, M. (1995). *Realist Social Theory: The Morphogenetic Approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bartlett, J., & Birdwell, J. (2010). *From Suspects to Citizens: Preventing violent extremism in a big society*. London: Demos.
- Bayles, J., Smith, S., & Owens, P. (2011). *The Globalization of World Politics*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Bechhofer, F., & Paterson, L. (2000). *Principles of research design in the social sciences*. London: Routledge.
- Bell, S. R. (2005). *The Martyr's Oath: The Apprenticeship of a Homegrown Terrorism*. Canada: John Wiley & Sons.
- Bergin, A., Jones, D. M., & Ungerer, C. (2007). *Beyond Belief: Islamism, Radicalization and the Counter-Terrorism Response*: Australian Strategic Policy Institute.
- Bhaskar, R. (1975). *A Realist Theory of Science*. England: Harvester Press.
- Bhaskar, R. (1989). *Reclaiming reality: A critical introduction to contemporary philosophy*. London: Verso.
- Biya, P. (2018). *The Multinational Joint Task Force. VIGIE: Strategic and Prospective Analysis Bulletin*. No 007 - Jan - Mar 2018.
- Blaikie, N. (1993). *Approaches to Social Enquiry*. London: Polity Press.
- Bowden, M. (2012). *The Killing of Osama Bin Laden*. Atlantic Monthly Press.
- Burke, J. (2004). *Al Qaeda: the true story of radical Islam*. London: I.B Tauri
- Bricmont, J (2006). *Humanitarian Imperialism: Using human rights to sell war*. New York: Monthly Review Press.
- Bryman, A., & Bell, E. (2003). *Business Research Methods*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Buzan, B. (1991). *People, States and Fear*. London: Harvester Wheatsheaf.
- Buzan, B., & Waever, O. (2003). *Regions and Powers*. In *Regions and Powers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Chadwick, A. E. (2017). *The Sage Encyclopedia of Communication Research Methods*. London: Sage.
- Clifford, J., & Marcus, G.E. (1986). *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Collier, A. (1994). *Critical Realism: An Introduction to Roy Bhaskar's Philosophy*. London: Verso.
- Collis, J., & Hussey, R. (2003). *Business Research a Practical guide for Undergraduate and Postgraduate students*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Creswell, J. (2005). *Educational research: Planning, conducting and evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative approaches to research*. 2nd ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill/Pearson Education.
- Creswell, J. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Incorporated.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches (4th Ed.)*. SAGE Publications.
- Cvrtila, V., & Peresin, A. (2009). *The Transformation of Terrorism and New Strategies*. *Politica misao*, 46(5), 121-139.
- Danermack, B., Ekstrom, M., Jakobsen, L., & Karlson, J. C. (2002). *Explaining Society: Critical Realism in the Social Science*. London: Routledge.
- Daymon, C., & Holloway, I. (2002). *Qualitative Research Methods in Public Relations and Marketing Communication*. London: Routledge.
- Denzin, N.K., & Lincoln, Y.S. (2000). *Handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Dornyei, Z. (2007). *Research methods in applied linguistics: Quantitative, Qualitative, and Mixed Methodologies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Drummond, J. (2002). *The psychology of terrorism: A public understanding (psychological dimension to war and peace)*. Connecticut: Praeger.

- Ganor, B. (2017). *The Counter-Terrorism Puzzle: A Guide to Decision Makers*. New York: Routledge.
- Geertz, C. (2000). *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology*. New York: Basic Books.
- Giddens, A. (1984). *The Constitution of Society*. Cambridge: Cambridge Polity Press.
- Gambetta, D. (1998). *Social Mechanisms: An Analytical Approach to Social Theory*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Grbich, C. (2012). *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Introduction*. London: Sage.
- Grill, J., & Johnson, P. (2005). *Research Methods for Managers*. 3rd ed. London: SAGE Publication Ltd.
- Hesse-Biber, S.N., & Leavy, P. (2006). *Emergent methods in Social Research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publication.
- Horsley, R. A. (1999). *Bandits, Prophets, and Messiahs: Popular Movements in the Time of Jesus*. Trinity Press.
- Juergensmeyer, M. (2000). *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Juergensmeyer, M. (2001). *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence*. Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Juergensmeyer, M. (2003). *Terror in the Mind of God*. Berkeley, California: University of California Press.
- Koehler, D. (2017). *Understanding Deradicalization: Methods, Tools and Programs for Countering Violent Extremism*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Laqueur, W. (1987). *The Age of Terrorism*. Toronto: Little, Brown and Company.
- Laqueur, W., & Wall, C. (2018). *The Future of Terrorism: ISIS, Al-Qaeda, and the Alt-Right*. New York, NY: Thomas Dunne Books/St. Martin's Press.
- Manicas, P. (1987). *A History of Philosophy of Social Sciences*. New York: Basil Blackwell.
- Matthews, B., & Ross, L. (2010). *Research Methods: A practical guide for Social Sciences*. London: Polity Press.
- Merriam, S.B. (2002). *Introduction to Qualitative Research*. San Francisco CA: John Wiley & Sons Inc.

- Myers, M.D. (2009). *Qualitative research in business and management*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Nye, J.S (2023). *Soft Power and Great- Power Competition*. Singapore: Springer
- Nye, J. S. (2011). *The future of power*. New York, NY: Public Affairs.
- Patton, M.Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*. London: Sage Publications.
- Pearlstein, R. (1991). *The Mind of the Political Terrorist*. Wilmington, Delaware: Scholarly Resources.
- Prasoon, P. (2006). *The Merchants of Terror: Vol. 1 Terrorism: Past, Present and Future*. London: Cipra Books.
- Rubin, H. J., & Rubin, I. S. (1995). *Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Sageman, M. (2004). *Understanding Terrorist Networks*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Sarantakos, S. (2000). *Social Research*. South Yarra (Australia): Macmillan.
- Sayer, A. (1992). *Method in Science: A Realist Approach*. New York: Routledge.
- Schmid, A. P., & Jongman, A.J. (1988). *Political Terrorism: A Guide to Actors, Authors, Concepts, Data bases, Theories, and Literature*. Amsterdam: SWIDOC.
- Scott-Baumann, A., & Cheruvallil-Contractor, S. (2015). *Islamic Education in Britain: New Pluralist Paradigms*. ebook: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Shneiderman, S.D., & Plaisant, C. (2005). *Designing the user interface*. Addison Wesley USA: Pearson.
- Silverman, D. (2010). *Doing qualitative research: a practical handbook*. 3rd ed. London: Sage.
- Smith, R. (2005). *Utility of Force: The Art of War in Modern World*. London UK: Allen Lane.
- Stake, R. E. (1995). *The art of Case Study Research*. Thousand Oak, CA: SAGE.
- Stern, J. (2003). *Terror in the name of God: Why religious militants kill*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers.
- Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Thackrah, J. (2004). *Dictionary of Terrorism (2nd ed)*. United Kingdom: Routledge.

- Van de Ven, A. (2007). *Engaged Scholarship: A Guide for Organizational and Social Research*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Walter, L. (2000). *The New Terrorism: Fanaticism and the Arms of Mass Destruction*. UK: Oxford Academic Press.
- Yin, R. K. (1984). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.
- Yin, R. K. (2003). *Case Study Research Design and Methods*. Newbury Park CA: Sage Publication.
- Yin, R.K. (2010). *Qualitative Research from Start to Finish*. Guilford Press.

## **B. Chapters in Books**

- Ackroyd, S. (2010). Critical Realism, Organization Theory, Methodology and Emerging Science of Reconfiguration. In P. Koslowski (Ed). *Elements of a Philosophy of Management and Organization*. Berlin: Springer, 47-77.
- Ardila, R. (2002). The Psychology of the Terrorist: Behavioral Perspective. In C. Stout (Ed.). *The Psychology of Terrorism: A Public Understanding (Psychological Dimension to War and Peace)*. Connecticut: Praeger.
- Buzan, B. (2003). Regional Security Complex Theory in the Post-Cold War World. In: Söderbaum, F., Shaw, T.M. (eds) *Theories of New Regionalism*. International Political Economy Series. Palgrave Macmillan, London.
- Crelinsten, R. (2007). Counterterrorism as Global Governance: A Research Inventory. In M, Ranstorp (Ed.). *Mapping Terrorism Research: state of the arts, gaps and future direction*. Abingdon, OX: Routledge
- Crenshaw, M. (2015) Counterterrorism Policy and the Political Process. In B. Hoffman & A. Strindberg (Eds). *Terrorism and Beyond: A 21ST Century Perspective*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- De Vos, A.S. (2005). Combined Qualitative and Quantitative approach. In De Vos, A.S., Strydom, H., Fouche, C.D., & Delpont, C.S. *Research at grass roots: for the social sciences and human service professions*. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publisher: 357-366.
- Grossman, M. (2021). Resilience in violent extremism and terrorism. In M, Ungar (Ed.). *Multi-systemic resilience*. Oxford: University Press.

- Harley, S. (2021). *Hard Power. Soft Power and Smart Power: Civilian-Military Challenges in Counterterrorism*. In H. Yalcinkaya (Ed). *Good Practices in Counterterrorism*. Ankara: Centre of Excellence Defence Against Terrorism.
- Hocking, J. (2007). *Counter-terrorism and the Politics of Social Cohesion*. In J. Jupp, J.P. Nieuwenhuysen & E. Dawson (Ed.). *Social Cohesion in Australia*. Melbourne: Cambridge University Press.
- Horgan, J. (2007). *Understanding Terrorist Motivation: A Socio-Psychological Perspective*. In M. Ranstorp (Ed.). *Mapping Terrorism: State of the Art, Gaps and Future Directions*. London: Routledge.
- Kaplan, J. (2011) *David Rapoport and the Study of Religiously Motivated Terrorism*. In J.E. Rosenfeld (Ed). *Terrorism, Identity and Legitimacy: The Four Waves Theory and Political Violence*. New York: Routledge.
- Merari, A. (2000). *Terrorism and the Strategy of Struggle: Past and Future*. In M. Taylor & J. Horgan (Ed.). *The Future of Terrorism*. London: Frank Case.
- Moghadam, F. M. (2009). *De-radicalization and the Staircase from Terrorism*. In D. Canter (Ed.). *The Faces of Terrorism: Multidisciplinary Perspective*. New York: John Wiley.
- Nozawa, J., & Lefas, M. (2018). *Coordination between Military Action and the Judiciary. In When the Dust Settles: Judicial Responses to Terrorism in the Sahel (pp. 25–34)*. Global Center on Cooperative Security.
- Omitoogun, W., & Oduntan, T. (2006). “Nigeria” In Omitoogun, W., & Hutchful, E. (eds). “Budgeting for the Military Sector in Africa: The Process and Mechanisms of Control. Solna”. Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 154-179.
- Pollard, N. A. (2007). *Competing with Terrorists in Cyberspace: Opportunities and Hurdles*. In M, Ranstorp (Ed.). *Mapping Terrorism Research: state of the art, gaps and future direction*. Oxon: Routledge.
- Piven, J. (2002). *On the Psychosis (Religion) of Terrorists*. In C. Stout (Ed.). *The Psychology of Terrorism: Theoretical Understandings and Perspectives (Psychological Dimension to War and Peace)*. Connecticut: Praeger.
- Rapoport, D. (2013). *The Four Waves of Modern Terror: International Dimensions and Consequences* in J.M. Hanhimaki & B. Blumenau (Eds). *An International History of Terrorism: Western and Non-Western Experiences*. New York: Routledge.
- Veness, D. (2015). *Terrorism and Counterterrorism: An International Perspective*. In B, Hoffman & A, Strindberg (Eds.). *Terrorism and beyond: A 21st Century Perspective*. London: Routledge.

**C. Journals Articles**

- Abiew, F. K. (2003). NGO-Military Relations in Peace Operation. *International Peacekeeping*, 10(1), 24-39.
- Abiew, F.K. (2003). NGO-Military Relations in Peace Operation. *International Peacekeeping*, 10(1): 24-39.
- Adeakin, I. (2016). The Military and Human Rights Violations in Post-1999 Nigeria: Assessing the Problems and Prospects of Effective Internal Enforcement in an Era of Insecurity. *Africa Security Review*, 25(2), 129-145.
- Adebayo, J. O., & Matsilele, T. (2019). Nigerian Experience with Post-Conflict Peacebuilding: Examining Operation Safe Corridors and the Niger Delta Amnesty Programme. *Journal of African Union Studies*, 8(3), 135–156.
- Aghedo, I., & Osuman, O. (2015). Insurgency in Nigeria: A Comparative Study of Niger Delta and Boko Haram Uprising. *Journal of Asian and Africa Studies*. 50(2): 208-222.
- Akanji, O.O. (2019) Sub-regional Security Challenge: ECOWAS and the War on Terrorism in West Africa. *Insight on Africa* 11(1): 94-112.
- Akinola, O. (2015). Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria: Between Islamic Fundamentalism, Politics, and Poverty. *African Security*, 8(1), 1–29.
- Albini, J. L. (2001). Dealing with the Modern Terrorist: The Need for Changes in Strategies and Tactics in the New War on Terrorism. *Criminal Justice Policy Review*, 12(4), 255-281.
- Ali, M.Y. (2019) Effective Counter-Measures to the Radicalization of Youth into Terrorism in Africa: From Theory to Practice- The Case of Building Resilience against Violent Extremism (BRAVE). *IDIS Journal of International Studies and Diplomacy* 59.
- Aljunied, S. (2012) Countering terrorism in maritime Southeast Asia: Soft and Hard power Approaches. *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 47(6): 652-665.
- Aly, A., Balbi, A. & Jacques, C. (2015). Rethinking countering violent extremism: Implementing the role of civil society. *Journal of Policing, Intelligence and Counter Terrorism* 10(1): 3-13.
- Aly, W. (2008). Axioms of Aggression: Counter-terrorism and counter-productivity in Australia. *Alternative Law Journal*, 33(1), 20-26.
- Amable, D. S. (2022). Theorizing the Emergence of Security Regions: An Adaptation for the Regional Security Complex Theory, *Global Studies Quarterly*, Volume 2, Issue 4.

- Ambrozik, C. (2019). Countering Violent Extremism Globally: A New Global CVE Dataset. *Perspectives on Terrorism* 13(5): 102-111.
- Ansary, A. F. (2008). Combating Extremism: A Brief Overview of Saudi Arabia's Approach. *Middle East Policy*, 15(2), 111-142.
- Aronson, S.L. (2013). Kenya and the Global War on Terror: Neglecting History and Geopolitics in Approaches to Counterterrorism. *Africa Journal of Criminology and Justice Studies*, 7(1) (2).
- Aziz, S.F. (2017). Losing the 'War of Ideas'. A Critique of Countering Violent Extremism Programs. *Texas International Law Journal* 52(2): 256-278.
- Babatunde, M. A. W & Thovoethin, P. S. (2017). Insurgency and Development in Nigeria: Assessing Reintegration Efforts in the North-East. *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development*, 12(2), 108–113.
- Bappah, H. Y. (2016). Nigeria's Military Failure against the Boko Haram Insurgency. *Africa Security Review*, 25(2), 146-158.
- Bah, A. M. (2005). West Africa: From a security complex to a security community. *Africa Security Studies*, 14(2), 77-83.
- Bell, S. R., Murdie, A., Blocksome, P., & Brow, K. (2013). Force Multipliers: Conditional Effectiveness of Military and INGO Human Security Interventions. *Journal of Human Rights*, 12(4), 397-422.
- Bettison, N. (2009). Preventing Violent Extremism- A Police Response. *Policing*, 3(2), 129-138.
- Borum, R. (2011). Radicalization into Violent Extremism II: A Review of Conceptual Models and Empirical Research. *Journal of Strategic Security*, 4(4), 37-62.
- Borum, R. (2013). Understanding the Terrorist Mindset. *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, 72(7).
- Briggs, R. (2010). Hearts and Minds and Votes: The Role of Democratic Participation in Countering Terrorism. *Democratization*, 17(2), 272-285.
- Brimley, S. (2006). Tentacles of Jihad: targeting Transnational Support Networks. *Parameters* (Summer), 30-46.
- Brown, B. (2007). T Rays vs Terrorists: Widening the Security Spectrum. *Environmental Health Perspectives*, 114(9), 540-543.
- Bryman, A., & Bell, E. (2007). The ethics of management research: an exploratory content analysis. *British Journal of Management*. 18(1), 63-77.

- Buket, Ö. N. A. L., & Oumar, M. H. (2021). Policies and Security Strategies of G5 Sahel States against Terrorism. *International Journal of Politics and Security*, 3(3), 1-27.
- Camara, A. (2020). The G5 Sahel: Security Implementation and Challenges. *Open Journal of Political Science*, Vol.10 No.3.
- Chandran, S. (2021). Dimensions of Preparedness for Countering Violent Extremism: Methods Approaches and Operations. *Modern Sri Lanka Studies, A Journal of the Social Sciences*, 12(1), 1-18.
- Chingle, I. P., Mancha, M. J., & Gukas, T. (2015). Effect of Conflict on the Socio-Economic Development in Nigeria. *Approaches in International Journal of Research Development*, 10(1).
- Chowdhury, A., & Krebs, R. R. (2010). Talking about Terror: Counterterrorist Campaigns and the Logic of Representation. *European Journal of International Relations*, 16(1), 125-150.
- Clubb, G. & Tapley, M. (2018). Conceptualizing De-Radicalization and Former Combatant Re-Integration in Nigeria. *Third World Quarterly*, 39(11), 2053-2068.
- Coaffee, J. (2006). From Counterterrorism to Resilience. *The European Legacy*, 11(4), 389-403.
- Cohen, D. (2016). The Next Generation of Government CVE Strategies at Home: Expanding Opportunities for Intervention. *The ANNALS of American Academic of Political and Social Sciences*, 668: 118-120.
- Coronado, J. P. (2005). Between soft power and a hard place: Dilemmas of the bush doctrine for inter-American relations. *Journal of Developing Societies*, 21, 321-335.
- Cotton, J. (2003). Southeast Asia after 11 September. *Terrorism and Political Violence* 15(1): 148-170.
- Crelinsten, R. (2009). *Counterterrorism*. Cambridge: Polity Press
- Crelinsten, R. (2014). Perspectives on counterterrorism: From Stovepipes to a Comprehensive Approach. *Perspectives on Terrorism*, 8, 2-15.
- Crenshaw, M. (1981). The Causes of Terrorism. *Comparative Politics* (July), 379-399.
- Danjibo, N.D. (2013). The Aftermath of the Arab Spring and its Implication for Peace And Development in The Sahel And Sub-Saharan Africa. *Strategic Review for Southern Africa*, 35(2):16-34.
- Davis, L., & Klopper, H. (2003). The Value of a Qualitative Methodology in Criminological Research. *Acta Criminologica*, 16(1): 72-81.

- Davis, M. (2006). Neural systems involved in fear and anxiety measured with fear potentiated startle. *American Psychologist*, 61: 741-756.
- Dieng, M., Onguny, P., & Mfondi, A. G. (2020). Leadership without membership: France and the G5 Sahel Joint Force. *African Journal of Terrorism and Insurgency Research*, 1(2), 21-41.
- Dixon, J. (2009). What causes civil wars? Integrating Quantitative Research Findings. *International Studies Review*, 11(4), 707-735.
- Dixon-Wood, M., Bonas, S., Booth, A., Jones, D.R., Miller, T., Sutton, A.J., & Young, B. (2006). How can systematic reviews incorporate qualitative research? A critical perspective. *Qualitative Research*, 6(1), 27-44.
- Duyvesteyn, I. (2008). Great Expectations: The use of Armed Force to combat Terrorism. *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 19(3), 328-351.
- Dze-Ngwa, W. (2018). The Multinational Joint Task Force against Boko Haram: Rethinking Military Interventions. *International Journal of Liberal Arts and Science* 6 (7).
- Erforth, B. (2020). Multilateralism as a tool: Exploring French military cooperation in the Sahel. *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 43:4, 560-582.
- Ewi, M. & Aning, K. (2006). Assessing the role of the African Union in Preventing and Combating Terrorism in Africa. *Africa Security Review*, 15(3): 32-46
- Ezeibe, C., Mbaigbo, N., Okafor, N., Udeogu, C., Uzodigwe, A., & Ogbo, U. S. (2022). Strange Bedfellows: Relations between International Nongovernmental Organizations and the Military Actors in Preventing/Countering Violent Extremism in Northeast Nigeria. *Central European Journal of International and Security Studies*, 16(1), 36-68.
- Falode, J. A. (2016). The Nature of Nigeria's Boko Haram War, 2010-2015: A Strategic Analysis. *Perspectives on Terrorism*, 10(1), 41-52.
- Ferrero, M. (2006). Martyrdom Contracts. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 50, 855-877.
- Flint, C. (2003). Terrorism and Counterterrorism: Geographic Research Questions and Agendas. *The Professional Geographer*, 55(2), 161-169.
- Flood, D. H. (2013). A Review of the French-led Military Campaign in Northern Mali. *Combatting Terrorism Center*. Volume 6, Issue 5.
- Gregg, H. S. (2010). Fighting the Jihad of the Pen: Countering Revolutionary Islam's Ideology. *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 22, 292-314.

- Hagberg, S., & Körling, G. (2012). Socio-political Turmoil in Mali: The Public Debate Following the “Coup d’État” on 22 March 2012. *Africa Spectrum*, 47(2/3), 111–125.
- Hajnalka, V. (2017). NATO: Assessing the Alliance’s Counter-Terrorism Efforts. *Terrorism Monitor* 15(8).
- Hanlon, L. (2007). UK Anti-Terrorism Legislation: Still Disproportionate? *The International Journal of Human Rights*, 11(4), 481-515.
- Heale, R., & Forbes, D. (2013). Understanding Triangulation in Research. *Evidence-Based Nursing*, 16(4):92.
- Heath-Kelly, C. (2013). “Counter-Terrorism and the Counterfactual: Producing the Radicalization Discourse and the UK Prevent Strategy”. *British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 15(3), 394-415.
- Horgan, J., & Braddock, K. (2010). Rehabilitating the Terrorist? Challenges in Assessing the Effectiveness of De-radicalization Programs. *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 22(2), 267-291.
- Howe, H. (1996). Lessons of Liberia: ECOMOG and Regional Peacekeeping. *International Security*, 21(3), 145–176.
- Kessler, O., & Daase, C. (2008). From Insecurity to Uncertainty: Risk and the Paradox of Security Politics. *Alternatives*, 33(2), 211-232.
- Khalil, J. (2014). Radical beliefs and violent actions are not synonymous: How to place the key disjuncture between attitudes and behaviors at the heart of our research into Political Violence. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 37(2), 198-211.
- Khan, M. M., & Azam, A. (2008). Root Causes of Terrorism: An Empirical Analysis. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, 20(1/2), 155-174.
- Kisangani, E. F. (2012). The Tuareg’s Rebellions in Mali and Niger and the US Global War on Terror. *International Journal on World Peace*, 29(1), 59-79.
- Kurki, M. (2007). Critical Realism and Causal Analysis in International Relations. *Millennium Journal of International Studies*, 35(2), 361-378.
- Kwarkye, S. (2021) Slow Progress for West Africa’s Latest Counter-Terrorism Plan. Institute For Security Studies Africa: 1-6.
- MacDonald, E., & Williams, G. (2007). Combating Terrorism: Australia’s Criminal Code Since September 11, 2001. *Griffith Law Review*, 16(1), 27-54.

- Maiangwa, B., Uzodike, U. O., Whetho, A., & Onapajo, H. (2012). "Baptism by Fire": Boko Haram and the Reign of Terror in Nigeria. *Africa Today*, Vol. 59, No. 2 pp. 41-57.
- Maira, S. (2009). Good and Bad Muslim Citizens: Feminists, Terrorists, and US Orientalism. *Feminist Studies*, 35(3), 631-656.
- Nye, J. S. (2006). Think Again: Soft Power. *Foreign Policy* 22(2).
- Nye, J. S. (2009). Combining hard and soft power. *Foreign Affairs*, 88(4), 160-163.
- O'Neil, A. (2007). Degrading and managing risk: Assessing Australia's counter-terrorist strategy. *Australian Journal of Political Science*, 42(3), 471-487.
- Ogbonnaya, U. M. (2016). Terrorism, Agenda 2063 and the Challenges of Development in Africa. *South Africa Journal of International Affairs*, 23(2), 185-199.
- Ogharanduku, V. I. (2017). Violent Extremism and Grievance in Sub-Saharan Africa. *Peace Review*, 29(2), 207-214.
- Oliver, W. M. (2006). The Fourth Era of Policing: Homeland Security. *International Review of Law Computers & Technology*, 20(1/2), 49-62.
- Prah, P. K. W. & Chanimbe, T. (2021) Ghana's Readiness to Combat Terrorism: Strategies of Security Institutions, *The International Journal of Intelligence, Security, and Public Affairs*, 23:3, 367-399
- Reconstruction of North Eastern Nigeria. *European Journal of Social Sciences Studies*, Volume 4, Issue 2.
- Sampson I. T. (2015). Between Boko Haram and the Joint Task Force: Assessing the Dilemma of Counter-Terrorism and Human Rights in Northern Nigeria. *Journal of African Law*. 59 (1):25-63.
- Sampson, I. (2016). The dilemmas of counter-bokoharamism: Debating state responses to Boko Haram terrorism in northern Nigeria. *Security Journal* 29, 122-146.
- Sandler, T. (2011). The many faces of counterterrorism: An introduction. *Public Choice* 149: 225-234.
- Sadurski, L. (2022). Regional Security Complex Theory: Why is this Concept Still Developing? *Polish Political Science Studies*. Vol. 75(3), pp. 137-153.
- Sauter, M. (2024). The Mali Puzzle: International Isolation, Anti-French Sentiments, and Withdrawal of UN Peacekeepers. *Georgetown Journal of Internal Affairs*.

- Speckhard, A., Shajkovci, A., & Esengul, C. (2017). Analysis of the Drivers of Radicalization and Violent Extremism in Kyrgyzstan, including the Role of Kyrgyz Women in Supporting, Joining, Intervening in, and Preventing Extremism in Kyrgyzstan. *International Center for the Study of Violent Extremism*.
- Stephens, W., Sieckelinck, S., & Boutellier, H. (2021) Preventing Violent Extremism: A Review of the Literature. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 44(4): 346-361.
- Stewart, M.G. (2010). Risk-informed Decision support for assessing the Costs and Benefits of Counterterrorism Protective measures for Infrastructure. *International Journal of Critical Infrastructure Protection*, 3: 29-40.
- Sinai, J., Fuller, J., & Seal, T. (2019). Effectiveness of Counter-Terrorism and Countering Violent Extremism: A Literature Review. *Perspectives on Terrorism*, 13(6), 90-108.
- Soares, B. F. (2006) Islam in Mali in the neoliberal era. *Africa Affairs* 105(418): 77-95
- Taherdoost, H. (2021). Data Collection Methods and Tools for Research: A Step-by-Step Guide to Choose Data Collection Technique for Academic and Business Research Projects. *International Journal of Academic Research in Management*, 10 (1), pp.10-38.
- Tella, O. (2018). Boko Haram Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism: The Soft Power Context. *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 53(6): 815-829.
- Tewksbury, R. (2009). Qualitative versus Quantitative Methods: Understanding why Qualitative Methods are superior for Criminology and Criminal Justice. *Journal of Theoretical and Philosophical Criminology*, 1(1): 38-58.
- Sampson I. T. (2015). Between Boko Haram and the Joint Task Force: Assessing the Dilemma of Counter-Terrorism and Human Rights in Northern Nigeria. *Journal of African Law*. 59(1):25-63.
- Sampson, I. (2016). The dilemmas of counter-bokoharamism: Debating state responses to Boko Haram terrorism in northern Nigeria. *Security Journal* 29, 122-146
- Sandler, T. (2011).The many faces of counterterrorism: An introduction. *Public Choice* 149: 225-234.
- Tsoukala, A. (2006). Democracy in the Light of Security: British and French Political Discourses on Domestic Counter-Terrorism Policies. *Political Studies*, 54, 607-627.
- Van Ginkel, B., & Westervelt, S. (2009). The Ethical Challenges of Implementing Counterterrorism Measures and the Role of the OSCE. *Security and Human Rights*, (2), 123-142.

- Von Hippel, K. (2008). A counter-radicalization strategy for the new U.S administration. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 618, 182-196.
- Weiss, C. (2016). Al Qaeda has launched more than 100 attacks in West Africa in 2016. *FDD's Long War Journal*.
- Williams, S.G. (2010). The CIA'S Covert Predator Drone War in Pakistan, 2004-2010: The History of an Assassination Campaign. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 33(10): 871-892.
- Williams, D. U. (2016). The Role of Conflict Resolution in Counterterrorism in Nigeria: A Case Analysis of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) and Boko Haram (BH). *Peace Research*, 48(1/2), 173–202.
- Winer, J. M. (2008). Countering Terrorism Finance: A work, mostly in progress. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 618, 112-132.
- Wynn, D. Jr., & Williams, C.K. (2012). Principle of Conducting Critical Realist Case Study Research in Information Systems. *MIS Quarterly*, 36(3), 787-810.
- Zulkarnain, M. (2020). Nature of Home-grown Terrorism Threat in Ghana. *Journal of Terrorism Studies: Vol. 2: No. 2, Article 1*.

#### **D. Documents/Reports/Papers**

- Abu-Nimer, M. (2018). *Alternative Approaches to Transforming Violent Extremism: The Case of Islamic Peace and interreligious Peace-building*. Berghof Foundation Operations GmbH.
- Africa Center for Strategic Studies (2023). *Malian Military Junta Scuttles Security Partnerships while Militant Violence Surges*.
- Africa Union. (2013). *Peace and Security Council: 358th Meeting. Progress Report of the Chairperson of the Commission on the African-led International Support Mission in Mali*.
- Allan, H., Glazzard, A., Jespersen, S., et al. (2015). *Drivers of violent extremism: Hypotheses and literature review*. London: Royal United Services Institute.
- Alvi, M.H. (2016). *A manual for selecting sampling techniques in research*. Pakistan: University of Karachi, Iqra University. Retrieved from: <https://mpira.ub.uni-muenchen.de/70218/1/>.
- Armitage, R., & Nye, J. (2007). *Commission on Smart Power- A smarter, more secure America*. Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) Press.
- ARTIS (2009). *Theoretical Frames on Pathways to Violent Radicalization*. Retrieved from [http://www.artisresearch.com/articles/ARTIS\\_Theoretical\\_Frames\\_August\\_2009.pdf](http://www.artisresearch.com/articles/ARTIS_Theoretical_Frames_August_2009.pdf).

- Asfura-Heim, P. (2013). The Tuareg: A Nation without Borders? A CNA Strategic Studies Conference Report.
- Atran, S. (2010). Pathways to and from violent extremism: The case for science-based field research. Washington, DC: ARTIS.
- AU/ACSRT. (2022). Coups d'état and Political instability in the Sahel: Implications for the Fight against Terrorism and Violent Extremism. Retrieved from <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/coups-detat-and-political-instability-sahel-implications-fight-against-terrorism>.
- Aubyn, F.K. (2021). The risk of Violent Extremism and Terrorism in the Coastal States of West Africa: Assessing Ghana's Vulnerabilities, Resilience and Response. *Conflict Trends* 3: 14-21.
- Babatunde, O. (2023). Federal Government's Peace Agency should drive the Non-kinetic Strategy. Retrieved from: <https://www.thecable.ng/fgs-peace-agency-should-drive-the-non-kinetic-strategy>.
- Bak, M., Tarp, K. N. & Liang, C. S. (2019). Defining the Concept of 'Violent Extremism': Delineating the attributes and phenomenon of violent extremism. The Geneva Centre for Security Policy. Paper 24/19.
- Belgium Federal Public Service-Justice (2015). Action Plan against Radicalization in Prisons. Retrieved from <https://justice.belgium.be/sites/default/files/downloads/Plland>.
- Boas, M. (2007). Terminology Associated with Political Violence and Asymmetric Warfare. Institute for Security Studies, Report on Domestic Terrorism in Africa: Defining, Addressing and Understanding its impact on Human Security.
- Boutellis, A., Abilova, O., Mechoulam, D., & Connolly, L. (2016). Investing in Peace and the Prevention of Violence in West Africa and the Sahel-Sahara: Conversations on the Secretary-General's Plan of Action. International Peace Institute Report.
- Bucher et al. (2009). Non-Kinetic Capabilities for Irregular Warfare: Four Case Studies. Institute of Defense Analysis. Paper 4436.
- Busch, K. G., & Weissman, S. H. (2005). The Intelligence Community and the War on Terror: The Role of Behavioral Science. *Behavioral Science and the Law*, 23, 559-571.
- Centre for Preventive Action (2023). Violent Extremism in the Sahel. Retrieved from: <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/violent-extremism-sahel>.
- Christensen, M. M., & Edu-Afful, F. (2019). Ghana's Response to the Threat of Terrorism Requires Enhanced Interoperability. Policy Brief- Royal Danish Defence College.

- Civil-Military Co-operation Center of Excellence (2013). CIMIC in Hungary. Volume 5, Issue 5.
- Cooke, J., Sanderson, T.M., Johnson, J.C., & Hubner, B. (2016). *Militancy and the Arc of Instability: Violent Extremism in the Sahel*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Cordesman, A. H. (2006). Winning the “War on Terrorism”: A Fundamentally Different Strategy. *Middle East Policy*, 13(3), 101-108.
- De Graaff, B. (2010). *Redefining ‘Us’ and ‘Them’ Countering Violent Extremism Narratives*. The Hague: National Coordinator for Counterterrorism.
- Denoeux, G. & Carter, L. (2009). *Development Assistance and Counter-Extremism: A Guide to Programming*. USAID October.
- Department of Homeland Security. (2019). Budget-in-brief. U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Retrieved from: <https://www.dhs.gov/publication/fy-2019-budget-brief>
- European Commission (2017) “Operational Guidelines on the Preparation and Implementation of EU Financed Actions Specific to Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism in Third World Countries”. Luxembourg
- Frazer, O., & Nunlist, C. (2015). “The Concept of Countering Violent Extremism”. *CSS Analysis in Security Policy*, 183, 1-4.
- Freedman, L. (2005). *Military Responses*. Paper presented at the *Confronting Terrorism: The Club de Madrid Series on Democracy and Terrorism*, Madrid.
- Frimpong, O.B. (2020) *Violent Extremism in West Africa: Are Current Responses Enough?* Southern Voices Network for Peacebuilding Research, 28
- Francis, D. J. (2013). *The regional impact of the armed conflict and French intervention in Mali*. Oslo: Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre.
- Homer, G. (2013). *Countering Violent Extremism: A Peace-building Perspective*. US Institute of Peace. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.com/stable/resrep12214>
- International Organization for Peace building (2018). *Women’s participation in the Defense and Security forces in Mali: A Vehicle for trust*.
- International Peace Institute. (2016). *Investing in Peace and the Prevention of Violence in West Africa and the Sahel-Sahara: Conversations on the Secretary-General’s Plan of Action*. IPI’s Dakar Seminar Report.
- International Peace Institute IPI. (2016). *Investing in Peace and the Prevention of Violence in West Africa and the Sahel-Sahara: Conversations on the Secretary-General’s Plan of Action*. IPI’s Dakar Seminar Report.

- Kessels, E., & Nemr, C. (2016). "Countering Extremism and Development Assistance: Identifying Synergies, Obstacles and Opportunities". Global Center on Cooperative Security Policy Report.
- Lebovich, A. (2013). The Local Face of Jihadism in Northern Mali. Combating Terrorism Center. Volume 6, Issue 6.
- Mali Human Rights Association (2017). Mali: Choosing justice in the face of crisis Report.
- Mamman, E. B. (2020). Public Policy Response to Violence: Case Study of Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria. Walden University Dissertations. Retrieved from: <https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=10671&context=dissertations>
- Mamud, Y. A. (2022) Terrorism and Counterterrorism in Nigeria: Towards a Strategic Soft Power Approach. Retrieved from: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=4413076>.
- McCants, W. & Watts, C. (2012). US Strategy for Countering Violent Extremism: An Assessment. Foreign Policy Research Institute E-NOTES. Retrieved from [http://www.fpri.org/docs/media/McCants\\_Watts](http://www.fpri.org/docs/media/McCants_Watts)
- MENA Economic Monitor. (2016). Economic and Social Inclusion to Prevent Violent Extremism. Retrieved from <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated>
- Nsengimana, L. (2018). African Female Military in United Nations Peacekeeping Missions. The U.S. Army Command and General Staff College.
- OCHA (2016). Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali (S/2016/281).
- Ouédraogo, E. (2014). Advancing Military Professionalism in Africa. The Africa Center for Strategic Studies. Research Paper No, 6.
- Patel, F., & Koushik, M. (2017). Countering violent extremism (pp. 1-80). New York, NY: Brennan Center for Justice at New York University School of Law.
- Pezard, S., & Shurkin, M. (2015). Achieving Peace in Northern Mali: Past Agreements, Local Conflicts, and the Prospects for a Durable Settlement. Rand Corporation.
- Pickering, S., Wright-Neville, D., McCulloch, J., & Lentini, P. (2007). Counter-Terrorism Policing and Culturally Diverse Communities. Victoria: Monash University and Victoria Police.
- Powers, E. (2017). The Military's Role in Countering Violent Extremism: Repurposing Stability Operations. US Institute of Peace.

- Promediation (2022). Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (Ed): The Jihadist Threat in Northern Ghana and Togo: Stocktaking and Prospects for Containing the Expansion.
- Renard, T. (2012). EU Counterterrorism Policies and Institutions after the Lisbon Treaty. Center on Global Counterterrorism Cooperation. Policy Brief.
- Sanders, D. P. (2010). An Analysis of Africa Command's Organizational Structure. Strategy Research Paper. US Army War College.
- Sharland, L., Grice, T., & Zeiger, S. (2017). Special Report: Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism in Africa: The role of the mining sector. Australian Strategic Policy Institute.
- Spet, S. (2015). Operation Serval: Analyzing the French Strategy against Jihadists in Mali. ASPJ Africa & Francophonie - 3rd Quarter 2015.
- Stewart, D. J. (2013). What is next for Mali? The Roots of Conflict and Challenges to Stability. Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College.
- The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2016). North-East Nigeria: Recovery and Peace Building Assessment, Volume III. State Reports.

UNHCR. (2018). Education under Attack 2018 – Mali.

#### **E. Unpublished Works**

- Barzilai, G. (2000). Center vs. Periphery: Rules for Preventing Terrorism as Politics. Criminal Cases (Pelilim) 8.
- Bøås, M. (2015). Crime, Coping, and Resistance in the Mali-Sahel Periphery, African Security, 8:4, 299-319.
- Burnett, N. B. (2007). Critical Realism: The required philosophical compass for inclusion. In Proceedings of Australian Association of Research in Education: Research impacts: Proving or improving? Western Australia: Fremantle. Retrieved from <http://eprints.qut.edu.au>
- Heydemann, S. (2014). Countering Violent Extremism as a Field Practice. USIP Insight 1
- Hoffman, B. (2019). "Extremism in 2019: New Approaches to Facing the Threat". In Bruce Hoffman (ed). 2019 Challenges in Counter-Extremism. Tony Blair Institute for Global change. Retrieved from <https://institute.global/policy/extremism-2019-new-approaches-threat>
- Kaldor, M., & de Oliveira, M. D. (2005). Civil Society. Paper presented at the Towards a Democratic Response: The Club de Madrid Series on Democracy and Terrorism, Madrid.

- Mamman, E. B. (2020). Public Policy Response to Violence: Case Study of Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria. Walden University Dissertations.
- Mamud, Y. A. (2022) Terrorism and Counterterrorism in Nigeria: Towards a Strategic Soft Power Approach. Retrieved from: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=4413076>.
- Tellis, W. (1997). Introduction to Case Study. The Qualitative Report 3(2). Retrieve from <http://www.nova.edu/ssss/OR/QR3-2/tellis1.html>
- Mamman, E. B. (2020). Public Policy Response to Violence: Case Study of Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria. Walden University Dissertations. Retrieved from: <https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=10671&context=dissertations>
- Mamud, Y. A. (2022) Terrorism and Counterterrorism in Nigeria: Towards a Strategic Soft Power Approach. Retrieved from: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=4413076>
- UN General Assembly (2016). “Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism: Report of the Secretary –General”. A/70/674
- UNDP (2016). Preventing Violent Extremism through Promoting Inclusive Development, Tolerance and Respect for Diversity. New York: UNDP.
- UNDP. (2017). Journey to Extremism in Africa: Drivers, Incentives and the Tipping Point for Recruitment. New York: UNDP
- UNESCO. (2015). Destruction of cultural heritage in Iraq. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. Retrieved from: <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000244834>
- UNHCR. (2020). Syria emergency. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Retrieved from: <https://www.unhcr.org/emergencies/syria-emergency>
- USAID (2011). The Development Response to Violent Extremism and Insurgency: Putting Principles into Practice. Retrieve from [http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf\\_docs/pdacs400.pdf](http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/pdacs400.pdf)
- USAID. (2009). Guide to the Drivers of Violent Extremism. Retrieved from [http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf\\_docs](http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs)
- Vaillancourt, S., & Boyd, W. (2007). Protect! People, Economies and Infrastructure: East-West Institute.
- Van der Heide, L., & Coleman, J. (2020). The Last Frontier: Prisons and Violent Extremism in Mali. International Center for Counter-Terrorism.

## **F. Internet Sources**

- Aregbesola, I. (2023). Nigerian Military records 27.9% Female participation in peace operations-CDS.
- Army Recognition. (2022). Nigerian Defense budget 2022 increased for additional equipment and capabilities.
- Asante, S. (2023). UN Missions: Ghana exceeds Female Military personnel Deployment Target. Ghana News Agency.
- Atran, S. (2004). Mishandling Suicide Terrorism. *The Washington Quarterly*, 27(30), 67-90.
- Akwagyira, A. (2013). Islamist Radicalization: Why does it lure Some Africans? BBC online 30 May.
- Augé, B. (2015). Nigeria: From Goodluck Jonathan to Muhammadu Buhari. The French Institute of International Relations.
- Baron, J. (2013). Deployment to Mali. Volume 557: Debated on Tuesday 29 January 2013. UK Parliament Hansard.
- Bricmont, J. (2011). Lybia in face of humanitarian imperialism. An interview with Jean Bricmont. Retrieved from <http://www.investigaction.net/en/Libya>
- Byman, D. (2015). Comparing Al Qaeda and ISIS: Different goals, different Targets. Retrieved from: <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/comparing-al-qaeda-and-isis-different-goals-different-targets/>. Accessed 12/11/23.
- de Figueiredo, R. J. P., & Weingast, B. R. (2001). Vicious Cycles: Endogenous Political Extremism and Political Violence. Working Papers. Retrieved from: <http://igs.berkeley.edu/publications/working-papers>
- Dibie, I.M. (2014). ICC to Probe Nigeria Army. Boko Haram over Human Rights Abuses. Africa News. Retrieved from <http://www.africanews.com/2016/04/14/icc>
- Ghana Armed Forces (2024). GAF Launches Gender Policy.
- Ghana Peace Journal. (2022). Ghana's Military Efforts in Curbing Terrorism.
- Ghana Peace Journal (2023). GAF Specially Celebrates Women on International Women's Day.
- Global Terrorism Index (GTI) (2022). Key Findings in 6 Charts. Retrieved from <https://www.visionofhumanity.org/global-terrorism-index-2022-key-findings-in-6-charts/>

- Ghimire, S. (2019, April 27). Regional Security Complex Theory. The Peace Post. Retrieved from: <http://safalghimire.blogspot.com/2019/04/regional-security-complex-theory.html>
- Global Terrorism Index (GTI) (2023). Retrieved from <https://www.visionofhumanity.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/GTI-2023>
- Hakimi, M.J. (2020) Applying Soft Power in the Afghan War. The Pacific Council on International Policy.
- Hilton, A. (2003). Should qualitative and quantitative studies be triangulated? International society of Nurses. Retrieved from <http://www.isncc.org/news/triangle.htm>
- Huffington, P. (2017). “Al-Shabaab: Should the Somali President Open Talks with the Terror Group”. Retrieved from <http://www.huffingtonpost.co.za/2017/03/09/al-shabaab-should-the->
- IATA. (2002). The Impact of 9/11 and other terrible Global events on International Civil Aviation. International Air Transport Association. Retrieved from: <https://www.iata.org/contentassets/49a331cdfb85447cac12894e01aabb5c/fact-sheet-iata-9-11.pdf>
- Jesse, G. (2019). The French Intervention in the 2012 Malian Conflict: Neocolonialism Disguised as Counterterrorism. Seattle University Undergraduate Research Journal: Vol. 3, Article 15.
- Klingler, G. (2022). Female Engagement Teams: More than Soldiers. U.S Global Leadership Coalition.
- Kirk, A. (2019, March 15). Christchurch mosque shootings: The lives lost and the world they revealed. The New Zealand Herald.
- Martin, G. (2023). Mali commissions military aircraft acquired from Russia. Defence Web.
- Mroz, J. (2009). Lone Wolf Attacks and the difference between Violent Extremism and Terrorism. Retrieved from <http://www.ewi.info/lone-wolf-attacks-and-difference-between-violent-extremism-and-terrorism>
- Nane, M. & Lau, B. (2018). Surveys and Countering Violent Extremism: A Practitioner’s Guide. The Asia Foundation. Retrieved from <https://www.thinkasia.org/bitstream/handle/11540/7979/Surveys-and>
- Nasser-Eddine, M., Garnham, B., Agostino, K., & Caluya, G. (2011). Countering violent extremism (CVE) literature review. DSTO-TR-2522. Retrieved from <http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc>

- Ndiaye, N. F. (2020). Counterterrorism: The G5 Response Efforts to Combat Terrorism in the Sahel region.
- Orosz, A. (2022). Violent Extremism in the Sahel is strengthening its grip in West Africa. Retrieved from <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/africaatlse/2022/02>.
- Pew Research Center. (2018). European attitudes towards refugees. Retrieved from: <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2019/03/19>.
- Powel, N. (2022). Why France Failed in Mali. Retrieved from <https://warontherocks.com/2022/02/why-france-failed>.
- Romaniuk, P. (2015). Does CVE Work? Lessons Learned from the Global Effort to Countering Violent Extremism. Global Center on Cooperative Security. Retrieved from <https://www.globalcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Does-CVE-Work>.
- Sharif, T., & Richards, J. (2016). Towards a Continental Strategy for Countering Violent Extremism in Africa. Retrieve from <http://peaceoperationsreview.org/thematic-essays/towards-a-continental-strategy-for-countering-violent-extremism-in-africa>.
- Sidra, A. (2016). Regional Security Complex Theory in South Asian Context. Retrieved from: <https://tasianwatch.wordpress.com/2016/05/02/regional-security-complex-theory-in-south-asian-context/>.
- Sharif, T., & Richards, J. (2016). Towards a Continental Strategy for Countering Violent Extremism in Africa. Retrieve from <http://peaceoperationsreview.org/thematic-essays/towards-a-continental-strategy-for-countering-violent-extremism-in-africa>.
- Sharland, L., Grice, T., & Zeiger, S. (2017). Special Report: Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism in Africa: The role of the mining sector. Australian Strategic Policy Institute, Retrieved from [www.aspistrategist.org.au](http://www.aspistrategist.org.au)
- Sidra, A. (2016). Regional Security Complex Theory in South Asian Context. Retrieved from: <https://tasianwatch.wordpress.com/2016/05/02/regional-security-complex-theory-in-south-asian-context/>
- Tukur, S. (2019). Buhari directs NEDC to take over activities of PINE, PCNI, other North-east initiatives. Retrieved from: <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/329123-buhari-directs-nedc-to-take-over-activities-of-pine-pcni-other-north-east-initiatives>.
- United Nations (2023). Meetings and Press Releases. Ghanaian Peacekeeper Wins 2022 Military Gender Advocate of Year Award. Retrieved from: <https://press.un.org/en/2023/pko816.doc.htm>

Yeboah, R. M. (2022). Government to construct 15 Forward Operating Bases in northern frontiers – Vice President Bawumia. Retrieved from: <https://ghanatoday.gov.gh/news/govt-to-construct-15-forward-operating-bases-in-northern-frontiers-vice-president-bawumia/>

#### **G. Online News**

Ampeah-Wood, K (2022, 9 May). “ECOWAS Military Chief’s Meeting in Ghana Ends”. Retrieved from <https://www.ghanapeacejournal.com/ecowas-military-chiefs-meeting-in-ghana>.

Babatunde, O. (2023). Federal Government’s Peace Agency should drive the Non-kinetic Strategy. Retrieved from: <https://www.thecable.ng/fgs-peace-agency-should-drive-the-non-kinetic-strategy>.

Bukarti, B. (2019). Making Peace With Enemies: Nigeria’s Reintegration of Boko Haram Fighters. War on the Rock, Available: <https://warontherocks.com/2019/03/making-peace-with-enemies-nigerias-reintegration-of-boko-haram-fighters>

Centre for Preventive Action (2023). Violent Extremism in the Sahel. Retrieved from: <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/violent-extremism-sahel>.

Centre for Preventive Action (2023). Violent Extremism in the Sahel. Retrieved from: <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/violent-extremism-sahel>.

Gberie, L. (2016). Terrorism overshadows internal conflicts. Africa Renewal. Retrieved from: <https://www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine/april-2016/terrorism-overshadows-internal-conflicts>.

GNA. (2022, May 8). “Africa has suffered 5306 terror related attacks in three years-Nitiwul. Retrieved from <https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchives/West-Africa-has-suffered-5306-terror-related-attacks>

GNA, (2022, May 15). Ghana warned to be vigilant as 8 soldiers die in terror attack in Togo. Retrieved from <http://www.ghanawebb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchives/Ghana-warned-to-be-vigilant-as-8-soldiers-die-in-attacks-in-Togo>

GNA. (2022, May 8). “Africa has suffered 5306 terror related attacks in three years-Nitiwul. Retrieved from <https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchives/West-Africa-has-suffered-5306-terror-related-attacks>

GNA, (2022, May 15). Ghana warned to be vigilant as 8 soldiers die in terror attack in Togo. Retrieved from <http://www.ghanawebb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchives/Ghana-warned-to-be-vigilant-as-8-soldiers-die-in-attacks-in-Togo>

Kirk, A. (2019, March 15). Christchurch mosque shootings: The lives lost and the world they revealed. The New Zealand Herald.

Kwarkye, S., Abatan, J.E. & Matongbada, M. (2019). Can the Accra Initiative prevent terrorism in West Africa coastal states? Institute for Security Studies Today.

Robertson, N. (2015). “Nigeria Military Disorganized, Under-Equipped in Battle against Boko Haram” CNN, 15 January. Retrieved from <https://edition.cnn.com/2015/01/15/africa/nigeria-military-families-boko-haram/>.

Robertson, N. (2015) “Nigeria Military Disorganized, Under-Equipped in Battle Against Boko Haram” CNN, 15 January Retrieved from <https://edition.cnn.com/2015/01/15/africa/nigeria-military-families-boko-haram/>



**APPENDIX I**

**Questionnaire Guide**

**THE NATURE AND EVOLUTION OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM AND CVE IN WEST AFRICA**

1. How would you define violent extremism in the context of West Africa?.....

.....

2. How would you describe the current state and prevalence of violent extremism in West Africa?.....

.....

3. In your opinion, what are the effects of violent extremism in West Africa?.....

.....

4. What do you think are the major factors contributing to the rise of violent extremism in the region?.....

.....

5. What role has the military played in countering violent extremism in West Africa?.....

.....

6. How has the military's role in countering violent extremism evolved over time in response to the changing nature of violent extremism in West

Africa?.....  
.....

**KNOWLEDGE ON THE EMPLOYMENT AND CHALLENGES IN APPLYING SMART MILITARY STRATEGY IN COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN WEST AFRICA**

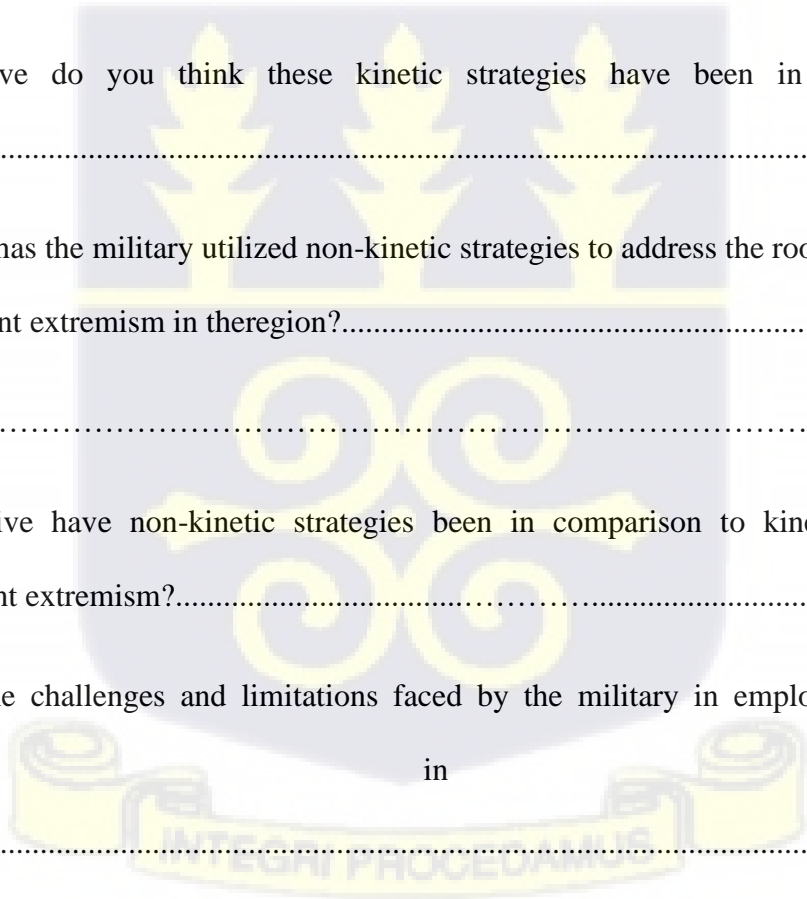
7. Provide examples of how the military has employed kinetic strategies to combat violent extremism in West Africa.....

8. How effective do you think these kinetic strategies have been in achieving their objectives?.....

9. In what ways has the military utilized non-kinetic strategies to address the root causes and enablers of violent extremism in theregion?.....

10. How effective have non-kinetic strategies been in comparison to kinetic strategies in addressing violent extremism?.....

11. What are the challenges and limitations faced by the military in employing non-kinetic strategies in West Africa?.....



12. How does the military integrate kinetic and non-kinetic strategies to counter violent extremism in West Africa? Provide examples

.....

13. How effective have the combination of both strategies been in combatting violent extremism?.....

14. What strategies or tactics have proven most effective for the military in dealing with violent extremism?.....

15. How do you think the balance between kinetic and non-kinetic strategies can be optimized to effectively counter violent extremism in West Africa?

.....

.....

**TRANSFORMING THE MILITARY TO BE EFFECTIVE IN THE APPLICATION OF SMART MILITARY STRATEGY IN COMBATING VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN WEST AFRICA**

16. What are the smart strategies employed by the military to combat violent extremism in West Africa?.....

17. What are the key components of the current smart strategies employed by the military to combat violent extremism in West Africa?

.....

.....

18. How can these smart strategies be improved to better address the root causes and drivers of violent extremism in the region?

.....

19. What are the challenges faced by the military in implementing smart strategies to combat violent extremism, and how can these challenges be addressed?.....

.....

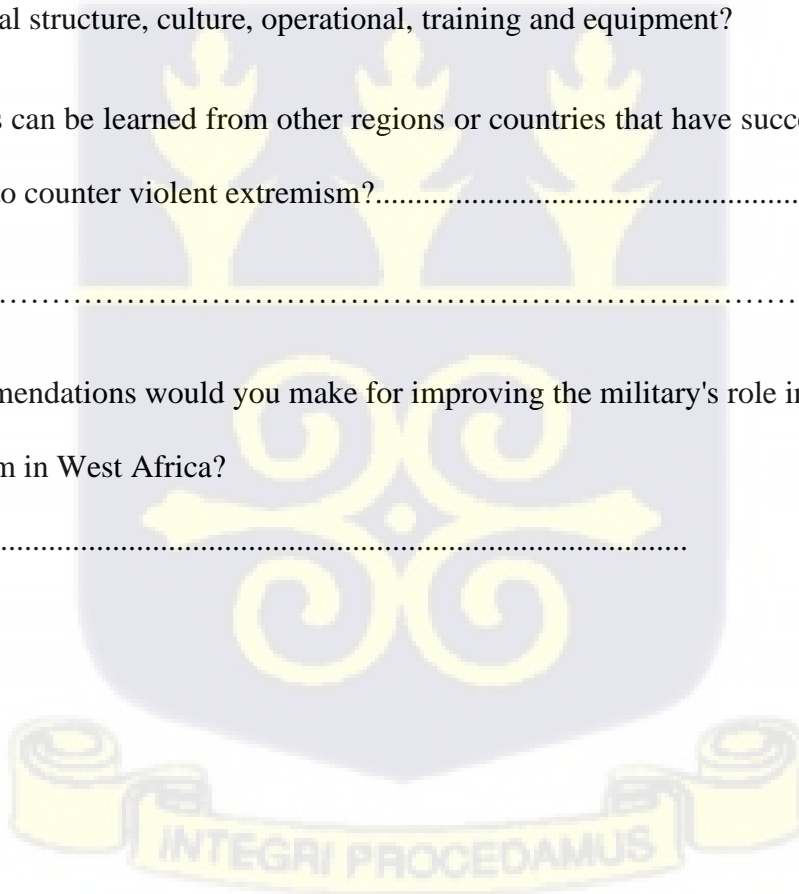
20. How compatible is non-kinetic and kinetic capabilities in terms of the military command and organizational structure, culture, operational, training and equipment?

21. What lessons can be learned from other regions or countries that have successfully employed smart strategies to counter violent extremism?.....

.....

22. What recommendations would you make for improving the military's role in countering violent extremism in West Africa?

.....



**APPENDIX II**

UNIVERSITY OF GHANA



Official Use only  
Protocol number

**Ethics Committee for Humanities (ECH)**

**HOW TO USE THIS CONSENT FORM:**

This document is the standard ECH -approved template to assist you with designing a written informed consent form. You may adapt the template as you see fit, but remember that the document must address the participant directly, have some information about each heading and include the UG logo at the top.

**Please write in SIMPLE, NON-TECHNICAL language.**

The text written in [BLUE] is for **guidance only** and should be removed before finalising the document. Answers provided under each heading should be in phrases and not bulleted. Also, **this information box should be deleted before the document is finalised.**

**PROTOCOL CONSENT FORM**

**Section A- BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Title of Study:	COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM IN WEST AFRICA: THE SMART ROLE OF THE MILITARY
Principal Investigator:	FELIX ADOM ASANTE
Certified Protocol Number	ECH 180/22-23

**Section B- CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH**

**General Information about Research**

This research is to examine the role of the military in countering violent extremism in West Africa. It seeks to determine the causes of radicalism and violent extremism and to investigate the successes and challenges of the military strategies in countering the phenomena in West Africa.

The research will adopt a qualitative approach in the collection of data and there will be flexibility in the durations of the interview process. Respondents will determine their availability, time and place for the interviews.

The main method for collecting primary data will be through interviews. In-depth interviews will be conducted through semi-structured and unstructured form. Face to Face and on-line video interview procedures that will allow the researcher direct contact with the respondents. Permission will be sought from the respondents before they are recording the interview.

### **Benefits/Risks of the study**

Any research on countering violent extremism is regarded as particularly sensitive as such the respondents will be informed of the risk in taking part of the research and will not be coerced. The risk of being attacked/abused as a result of one expressing his/her views on such sensitive subject is a possibility as such the principle of anonymity will be adhered to. Bearing in mind the risk of being attacked the scheduling of private interview locations of the participants choice will be the rule and their security concerns will be a priority. The respondents will be reassured that as a consequence of their participation they would not encounter any physical or psychological harm. There are also no anticipated hazards to respondents. Society will benefit from this research in understanding the causes of violent extremism and radicalism in West Africa.

### **Confidentiality**

During the research respondents will be educated on the purpose of the study and will be allowed to freely express their consent. All respondents will be guaranteed maximum confidentiality and anonymity. Interviews records and transcripts will be held strictly as confidential documents. All documents used for the study will be sought through legitimate means.

The research is an academic project as such only the supervisors and lecturers will have access to the research records and the respondents will be briefed as such before the interview.

### **Compensation**

There will be no compensation for the respondents.

### **Withdrawal from Study**

Respondents are free to withdraw from the interview at any instance. Respondents will not be coerced to participant in the research. There will be no sanctions or any adverse effect of any respondent who decline to take part in the research either during the interviews or before we start the interview.

### **Contact for Additional Information**

Dr. Kennedy E. Ahorsu  
Senior Lecturer LECIAD  
University of Ghana, Legon  
+233 544 930560  
Prof. Emmanuel Debrah  
Director LECIAD  
University of Ghana  
+233 20 813 2486

- If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant in this study you may contact the Administrator of the Ethics Committee for Humanities, ISSER, University of Ghana at [ech@ug.edu.gh](mailto:ech@ug.edu.gh) or 00233- 303-933-866.

Section C- PARTICIPANT AGREEMENT

**"I have read or have had someone read all of the above, asked questions, received answers regarding participation in this study, and am willing to give consent for me, my child/ward to participate in this study. I will not have waived any of my rights by signing this consent form. Upon signing this consent form, I will receive a copy for my personal records."**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature or mark of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

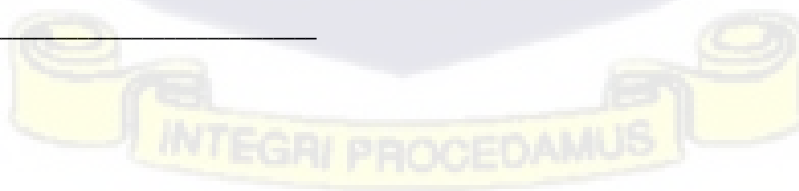
**If participant cannot read and or understand the form themselves, a witness must sign here:**

I was present while the benefits, risks and procedures were read to the volunteer. All questions were answered and the volunteer has agreed to take part in the research.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of witness

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of witness / Mark

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



I certify that the nature and purpose, the potential benefits, and possible risks associated with participating in this research have been explained to the above individual.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Person who Obtained Consent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Person Who Obtained Consent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



**APPENDIX III**

My Ref. No. : CM/DA/4  
Your Ref. No. : \_\_\_\_\_



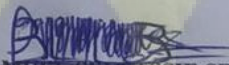
EMBASSY OF THE REPUBLIC OF GHANA  
6, Tanta Street, Agouza  
Cairo, Egypt.

4<sup>th</sup> September, 2023

**TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:**  
**AIR COMMODORE FELIX ADOM ASANTE**

I have the honour to formally introduce to the esteemed Embassy, Air Commodore Felix Adom Asante, Defence Attaché of the Embassy of the Republic of Ghana, who is currently pursuing a PhD programme in International Affairs at the University of Ghana.

2. The Candidate is writing on the topic - **Countering Violent Extremism: The role of the Military**, and has intended to undertake an in-person interview with the relevant offices on the above-mentioned subject. In this regard, it would be extremely appreciated if you may kindly extend to him any assistance he may require.
3. Counting on your usual cooperation.

  
SAMUEL SELLASSIE SEVOR  
HEAD OF CHANCERY



**INTEGRI PROCEDAMUS**

Tel.: (+202) 33032290/93  
(+202) 33460125  
(+202) 33471441

Fax.: (+202) 33032292

E.mail: [cairo@mfa.gov.gh](mailto:cairo@mfa.gov.gh)  
[ghmfa23@gmail.com](mailto:ghmfa23@gmail.com)

APPENDIX IV

SAMPLE WRITTEN RESPONSE FROM PARTICIPANT

**COUNTERING VIOLENT EXTREMISM (CVE) IN WEST AFRICA**  
**THE “SMART ROLE” OF THE MILITARY**

- Q1. **What are the causes (push/pull factors) of contemporary extremism in your country? What could be the similarities and differences with other geographical areas?**
- A1. a. **Push Factors.** Youth bulge, Unemployment, Poverty, Labour Upheavals, Misinformation and Disinformation resulting in Fake News and Hate Speech, Governance Deficit, Ecological Hazards/Environmental Degradation.
- b. **Pull Factors.** Espionage, Distorted Religious/Ideological interpretations to achieve political objectives. Such groups tap into real or perceived political, economic and socio-cultural grievances to recruit followers. Porous Borders and their security challenges including Maritime Security, Piracy and Criminal Networks.
- c. **Similarities/Differences.** The factors identified above reinforce each other and are not to be held in watertight compartments. They converge in a reinforcing manner to create complex and volatile situations conducive to extremism.
- Q2. **What are the policies, program or strategy towards CVE in your country (Policy Paper).**
- A2. Ghana’s main policy document is the “**National Security Strategy- A Secure and Prosperous Ghana with Regional, Continental and Global Reach and Influence**”. The policy aims at a commitment to full cooperation and coordination among local, national, regional and global efforts to counter VEOs. At the strategic level, it adopts a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach embracing all relevant stakeholders. At the operational level it is structured to deepen intelligence gathering and

sharing, increased situational awareness (“See Something, Say Something”), interoperability among the security agencies to enable them operate seamlessly within a unified command and control structure.

**Q3. What Strategies have been adopted by the military in countering violent extremism (Kinetic and non-Kinetic strategies)**

A3. a. **Kinetic Methods.** Deployment of troops and extensive patrols by air, land and sea, Establishing forward operating bases to monitor cross border movement of personnel, weapons and ammunition. Establishing emergency response mechanisms to respond to threats, Use of force where applicable.

b. **Non-Kinetic Methods.** Early Warning, Intelligence Sharing, Psychological Operations, Electronic Warfare, Information Warfare.

**Q4. What are the specific initiatives or tactics that have been employed by your Military**

A4. See A3 above

**Q5. What do you understand by “Smart” military approach (Kinetic and non-Kinetic Military).**

A5. By definition, a kinetic approach involves the application of physical force, operational manoeuvres, use of explosives and munitions of all nature. A non-kinetic approach is however without direct military action.

**Q6. What are the non-kinetic military capabilities in countering violent extremism.**

A6. The principal objective of non-kinetic operations is to degrade the decision-making capabilities of an adversary and thereby render him ineffective. Among the spectrum of non-kinetic military capabilities that an armed force must aim at are: Virtual

Warfare, Cyber Warfare, Hybrid Warfare, Electronic Warfare, etc. They present asymmetric opportunities for victory without physical casualties.

**Q7. What are the successes of the military strategies in countering violent extremism in your country?**

A7. OPERATION KOUDANGOU, OPERATION CONQUERED FIST, OPERATION CALM LIFE, OPERATION MOTHERLAND, EXERCISE OBANGAME EXPRESS, EXERCISE GRAND AFRICAN NEMO, EXERCISE FLINTLOCK, ETC.

**Q8. What are the challenges of the military strategies in countering violent extremism in your country.**

A8. The following are some the challenges confronting military strategies: Lack of political will to take bold decisions. Lack of coherence at the national and regional levels. Conflict of interests and proliferation of strategies; Inadequate funding and resources. Lack of capacity and training. Inter-agency rivalry/Lack of cooperation. Donor fatigue.

**Q9. Has there been any change in military strategy in CVE since 2016.**

A9. Construction of FOBs along the northern borders and the formation of Army Special Operations Brigade (ASOB).

**Q10. Has there been a change in the doctrine, operations and training of the military in countering violent extremism in your country.**

A10. No.

**Q11. How are the non-Kinetic military resources compatible with the Kinetic military resources in CVE in your country.**

- A11. As stated in the National Security Strategy, its strategic end state is “to outline the context within which Ghana should mobilise and coordinate the efforts of all sectors of the Ghanaian society to respond to the security threats, risks and challenges confronting the country in order to ensure national stability and peaceful socio-economic development”. Accordingly there is a coordinated task matrix for all stakeholders covering both kinetic and non-kinetic operations for the achievement of the common objective of the preservation of the national sovereignty of the country.
- Q12. **What are the challenges in using conventional military doctrine in countering violent extremism.**
- A12. Addressing terrorism should not be limited only to the military or security dimension but should also include economic, social, cultural, educational and developmental measures. There should therefore be an intellectual and ideological pillar that generates a counter narrative. This coupled with conventional military efforts will lead to victory.
- Q13. **What are your recommendations on how the military can improve their CVE strategies in West Africa?**
- A13. Adequate resource allocation, Focused Logistics, Unified Strategy, Training/Simulation Exercises, Precision Engagements, Situational Awareness, Role of Civil Society Organisations. In sum, a Whole of Government approach.

