

**UNDERSTANDING THE SOCIOECONOMIC FACTORS  
CONTRIBUTING TO RADICALIZATION INTO VIOLENT EXTREMIST  
GROUPS IN NORTH EAST NIGERIA**

**Enakemu, Frank Adogbeji**

Ph.D. Student Centre for Peace and Security Studies  
University of Port Harcourt Choba. Rivers State

**&**

**Martin I. Ifeanacho PhD**

Director Centre for peace and Security Studies  
University of Port Harcourt Choba. Rivers State  
Email: emperorfrank42@gmail.com  
Phone: 07010626687

## **Abstract**

This study investigates the socioeconomic factors contributing to radicalization into violent extremist groups in North East Nigeria, focusing on organizations such as Boko Haram and Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP). Through a comprehensive review of existing literature, empirical findings, and case studies, the study identifies key drivers such as economic disparities, social marginalization, and perceptions of injustice that fuel the recruitment and retention of individuals into these groups. The study emphasizes the importance of addressing these underlying drivers through targeted socioeconomic development programmes, inclusive governance structures, and community resilience-building initiatives. The findings underscore the need for holistic approaches that integrate economic, social, and governance dimensions in countering violent extremism efforts. By implementing evidence-based interventions and fostering collaboration among stakeholders, policymakers and practitioners can work towards preventing radicalization and promoting sustainable peace and stability in the region.

**Keywords:** Radicalization, Violent extremism, socioeconomic factors, North East Nigeria, Boko Haram, ISWAP.

## **Introduction**

The rise of violent extremist groups in North East Nigeria, notably Boko Haram and the Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP), has posed significant security challenges not only to the region but also to international efforts to combat terrorism (Adebayo, 2019). These groups have carried out numerous attacks targeting civilians, government institutions, and security forces, resulting in widespread casualties and displacement of populations (Ibrahim, 2018). Understanding the complex factors contributing to the radicalization of individuals into these violent extremist groups is essential for developing effective strategies to prevent and counter their influence.

The phenomenon of radicalization into violent extremism is multifaceted, influenced by a combination of ideological, social, economic, and political factors (Hassan, 2020). In the case of North East Nigeria, where Boko Haram and ISWAP have established a strong presence, socioeconomic disparities and grievances play a significant role in driving recruitment and mobilization into these groups (Ojebode & Odufowokan, 2017). The region has long been marginalized in terms of economic development, with high levels of poverty, unemployment, and lack of access to basic services such as education and healthcare (Olaniyan & Adesina, 2017).

Poverty and economic deprivation are often cited as root causes of radicalization, as individuals facing economic hardship may be more susceptible to extremist narratives promising a sense of belonging, purpose, and financial support (Aworawo, 2018). In North East Nigeria, where economic opportunities are limited, Boko Haram and ISWAP exploit these vulnerabilities by providing financial incentives, including salaries and looted resources, to recruit new members (Aghedo & Osumah, 2017). Moreover, the collapse of traditional livelihoods due to conflict and displacement further exacerbates economic desperation, making individuals more susceptible to recruitment by violent extremist groups (Yahaya & Idris, 2019).

Social marginalization and perceived injustice also play a significant role in driving radicalization in North East Nigeria (Akinola, 2018). Many communities in the region feel marginalized and neglected by the central government, exacerbating feelings of alienation and resentment (Yakubu, 2020). Grievances related to corruption, human rights abuses, and lack of political representation fuel a sense of injustice among the population, making them more receptive to extremist

ideologies that promise to address these grievances through violence (Omojuwa, 2016).

Islam originated in the early 7th century in Mecca, in present-day Saudi Arabia, with the Prophet Muhammad receiving revelations from Allah, which were later compiled into the Quran. The core teachings of Islam emphasize monotheism, social justice, and moral conduct, promoting a comprehensive way of life for its adherents. Islam rapidly expanded beyond the Arabian Peninsula through trade, diplomacy, and military conquest, establishing a vast and diverse civilization that made significant contributions to science, culture, and governance. However, extremist groups like Boko Haram and ISIS West Africa Province (ISWAP) exploit Islam to further their radicalization agenda in Northeast Nigeria.

These groups manipulate religious texts and teachings. Boko Haram's name translates to "Western education is forbidden," reflecting their condemnation of secular education and modern society (Mamdani, 2017). They cherry-pick verses from the Quran that promote violence against non-believers, ignoring the Quran's overall themes of peace and compassion. ISWAP employs similar tactics, often using charismatic leaders who pose as religious scholars to manipulate religious devotion and indoctrinate followers with extremist views (United States Institute of Peace, 2017).

Origin and pathways of Boko Haram and the Islamic State of West African Province (ISWAP). Boko Haram, officially known as Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad, was founded in 2002 by Mohammed Yusuf in Maiduguri, Nigeria. Initially, the group focused on opposing Western education and promoting a strict interpretation of Islam. However, after Yusuf's death in 2009 during a crackdown by Nigerian security forces, the group became increasingly radical and violent under the leadership of Abubakar Shekau. Boko Haram's insurgency has led to widespread violence, including bombings, kidnappings, and assaults on both civilian and military targets. In 2016, internal disagreements led to a split, with a faction aligning itself with the Islamic State, forming ISWAP. This group, operating primarily around the Lake Chad Basin, has focused more on winning local support and targeting military installations. Both groups continue to pose significant security threats in the region.

In light of these challenges, there is an urgent need for research that systematically examines the socioeconomic factors contributing to radicalization in North East Nigeria. By gaining a deeper understanding of the root causes of extremism, policymakers, practitioners, and other stakeholders can develop more targeted and

effective interventions to prevent radicalization and promote peace and stability in the region.

## **Methodology**

### **Research Approach**

This study employs a qualitative research approach to explore the socioeconomic factors contributing to radicalization into violent extremist groups in North East Nigeria. Qualitative methods allow for an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences, perceptions, and narratives of individuals affected by radicalization, thereby complementing the quantitative analysis of secondary data.

### **Data Collection**

The primary source of data for this study is secondary sources, including academic literature, reports from governmental and non-governmental organizations, media sources, and other relevant documents. Secondary data analysis enables the examination of existing knowledge and insights into the socioeconomic drivers of radicalization in North East Nigeria.

### **Sampling Strategy**

A purposive sampling strategy is employed to select relevant secondary sources for analysis. Selection criteria include the publication date, relevance to the research topic, geographical focus on North East Nigeria, and credibility of the sources. A comprehensive search of academic databases (e.g., PubMed, JSTOR, Google Scholar) and organizational websites is conducted to identify relevant literature and reports.

### **Data Analysis**

Thematic analysis is utilized to identify recurrent themes, patterns, and relationships within the selected secondary data. Data coding is conducted to systematically categorize information related to socioeconomic factors contributing to radicalization, such as economic disparities, poverty, unemployment, education, social marginalization, grievances, and perceptions of injustice.

### **Data Triangulation**

To enhance the validity and reliability of the findings, data triangulation is employed by comparing and contrasting information from multiple secondary sources. This methodological approach allows for the verification of emerging

themes and insights across different types of data, thereby reducing the risk of bias and enhancing the credibility of the study.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Ethical principles, including respect for intellectual property rights, confidentiality, and the responsible use of data, are upheld throughout the research process. Proper citation and acknowledgment of the original sources are ensured to maintain academic integrity and avoid plagiarism.

This methodology section outlines the research approach, data collection methods, sampling strategy, data analysis techniques, and ethical considerations involved in conducting a qualitative study using secondary data analysis. It emphasizes transparency, rigor, and ethical integrity in the research process.

### **Literature Review**

Radicalization into violent extremist groups in regions such as North East Nigeria is a complex phenomenon influenced by a multitude of factors, including socioeconomic conditions, political grievances, and ideological indoctrination. This literature review aims to synthesize existing research on the socioeconomic drivers of radicalization in the context of North East Nigeria, shedding light on the underlying dynamics that contribute to the recruitment and mobilization of individuals into groups like Boko Haram and the Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP).

One prominent theme in the literature is the role of socioeconomic marginalization and deprivation as significant contributors to radicalization (Omeje, 2016). Studies have consistently found that poverty, unemployment, and lack of economic opportunities create fertile ground for recruitment by violent extremist groups (Omotola, 2013). In North East Nigeria, where poverty rates are high and economic development is limited, disaffected youth often perceive joining extremist organizations as a means of economic empowerment and social mobility (Omotola, 2018). Additionally, economic disparities exacerbate feelings of marginalization and injustice, fueling grievances that extremist recruiters exploit to garner support (Mkanda, 2020).

Education, or the lack thereof, also plays a crucial role in the radicalization process. Limited access to quality education and extremist infiltration of educational institutions have been identified as contributing factors to radicalization (Ndlovu-Gatsheni & Moyo, 2013). In North East Nigeria, the disruption of schooling due to

conflict and the deliberate targeting of schools by extremist groups have deprived many young people of educational opportunities, leaving them vulnerable to recruitment (Obasi, 2019). Moreover, extremist organizations often use educational institutions to propagate their ideologies, indoctrinating students with extremist beliefs from a young age (Omeje, 2017).

Furthermore, social exclusion and perceived discrimination based on factors such as ethnicity, religion, or political affiliation contribute to feelings of alienation and resentment, driving individuals towards radicalization (Adebowale, 2015). In North East Nigeria, where ethno-religious tensions and sectarian violence are prevalent, identity-based grievances are exploited by extremist groups to mobilize support and foster a sense of belonging among marginalized communities (Adamu, 2018). This sense of exclusion is exacerbated by government policies perceived as discriminatory or oppressive, further alienating vulnerable populations and fueling radicalization (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2016).

In addition to socioeconomic factors, the literature highlights the role of political grievances and state repression in driving radicalization in North East Nigeria (Agbibo, 2015). Years of political instability, corruption, and ineffective governance have eroded trust in state institutions and created a fertile ground for extremist ideologies to take root (Agbibo, 2017). The failure of the Nigerian government to address underlying socio-political grievances and provide adequate governance and security has contributed to the appeal of extremist groups promising to address these grievances through violence (Obi, 2014).

It is important to note that while socioeconomic factors play a significant role in radicalization, they interact with and are often reinforced by ideological and religious narratives propagated by extremist groups (Bartels, 2018). The appeal of extremist ideologies lies in their ability to provide a sense of purpose, identity, and belonging to marginalized individuals who feel disconnected from mainstream society (Agbibo & Akinola, 2016). Thus, addressing the socioeconomic drivers of radicalization requires a multifaceted approach that combines economic development initiatives with efforts to counter extremist narratives and promote social inclusion and cohesion (Mkanda, 2021).

The literature reviewed underscores the importance of understanding the socioeconomic factors contributing to radicalization in North East Nigeria. Poverty, lack of education, social exclusion, and political grievances all play significant roles in driving individuals towards violent extremism. Addressing these underlying drivers requires holistic interventions that address not only the symptoms but also

the root causes of radicalization, including structural inequalities, governance deficits, and ideological indoctrination.

### **Socioeconomic Factors Contributing to Radicalization**

<b>Socioeconomic Factor</b>	<b>Impact on Radicalization</b>	<b>Citation</b>
Economic Deprivation	Perception of extremism as solution to economic grievances	(Smith, 2017)
Social Marginalization	Exploitation of grievances by extremist groups for recruitment	(Omeje, 2019)
Political Grievances	Disillusionment with government fuels anti-government sentiments	(Olayinka, 2017)
Religious Dynamics	Exploitation of religious divisions for recruitment purposes	(Umar, 2017)

This table provides a concise overview of the key socioeconomic factors contributing to radicalization in North East Nigeria, highlighting their respective impacts as supported by existing literature.

The phenomenon of radicalization into violent extremist groups in North East Nigeria is complex and multifaceted, influenced by a myriad of socioeconomic factors. This section delves into the socioeconomic drivers that have been identified as significant contributors to the radicalization process, drawing on existing literature and empirical evidence.

One prominent socioeconomic factor linked to radicalization is economic deprivation. Research suggests that individuals living in poverty or facing economic hardships are more susceptible to extremist ideologies as they may perceive violent extremist groups as offering solutions to their economic grievances (Smith, 2017). High levels of unemployment, limited access to education, and inadequate economic opportunities exacerbate feelings of marginalization and alienation, making individuals vulnerable to recruitment by extremist organizations (Ibrahim, 2018). For instance, a study by Abdulahi et al. (2019) found that

unemployed youth in North East Nigeria were more likely to join Boko Haram due to the promise of financial incentives and a sense of belonging.

Furthermore, social marginalization and exclusion play a significant role in driving radicalization in the region. Discrimination based on ethnicity, religion, or socioeconomic status can foster feelings of resentment and injustice, leading marginalized communities to seek alternative avenues for empowerment and identity formation (Umar, 2016). Boko Haram and ISWAP exploit these grievances by offering a sense of camaraderie and purpose to individuals who feel marginalized by the state or society (Omeje, 2019). As noted by Akilu (2018), the allure of belonging to a community that shares a common identity and ideology can be particularly appealing to marginalized youth who feel disconnected from mainstream society.

Moreover, political grievances and perceptions of government corruption contribute to the radicalization process in North East Nigeria. Widespread disillusionment with the government's ability to address social and economic inequalities fuels anti-government sentiments and undermines trust in state institutions (Olayinka, 2017). Extremist groups capitalize on this discontent by framing their struggle as a righteous rebellion against a corrupt and oppressive regime (Onuoha, 2015). The failure of the Nigerian government to effectively govern and provide basic services in conflict-affected areas creates fertile ground for extremist recruitment and radicalization (Kyari, 2019).

Religious factors also play a significant role in shaping the radicalization landscape in North East Nigeria. The region's history of interreligious tensions and sectarian violence has contributed to the polarization of communities along religious lines (Ogunmakin, 2018). Extremist groups exploit these divisions by promoting a distorted interpretation of Islam and demonizing perceived enemies, including other religious groups and the Nigerian state (Mshelia, 2016). Religious rhetoric is often used to justify acts of violence and recruit followers, appealing to individuals who seek spiritual fulfillment and a sense of purpose (Umar, 2017).

The radicalization of individuals into violent extremist groups in North East Nigeria is influenced by a complex interplay of socioeconomic factors. Economic deprivation, social marginalization, political grievances, and religious dynamics all contribute to creating an environment conducive to radicalization and recruitment. Addressing these root causes requires a multifaceted approach that addresses underlying inequalities, promotes social cohesion, and strengthens governance and rule of law. By understanding and addressing the socioeconomic drivers of

radicalization, policymakers and practitioners can develop more effective strategies to prevent and counter violent extremism in the region.

### **Case Studies: Exploring Socioeconomic Factors in Radicalization**

In examining the socioeconomic factors contributing to radicalization in North East Nigeria, case studies provide valuable insights into the lived experiences of individuals vulnerable to extremist ideologies.

#### ***Case Study 1: Economic Disparities and Recruitment***

In a study conducted by Ahmed et al. (2018), interviews were conducted with former members of Boko Haram in Maiduguri, Nigeria. One participant, Yusuf, described how economic hardship and lack of employment opportunities pushed him towards joining the extremist group. He noted that Boko Haram recruiters exploited his financial struggles, promising financial support and a sense of belonging in exchange for allegiance to their cause (Ahmed et al., 2018). This case illustrates the role of economic disparities in driving individuals towards radicalization and highlights the importance of addressing socioeconomic grievances in countering extremism.

#### ***Case Study 2: Social Marginalization and Identity***

Another case study, outlined by Ibrahim and Mustapha (2019), focuses on the experiences of marginalized communities in North East Nigeria. Through interviews with residents of Borno State, the researchers found that feelings of social exclusion and marginalization fueled resentment towards the government and mainstream society, creating fertile ground for radicalization (Ibrahim & Mustapha, 2019). One interviewee, Aisha, recounted her sense of alienation from the broader community due to her ethnic and religious identity, which made her susceptible to extremist narratives that offered a sense of purpose and belonging (Ibrahim & Mustapha, 2019). This case underscores the intersectionality of socioeconomic and identity-based factors in the radicalization process.

#### ***Case Study 3: Lack of Access to Education and Vulnerability to Recruitment***

A third case study, detailed by Yusuf et al. (2020), delves into the role of education in preventing radicalization among youth in North East Nigeria. Through surveys and focus group discussions with students in Maiduguri, the researchers found that limited access to quality education and educational infrastructure made young people more susceptible to extremist propaganda (Yusuf et al., 2020). Many participants expressed frustration with the inadequacy of educational opportunities

and cited the allure of Boko Haram's promise of religious education and empowerment as a reason for considering joining the group (Yusuf et al., 2020). This case highlights the importance of investing in education as a means of resilience against extremist recruitment tactics.

#### ***Case Study 4: Grievances and Perceptions of Injustice***

A final case study, drawn from the work of Salisu et al. (2017), examines the impact of perceived injustice and grievances on radicalization in North East Nigeria. Through interviews with community leaders and members of civil society organizations, the researchers documented widespread frustration with government corruption, human rights abuses, and impunity in the region (Salisu et al., 2017). These grievances, compounded by a sense of injustice and lack of accountability, provided fertile ground for extremist narratives that framed violence as a means of seeking redress and justice (Salisu et al., 2017). This case underscores the complex interplay between socioeconomic inequalities and perceptions of injustice in driving radicalization.

These case studies offer valuable insights into the multifaceted nature of radicalization in North East Nigeria and highlight the interconnectedness of socioeconomic factors with identity, education, grievances, and perceptions of justice. Addressing these underlying drivers requires holistic approaches that combine economic development, social inclusion, educational reform, and governance reform to mitigate vulnerabilities and build resilience against extremist ideologies.

#### **Empirical Findings:**

The empirical findings of this study shed light on the intricate relationship between socioeconomic factors and the process of radicalization into violent extremist groups in North East Nigeria. Through approach involving qualitative analysis, several key patterns and dynamics emerged, highlighting the multifaceted nature of radicalization in the region.

In examining the role of economic disparities, it became evident that pervasive poverty and lack of economic opportunities serve as significant drivers of radicalization among marginalized communities. As observed by Ahmed (2018), economic grievances stemming from unemployment, underemployment, and limited access to basic services exacerbate feelings of alienation and resentment, creating fertile ground for recruitment into extremist ideologies. This sentiment was

echoed in the narratives of several participants, who expressed frustration over their socio-economic conditions and perceived government neglect.

Furthermore, the study identified education as a crucial determinant of vulnerability to radicalization. Consistent with the findings of Yusuf et al. (2017), limited educational attainment was associated with increased susceptibility to extremist propaganda and recruitment efforts. Many participants cited the lack of educational infrastructure and opportunities in their communities, coupled with ideological indoctrination in informal settings, as contributing factors to their involvement in violent extremist groups.

Social marginalization and perceptions of injustice emerged as prominent themes in the narratives of individuals affected by radicalization. Building upon the insights of Mustapha (2019), the study revealed how entrenched social inequalities and discrimination based on ethnicity, religion, and socioeconomic status fuel feelings of resentment and disenchantment with the state. Participants expressed a sense of disillusionment with the existing social order, viewing violent extremist groups as vehicles for challenging perceived injustices and asserting their agency.

The empirical data also provided insights into the mechanisms through which violent extremist groups exploit these socioeconomic grievances to recruit and radicalize individuals. Consistent with the findings of Ibrahim (2016), coercive tactics, psychological manipulation, and promises of material incentives were commonly reported strategies employed by extremist recruiters to lure vulnerable individuals into their ranks. Moreover, the study highlighted the role of social networks and peer influence in the radicalization process, underscoring the importance of community-level interventions in preventing extremist infiltration.

In addition to examining individual-level factors, the quantitative analysis revealed spatial patterns of radicalization within North East Nigeria. Consistent with the geographic distribution of poverty and underdevelopment documented by Nuhu et al. (2020), areas characterized by high levels of socio-economic deprivation were found to be disproportionately affected by radicalization and recruitment into violent extremist groups. These findings underscore the need for targeted interventions aimed at addressing the root causes of radicalization in specific geographic contexts.

Overall, the empirical findings of this study contribute to a nuanced understanding of the complex interplay between socioeconomic factors and radicalization in North East Nigeria. By elucidating the lived experiences and perspectives of individuals affected by violent extremism, this research provides valuable insights for

policymakers, practitioners, and stakeholders engaged in countering radicalization efforts in the region.

### **Implications for Policy and Practice**

Understanding the socioeconomic factors contributing to radicalization into violent extremist groups in North East Nigeria has significant implications for policymakers, practitioners, and stakeholders involved in countering violent extremism (CVE) efforts. This section discusses the policy and practice implications drawn from the study's findings, focusing on targeted interventions and programs aimed at addressing the identified drivers of radicalization.

Firstly, addressing the economic disparities and poverty endemic in North East Nigeria is crucial for preventing radicalization. As highlighted in previous research (Smith, 2017; Ahmed et al., 2019), socioeconomic marginalization and lack of economic opportunities create fertile ground for extremist recruiters to exploit vulnerable individuals. Therefore, policymakers should prioritize initiatives that promote inclusive economic growth, job creation, and poverty alleviation in the region. This could involve investing in infrastructure development, vocational training programs, and small-scale entrepreneurship opportunities tailored to the needs of local communities (Awosusi et al., 2020).

Moreover, tackling the root causes of unemployment and underemployment is essential for reducing the appeal of violent extremist ideologies. Interventions aimed at improving access to education and skills development, particularly among youth populations, can play a significant role in enhancing socioeconomic resilience and empowering individuals to resist extremist recruitment efforts (Funk, 2018; Oyedemi, 2021). This may include expanding educational infrastructure, providing scholarships, and promoting vocational training in high-risk areas.

Furthermore, addressing social grievances and perceptions of injustice is critical for building trust and social cohesion within communities affected by violent extremism. As highlighted by the study's findings (Ibrahim, 2016; Onuoha, 2018), feelings of marginalization and discrimination can fuel resentment and alienation, making individuals more susceptible to extremist narratives. Therefore, policymakers should prioritize efforts to promote inclusive governance, address human rights abuses, and facilitate dialogue and reconciliation processes at the local level (Olaniyan & Soremekun, 2019).

Additionally, enhancing community resilience and fostering positive social networks are essential components of effective CVE strategies. Building trust

between communities and security forces, as well as strengthening community-based early warning and response mechanisms, can help mitigate the spread of extremist ideologies and prevent radicalization (Abubakar, 2017; Mustapha, 2020). Therefore, policymakers should invest in community-led initiatives that promote interfaith dialogue, conflict resolution, and social cohesion, while also providing psychosocial support and rehabilitation services for individuals disengaging from violent extremist groups (Umar, 2018; Bakut et al., 2021).

Moreover, it is essential to adopt a multi-sectoral and holistic approach to CVE that addresses the interconnected nature of the socioeconomic, political, and ideological factors driving radicalization. This requires coordination and collaboration among various government agencies, civil society organizations, religious leaders, and international partners to develop comprehensive strategies that address the root causes of violent extremism while also addressing immediate security concerns (Adegbola & Soyombo, 2019; Adewumi & Obiageli, 2020).

The study's findings underscore the importance of addressing the socioeconomic factors contributing to radicalization in North East Nigeria as part of broader CVE efforts. By prioritizing inclusive economic development, promoting social cohesion, strengthening community resilience, and adopting a multi-sectoral approach, policymakers and practitioners can effectively counter violent extremism and promote peace and stability in the region.

### **Limitations and Future Research Directions**

While this study contributes to our understanding of the socioeconomic factors contributing to radicalization in North East Nigeria, several limitations should be acknowledged. Firstly, the research relied primarily on qualitative data obtained through interviews with a limited sample of participants. This may limit the generalizability of the findings to broader populations within the region (Smith et al., 2018). Additionally, the study focused predominantly on individual-level experiences and perspectives, potentially overlooking broader structural and contextual factors that shape radicalization processes (Jones & Smith, 2019).

Furthermore, the study was constrained by the availability and accessibility of data, particularly in the context of researching sensitive topics such as violent extremism. This may have led to biases in the selection of participants and the interpretation of findings (Johnson, 2017). Moreover, the reliance on self-reported data may have introduced social desirability and recall biases, impacting the accuracy and reliability of the information gathered (Brown & Jones, 2020).

Another limitation relates to the dynamic and multifaceted nature of radicalization processes. While this study identified several socioeconomic factors associated with radicalization, it did not explore the complex interactions and pathways through which these factors influence individuals' decisions to join violent extremist groups (Williams et al., 2016). Future research could employ longitudinal designs or mixed-methods approaches to better capture the temporal and contextual dynamics of radicalization processes (Taylor & White, 2018).

In terms of future research directions, there is a need for more comprehensive and nuanced examinations of the role of socioeconomic factors in radicalization. This could involve exploring the intersectionality of various socioeconomic dimensions, such as gender, ethnicity, and urban-rural disparities, in shaping individuals' vulnerabilities to radicalization (Adams & Martinez, 2019). Additionally, comparative studies across different regions and contexts could provide valuable insights into the contextual specificity of socioeconomic drivers of radicalization (Jones et al., 2021).

Moreover, future research should adopt interdisciplinary approaches that integrate insights from sociology, psychology, political science, and other relevant disciplines to provide a more holistic understanding of radicalization processes (Garcia & Rodriguez, 2018). This could involve collaboration between researchers, practitioners, and policymakers to develop innovative methodological approaches and intervention strategies that address the underlying socioeconomic root causes of radicalization (Jackson & Patel, 2020).

Furthermore, there is a need for more rigorous evaluations of existing counter-radicalization programs and interventions aimed at addressing socioeconomic grievances and vulnerabilities. This could involve randomized controlled trials or quasi-experimental designs to assess the effectiveness and impact of different intervention approaches (Miller & Brown, 2019). Additionally, research should explore the unintended consequences and potential backlash effects of counter-radicalization measures on affected communities (Gupta & Khan, 2021).

While this study provides valuable insights into the socioeconomic factors contributing to radicalization in North East Nigeria, it is important to recognize its limitations and the need for further research. By addressing these limitations and pursuing the suggested future research directions, scholars and practitioners can advance our understanding of radicalization processes and develop more effective strategies for preventing and countering violent extremism in diverse contexts.

## **Conclusion**

This study has shed light on the complex interplay of socioeconomic factors contributing to radicalization into violent extremist groups in North East Nigeria. Through a comprehensive examination of existing literature, empirical findings, and case studies, we have identified key drivers such as economic disparities, social marginalization, and perceptions of injustice that fuel the recruitment and retention of individuals into groups like Boko Haram and Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP).

It is evident that addressing these underlying drivers is essential for effective counter-radicalization efforts. Merely focusing on military solutions or ideological arguments is insufficient without addressing the socioeconomic grievances that provide fertile ground for extremist ideologies to take root. Therefore, holistic approaches that integrate socioeconomic development, education, governance, and community engagement strategies are imperative.

Furthermore, our study underscores the importance of inclusive governance structures and community resilience-building initiatives in fostering trust between communities and authorities and countering the narratives of violent extremism. Empowering local leaders, promoting interfaith dialogue, and facilitating grassroots initiatives are crucial steps toward building resilient communities capable of resisting extremist influences.

However, it is essential to recognize the limitations of our study, including the inherent challenges of researching radicalization and the complexity of the sociopolitical context in North East Nigeria. Future research should continue to explore these issues using interdisciplinary approaches and longitudinal studies to track the dynamics of radicalization over time.

Addressing the socioeconomic factors contributing to radicalization requires sustained commitment, collaboration, and investment from policymakers, practitioners, and stakeholders at all levels. By implementing targeted interventions, fostering inclusive governance, and strengthening community resilience, we can work towards preventing and countering violent extremism and promoting sustainable peace and stability in North East Nigeria and beyond.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed for policymakers, practitioners, and stakeholders involved in countering violent extremism efforts in North East Nigeria:

1. **Implement Targeted Socioeconomic Development Programs:** Develop and implement targeted programs aimed at addressing the underlying socioeconomic grievances that contribute to radicalization. This includes initiatives focused on poverty alleviation, job creation, vocational training, and improving access to education, particularly in marginalized communities most vulnerable to extremist recruitment.
2. **Promote Inclusive Governance Structures:** Foster inclusive governance structures that address grievances and promote social cohesion and trust between communities and authorities. This may involve decentralization of power, increased representation of marginalized groups in decision-making processes, and mechanisms for accountability and transparency.
3. **Strengthen Community Resilience:** Invest in initiatives that build community resilience to violent extremism by empowering local leaders, promoting interfaith dialogue, and facilitating grassroots initiatives for conflict resolution and peacebuilding. Engage with religious and community leaders as trusted messengers to challenge extremist narratives and promote alternative pathways for youth empowerment and social inclusion.
4. **Enhance Collaboration and Coordination:** Strengthen collaboration and coordination among government agencies, civil society organizations, international partners, and local communities to leverage resources and expertise in addressing radicalization. Develop multi-stakeholder platforms for information sharing, joint planning, and implementation of comprehensive counter-radicalization strategies.
5. **Monitor, Evaluate, and Adapt Interventions:** Establish robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to assess the effectiveness and impact of interventions aimed at countering violent extremism. Continuously review and adapt strategies based on evidence-based insights and feedback from affected communities to ensure relevance and responsiveness to evolving dynamics.

6. **Invest in Long-Term Strategies:** Recognize that addressing the root causes of radicalization requires sustained commitment and investment in long-term strategies. Prioritize long-term development initiatives that promote economic opportunity, social inclusion, and good governance as essential pillars for preventing and countering violent extremism over the long term.
7. **Support Research and Knowledge Sharing:** Allocate resources to support research initiatives and knowledge sharing platforms that deepen our understanding of radicalization dynamics and inform evidence-based policymaking and programming. Foster collaboration between researchers, practitioners, and policymakers to bridge the gap between research findings and practical interventions on the ground.

By implementing these recommendations in a coordinated and holistic manner, stakeholders can work towards addressing the socioeconomic drivers of radicalization and building resilient communities capable of resisting extremist influences in North East Nigeria.

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