
UNDERSTANDING THE FACTORS INFLUENCING TERRORIST BEHAVIOUR AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR GOVERNANCE AND COUNTER TERRORISM STRATEGIES IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Terrorism is one of the major threats to human and territorial security across the world. Domestic terrorists, motivated by racially- and ethnically-motivated violent extremism, anti-government and anti-authority violent extremism, and other violent extremist ideologies, represent a growing share of the threat to global community. Understanding terrorist behaviour is crucial for developing effective governance and counter-terrorism strategies. Anchoring on the Frustration-Aggression and Social learning theory, this study examines the psychological, social, and political factors driving terrorism. It also explores how governance structures can address these behaviours through preventive and reactive measures. Using a qualitative and basic descriptive methodology, the study synthesizes insights from theoretical and empirical research to provide recommendations for improved counter-terrorism strategies. Findings suggest that a combination of socio-economic factors, ideological motivations, and political grievances often drive terrorist behaviours. This study provides recommendations for governments and stakeholders to enhance their counter-terrorism approaches, particularly by addressing root causes and improving coordination between security agencies and communities.

Keywords: Terrorist behaviour, governance, counterterrorism strategies, psychosocial and political factors

Introduction

Terrorism has become one of the most pressing global challenges, posing significant threats to peace, security, and governance in many regions of the world. The plight of displaced persons due to terrorism and violent insurgencies has become a global concern, particularly in the Sahara and sub-Saharan Africa (Akinfala, Akinbode, & Agiobu-Kemmer, 2014). Apart from experience of mental health problems, vulnerabilities and profound psychological symptoms for the victims, displacement constituted a complex life-changing process for all victims (David, Dammeyer & Dangana (2023). The Nigeria experience, according to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), approximately 1.87 million people reside in 22 Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps across the country's north-eastern states: Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa (IOM, 2016), consequent on the advent of terrorist activities. The complexity of terrorist behaviour, driven by a range of psychological, ideological, and socio-political factors, underscores the need for a nuanced understanding of its underlying motivations. As Hoffman (2019) highlighted, terrorist acts are not merely expressions of violence but are deeply rooted in intricate dynamics that must be comprehensively addressed. While conventional counter-terrorism strategies, such as military interventions and security operations, have been widely implemented, their limitations are becoming increasingly evident. These reactive measures, though necessary, often fail to address the root causes of terrorism. As a result, there is a growing recognition that counter-terrorism efforts should extend beyond forceful interventions to include preventive measures, rehabilitation, and the strengthening of societal resilience (Akinfala, Akinbode, & Agiobu-Kemmer, 2014; Jones & Smith, 2020). Reporting on the aftermath of various terrorist activities and human displacement, the 2024 Internal Displacement Monitoring Center (IDMC) report presents in-depth results of global internal displacement data collected by IDMC throughout 2023. It includes maps, charts and written analysis of the numbers of internally displaced people and internal displacements, or movements, globally and by region and country (IDMC, 2024). Much as

conflicts and displacement could sometimes be a positive development needed for expansion and for new communities to be established, it is a development with a very high cost to the health, social and psychological well-being of the displaced persons.

Given the humanitarian challenges occasioned by terrorist activities, massive displacement, and psycho-social and physiological consequences, this study seeks to understand the motivations, behaviours, and psychological processes that drive individuals to engage in terrorist activities. Vulnerable groups go through a gradual process of adoption of extreme ideologies, often facilitated by social, economic, or political grievances (i.e. radicalization). Terrorists often form strong bonds with their group, which becomes a primary source of identity, belonging, and meaning. They may experience discomfort or dissonance when their actions contradict their values or beliefs, leading to rationalization or justification of their behaviour. More often than not terrorists may use violence as a means to regulate and manage their emotions, such as anger, frustration, or anxiety. While exhibiting narcissism and grandiosity, some terrorists may exhibit tendencies of seeking to assert their power, control, and importance through violent acts. Experiences of trauma, victimization, or perceived injustice can contribute to an individual's radicalization and willingness to engage in terrorist activities.

Statement of Problem

Despite substantial investments in military interventions, intelligence gathering, and international counter-terrorism collaborations, terrorism continues to thrive in various parts of the world. The persistent rise in terrorist activities indicates that existing counter-terrorism strategies are falling short of the expected impact. The plight of displaced persons, disruption of people's primary occupation and the attendant food crisis have become a global concern, particularly in Nigeria. The disturbing and harrowing aspect of this humanitarian emergencies is the unfavourable human conditions associated with the menace. The connection between terrorism and mental health is very complex, bidirectional and usually accompanied with psycho-physiological and mental health consequences for the victims. Exposure to terrorist attacks can lead to PTSD, characterized by symptoms like flashbacks, nightmares, and avoidance behaviours. Terrorism can cause significant anxiety, depression, and emotional distress in individuals and communities. Terrorist attacks can lead to acute stress reactions, including shock, denial, and dissociation. Loss of loved ones in terrorist attacks can result in complicated grief and bereavement. Given the pervasive nature and pattern of terrorist activities and the attendant human conditions, a deeper understanding of the terrorist motivation is worthwhile. Terrorists' motivations can be complex and varied, but some common drivers include: *Ideological Motivations*: Religious extremism (i.e., Belief in a distorted or radical interpretation of a religion, leading to a desire to impose their beliefs on other; Political ideology (i.e., Commitment to a particular political ideology, such as Marxism, nationalism, or anarchism. Separatist or nationalist goals (i.e., Desire for independence or self-rule for a particular group or region.

Moreover, terrorists' motivation could be *Psychological*: as in Personal grievance (i.e., Sense of injustice, perceived wrongs, or personal trauma; Mental health issues (i.e., Unaddressed mental health problems, such as depression, anxiety, or personality disorders; need for identity and belonging (i.e., desire for a sense of purpose and belonging, often fulfilled by joining a terrorist group. Social and Economic Motivations: Poverty and economic inequality (i.e., Feeling of economic disenfranchisement and marginalization; Social injustice (i.e., Perception of systemic injustice, discrimination, or oppression; Lack of education and opportunities (i.e., Limited access to education, employment, and social mobility. Also, motivation could be rooted in *Environmental/Territorial and Cultural interest*: Cultural or historical grievances (i.e., Perceived historical injustices or cultural suppression; Environmental concerns (i.e., Belief that environmental issues, such as climate change, are not being adequately addressed; Government corruption and incompetence (i.e., Perception of corrupt or ineffective governance. *Other Motivations may include*: Thrill-seeking and adventure (i.e., Desire for excitement and a sense of adventure; Peer pressure and social influence (i.e., Influence from friends, family, or social networks; Financial gain (i.e., Promise of financial reward or compensation.

Despite the pervasive nature and ever-growing pattern of insurgencies and terrorist activities on national and subnational levels is a significant gap in current approaches, particularly in addressing the root causes of terrorism, such as economic inequality, political marginalization, and the process of radicalization (Aly *et al.* 2020). Simply intensifying security measures without understanding the psychological and socio-political drivers behind terrorism limits the effectiveness of counter-terrorism policies. Therefore, it is imperative to shift focus toward a deeper exploration of the factors influencing terrorist behaviour. This study aims to investigate these dimensions, with a specific focus on their implications for governance and the development of more holistic and sustainable counter-terrorism strategies. Therefore, by examining terrorist behaviour, this study seeks to provide insights into alternative governance approaches that can be more effective mitigating the risk of terrorism and promote long-term peace and stability.

Objectives the study

The objectives of this study are to:

- i. examine the underlying psychological, social, and political factors that drive terrorist behaviour;
- ii. analyse the role of governance in preventing and mitigating terrorist activities;
- iii. assess current counter-terrorism strategies and their effectiveness; and
- iv. propose governance-oriented recommendations for enhancing counter-terrorism efforts.

Theoretical Framework

No single theory has gained ascendance as an explanatory model for all types of violence. Perhaps the diversity in behaviours regarded as violent poses an inherent barrier to such a global theory (Burom, 2004). Social learning, frustration aggression and social cognition approaches have received some of the most extensive empirical attention and support, but not necessarily for terrorism specifically (Burom, 2004). Terrorist violence most often is deliberate (not impulsive), strategic, and instrumental; it is linked to and justified by ideological (e.g., political, religious) objectives and almost always involves a group or multiple actors/supporters. This study is anchored on the following theoretical frameworks:

Frustration-Aggression Theory: When people perceive that they are being prevented from achieving a goal, their frustration is likely to turn to aggression. The link between frustration (being prevented from attaining a goal or engaging in behaviour) and aggression has been discussed in psychology for more than half a century. Some even view it as a “master explanation” for understanding the cause of human violence (Burom, 2004). The basic premise of the frustration-aggression hypothesis is twofold: (1) Aggression is always produced by frustration, and (2) Frustration always produces aggression. When subjected to empirical scrutiny, however, research has shown that frustration does not inevitably lead to aggression. Sometimes, for example, it results in problem solving or dependent behaviours. And aggression is known to occur even in the absence of frustration. Thus, it is not reasonable to view frustration alone as a necessary and sufficient causal factor.

Various theories have been advanced to explain terrorist behaviour, with psychological and sociological perspectives being dominant. Frustration-Aggression Theory, proposed by Dollard *et al.* (1939) is very prominent, it suggests that individuals resort to violence when they are unable to achieve their goals, often as a result of socio-political obstacles. Terrorism, in this context, is a reaction to unmet socio-political demands or grievances. The frustration aggression theory states that aggression is caused by frustration (Dollard, Miller *et al.* 1939; Berkowitz, Leonard, 1969). When someone is prevented from reaching his target, he becomes frustrated. This frustration then can turn into aggression when something triggers it. The closer you get to a goal, the greater the excitement and expectation of the pleasure. Thus, the closer you are, the more frustrated you get by being held back. Unexpected occurrence of the frustration also increases the likelihood of aggression Dollard, Miller *et al.* 1939; Berkowitz, Leonard, 1969). In an important reformulation of the FA hypothesis, Berkowitz (1989) posited that it was only “aversive” frustration that would lead to aggression. The newly proposed progression was that frustration would lead to anger, and that anger – in the presence of aggressive cues – would lead to aggression. While subsequent research findings have, at times, been inconsistent or contradictory, “it is reasonable to conclude that aversive

stimuli do facilitate, but probably not instigate, aggressive behaviour” (Tedeschi & Felson, 1994, p. 688). In a now classic work, Ted Gurr was among the first to apply a systematic FA analysis to the problem of political violence, framing the frustration as one of “relative deprivation” (Gurr, 1968).

Social Learning Theory: Fundamental learning theory suggests that behavioural patterns are acquired by links (contingencies) established between the behaviour and its consequences. When behaviour is followed by desired results (reward), that behaviour is “reinforced” (made more likely). Conversely, when behaviour is followed by undesirable or aversive consequence, that behaviour is “punished” (made less likely). Social learning theory is a simple extension of this basic idea, suggesting that behaviour (e.g., aggression) is learned not only through one’s direct experience, but also through observation of how such contingencies occur in one’s environment. Some have referred to this as vicarious learning. In this model, aggression is viewed as learned behaviour. Accordingly, it is argued that through observation we learn consequences for the behaviour, how to do it, to whom it should be directed, what provocation justifies it, and when it is appropriate. “If aggression is a learned behaviour, then terrorism, a specific type of aggressive behaviour, can also be learned” (Oots & Wiegele, 1985, p. 1110; Oots, 1989)

Therefore, social learning theory suggests that social behaviour is learned by observing and imitating the behaviour of others (Bandura, 1977). Unlike Skinner, Bandura (1977) believes humans are active information processors and think about the relationship between their behaviour and its consequences. Albert Bandura’s social learning theory suggests that people learn new behaviours by observing and imitating others. The theory emphasizes the importance of observational learning, where individuals acquire knowledge, skills, attitudes, and beliefs by watching the actions of others and the consequences that follow, leading to the modeling and adoption of observed behaviours. Therefore, the main idea of social learning theory is that people learn through observation of behaviour enacted by others. This behaviour is later replicated by the observer. Social learning theory, proposed by Albert Bandura, emphasizes the importance of observing, modeling, and imitating the behaviours, attitudes, and emotional reactions of others. Social learning theory considers how both environmental and cognitive factors interact to influence human learning and behaviour. Using the assumptions of social learning theory disruptive behaviours of the terrorists can be explained as a product of behaviour learned through observation of behaviour enacted by others, which they later replicated. By extension, terrorists learn violent behaviours and ideologies through observation, imitation, and reinforcement

Empirical Review

What is terrorism: The Department of Homeland Security defines terrorism as any activity involving a criminally unlawful act that is dangerous to human life or potentially destructive of critical infrastructure or key resources, and that appears intended to intimidate or coerce a civilian population, to influence government policy by intimidation or coercion, or to affect the conduct of a government by mass destruction, assassination, or kidnapping (McAleenan, 2019). Empirical research on terrorism indicates that various factors contribute to the recruitment and radicalization of individuals into terrorist organizations (Gurr, 1968; Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Oots & Thomas, 1985; Tedeschi, & Felson, 1994; Dodge & Schwartz, 1997; Kruglanski *et al.* 2018). A study by Sageman (2017) highlights that socio-economic marginalization plays a significant role in the radicalization process, especially among young people in unstable regions. Furthermore, empirical findings suggest that political instability and corruption often serve as catalysts for terrorist activities. Piazza (2018) demonstrated that terrorism is more prevalent in countries with weak governance structures, where public grievances are high due to poor service delivery and lack of political representation (see also, MaCauley, & Segal, 1989; Post, 1989; Oots, 1989; Sageman, 2004)

Schmid (2020) explored the role of ideology in terrorism, arguing that ideological extremism thrives in environments where political ideologies fail to address the concerns of the populace. This gap creates a vacuum that is often filled by extremist organizations, which provide alternative worldviews and solutions, albeit through violence. The problem with the failure of political ideologies is that terrorist groups would take advantage of it to sustain their campaigns against the government. Similarly, while discussing the linkages between strain, social control and rational choice theories in motivating the motivations of terrorist behaviour, Kapetanovic, Dechesne & Van der Leun (2024) identified the efficacy

of transplantation framework in facilitating the transnational operation of terror groups thereby portraying the dynamics of terrorist group expansion especially in Africa and Middle East where they have their strongholds. The implication of the transplantation is that terrorist groups expand their activities through intentional migration across borders and economic mobilization, usually achieved through the spread of their ideologies (Post, 1989; Oots, 1989; Sageman, 2004; Piazza, 2018).

The Evolving Nature of the Threat

Today, it is clear that the threat of terrorism and targeted violence has evolved significantly and in some important ways. Therefore, society must evolve with the spate of the emerging threat. The fact that all of our lives are increasingly touched by digital technology and online activity has brought profound changes, for good and for ill (McAleenan, 2019). Violent extremist groups have often proven adept at exploiting the Internet's potential. Communication advances have likely contributed to compressed "flash-to-bang" timelines, the period between radicalization to violent extremism and mobilization to violence (McAleenan, 2019). Online extremist communities lionize attackers, encouraging others. The online space has made attackers more operationally competent, as they use the Web to glean technical information for their attacks. This change has also magnified many Nations', regions', and communities' vulnerability to terror attack. Militant groups across the globe increasingly use technologies that were either crude or unavailable to consumers as at the time of the 9/11 attacks (McAleenan, 2019).

METHODS

Design

This study utilizes a qualitative approach, involving an extensive review of existing literature and empirical studies on terrorist behaviour and counter-terrorism strategies. By analyzing qualitative data, the study aims to derive deeper insights into the socio-political and psychological factors that influence terrorist actions. The basic descriptive method is employed to provide a detailed description of the patterns and trends in terrorist behaviour based on recent cases and studies. This methodology allows for a comprehensive understanding of the complex interplay of factors that drive terrorism, offering a foundation for improved governance strategies.

To identify the relevant social science literatures, we began by searching a series of major academic databases using a systematic, iterative keyword strategy, mapping, where possible onto existing subject headings. The focus was on locating professional social science literature published in major books or in peer-reviewed journals. The following database searches were conducted in December 2024: Sociofile/Sociological Abstracts, Criminal Justice Abstracts (CJ Abstracts), Criminal Justice Periodical Index (CJPI), National Criminal Justice Reference Service Abstracts (NCJRS), PsychInfo, Medline, Public Affairs Information Service (PAIS). The "hit count" from those searches is summarized in the table below. After the initial list was generated, we cross-checked the citations against the reference list of several major review works that had been published in the preceding ten years. Finally, the list was submitted to the three senior academic consultants soliciting recommendations based only on relevance as to whether any of the citations listed should be removed and whether they knew of others that met the criteria that should be added. Reviews mainly suggested additions (rarely recommending removal) to the list. Revisions were made in response to reviewer comments, and the remaining comprised our final citation list.

Table 1: Summary of Relevant Social Science Literature and Academic databases

Terrorism	Psychinfo	Medline	CJPI	NCJRS	CJ Abstracts	PAIS	SocioFile	APA Abstracts
Terror* (kw)	2344		3123	N/A	78(0)		4005	3451
Terror* & Mindset	17(0)	34	43(0)	Boolean 63(0)		10(0)	2(0)	245
Terror*(kw) & Psych*(kw)	239	958	251	23(0)	59(0)	16(0)	N/A	567
Terrorism & Mindset	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	I	N/A	N/A	665(0)
Psychology (Sub) & Terror* (kw)	50	17(0)	N/A	N/A	3	N/A	N/A	612
Psychology (Sub) & Terrorism (Sub)	79	98(0)	45(0)	65(0)	33	N/A	N/A	445
Psychology & Terrorism	N/A	N/A	N/A	Boolean 154(0)	14	23	28	98(0)
Political Violence (kw)	258	2345(0)	89(0)	Boolean 54	97	16(0)	44(0)	49
Political Violence (kw) & Psychology	55	33	N/A	N/A	23	10(0)	149	238(0)

Numbers= Total results N/A= Search Term unnecessary (0) =No items were kept from the results
kw=keyword

Results

The following are the summaries of major findings from qualitative analysis of the literature search:

Objective 1: Examine the underlying psychological, social, and political factors driving terrorist behaviour

Terrorist behaviour is driven by a combination of socio-economic, political, and ideological factors. Political marginalization and economic inequality are significant contributors to radicalization. Exposure to extremist ideologies acts as a catalyst for individuals vulnerable to such factors.

Objective 2: Analyze the role of governance in preventing and mitigating terrorist activities Weak governance structures exacerbate terrorism by failing to address grievances, creating an environment conducive to radicalization.

Effective governance through better service delivery, political inclusion, and community engagement can help mitigate the root causes of terrorism and reduce the appeal of extremist groups.

Objective 3: Assess current counter-terrorism strategies and their effectiveness

Current counter-terrorism strategies, which are largely military-focused overlook the socio-political and economic roots of terrorism. There is a need for a shift from purely military interventions to comprehensive governance-based strategies that address the underlying causes of terrorism. Governance reforms that include political inclusivity, service delivery improvements, and community-based initiatives play a crucial role in preventing terrorism. Engaging communities and addressing socio-economic grievances are essential components of a long-term counter-terrorism strategy that targets the root causes of radicalization.

Discussion

The findings of this study align closely with the set objectives, theoretical frameworks, and empirical studies previously reviewed. The central theme that emerged is that terrorist behaviour is driven

by a complex interplay of socio-economic, political, and ideological factors. These findings offer a nuanced understanding of terrorist motivations and provide a basis for enhancing governance and counter-terrorism strategies. Below is a detailed discussion of how the study's findings correlate with the objectives, literature, and empirical evidence.

The findings of the study confirmed that socio-economic deprivation, political marginalization, and exposure to radical ideologies are major contributors to terrorism. This is consistent with the Frustration-Aggression Theory, which posits that individuals turn to violence when their socio-political needs are unmet (Dollard *et al.* 1939). Marginalized communities, particularly in politically unstable regions, often experience a sense of frustration and hopelessness, making them more susceptible to extremist recruitment. This finding is consistent with several other findings reported (see, MaCauley, & Segal, 1989; Post, 1989; Oots, 1989; Sageman, 2004; Piazza, 2018).

The Social Identity Theory also aligns with the study's findings, as individuals, especially disenfranchised youth, are attracted to terrorist organizations as a means of identity and belonging. Terrorist groups often offer a strong in-group identity, fostering a sense of purpose and loyalty, which can drive violent behaviour (Kruglanski *et al.* 2018). The study further confirmed that political grievances, such as lack of political representation and governmental corruption, exacerbate the conditions that fuel terrorism, as previously discussed by Piazza (2018).

The study revealed that weak governance structures significantly contribute to the persistence of terrorism, aligning with findings from the literature. Hoffman (2019) and Jones & Smith (2020) argue that governance plays a critical role in either preventing or fostering conditions conducive to terrorism. Weak state institutions, lack of political inclusivity, and poor service delivery leave populations vulnerable to radical ideologies. This is particularly evident in regions where governments fail to address socio-economic disparities or protect the rights and needs of marginalized groups. The findings emphasize that effective governance is not solely about deploying military force but also involves addressing the underlying socio-political issues. Corruption, human rights abuses, and poor service delivery undermine the legitimacy of governments, making it easier for terrorist groups to justify their actions and recruit new members (Aly *et al.* 2020).

The findings of this study suggest that current counter-terrorism strategies, which primarily focus on military interventions, are insufficient. Although military and intelligence efforts have succeeded in dismantling some terrorist networks, they do not address the root causes of terrorism. This finding corroborates that of Schmid (2020), who contends that ideologically driven extremism cannot be eliminated through force alone. Rather, the study points to the need for a multifaceted approach that incorporates governance reforms, socio-economic development, and community engagement as part of a broader counter-terrorism strategy. Counter-terrorism strategies should prioritize de-radicalization, rehabilitation, and reintegration programs for former extremists, as well as promote political and social inclusion.

Piazza's (2018) work supports the notion that terrorism thrives in environments with poor governance. Therefore, addressing governance failures can be an effective long-term strategy for reducing terrorism. This finding also ties back to Rational Choice Theory, which suggests that when governance improves, the costs of engaging in terrorism outweigh the perceived benefits, leading to a reduction in terrorist activities. The study's findings are in agreement with much of the existing literature on terrorist behaviour and governance. For instance, Sageman (2017) found that socio-economic marginalization plays a critical role in radicalization, particularly among young adults in conflict-prone regions. The empirical review also highlighted how terrorist organizations thrive in areas where governance is weak and public trust in institutions is low (Jones & Smith, 2020). This study's findings confirm the observations made by Schmid (2020), who emphasized that ideology plays a crucial role in terrorism, but it is often fueled by grievances rooted in poor governance. When governance structures fail to address socio-economic disparities, political grievances, and public mistrust, terrorist groups step in to exploit these vulnerabilities.

In comparison to other studies, such as Piazza (2018), which explored the link between political marginalization and terrorism, this study also found that terrorism is more prevalent in regions with weak

governance structures. The weakness of governance structures is occasioned by the inability of policymakers and traditional institutions to address the root causes of grievances and use institutions to address the differences involving groups. Crenshaw (2011) also supports the idea that terrorism is a calculated decision, where groups and individuals weigh the risks and benefits, particularly when there is a perceived failure of governance. These empirical findings reinforce the need for a holistic approach to counter-terrorism, where governance reforms play a central role. In summary, the findings of this study align with both the theoretical frameworks and empirical literature on terrorism and governance. The research confirms that terrorist behaviour is driven by a combination of socio-economic, political, and ideological factors. While current counter-terrorism strategies are heavily focused on military solutions, the study emphasizes the importance of addressing root causes through improved

Recommendations

(a) Governments should ensure that all segments of society, particularly marginalized groups, have a voice in political processes. This can be achieved through constitutional reforms, proportional representation, and improved civic education. Inclusivity will reduce the sense of disenfranchisement that often fuels terrorist activities.

(b) Implement targeted socio-economic development initiatives in regions prone to terrorism. These programs should focus on poverty alleviation, employment generation, and improving access to education and healthcare. Such initiatives will help address the economic grievances that drive radicalization.

(c) Governments should prioritize transparency, accountability, and good governance, particularly in areas where state legitimacy is weak. Investing in robust public service systems will reduce corruption, build public trust, and mitigate the conditions that allow terrorism to thrive.

(d) Engage local communities in counter-terrorism efforts by promoting grassroots initiatives that emphasize dialogue, conflict resolution, and deradicalization. Community-based programs can serve as an early warning system to identify and address extremist ideologies before they escalate into violence.

(e) Establish programs to rehabilitate and reintegrate former terrorists and radicalized individuals back into society. These programs should focus on psychological counseling, vocational training, and social reintegration to ensure that former extremists do not return to terrorist activities.

(f) Strengthen international cooperation in counter-terrorism through information and intelligence sharing, joint operations, and capacity-building programs. Global terrorist networks require coordinated responses that transcend national borders.

(g) Governments should work with technology companies to monitor and limit the spread of extremist ideologies online. Counter-narratives should be developed and disseminated to challenge the ideological foundations of terrorist organizations, particularly through digital platforms.

Limitations and Future Study Directions

This study is limited by its reliance on secondary data, which may not capture all dimensions of terrorist behaviour, particularly in rapidly evolving contexts. Future studies should consider conducting field research to gather primary data on terrorist groups and their motivations. Additionally, further research should explore the role of technology in radicalization and the spread of terrorism, particularly in the digital age.

Conclusion

This study has explored the complex drivers of terrorist behaviour and the role of governance in shaping counter-terrorism strategies. It is clear that terrorism is not solely a product of radical ideologies

but is also influenced by socio-economic deprivation, political marginalization, and weak governance structures. Current counter-terrorism approaches, which largely emphasize military interventions, fail to address these underlying causes, resulting in the persistence of terrorist activities in many regions. Effective governance, characterized by political inclusivity, socio-economic development, and community engagement, is critical in preventing terrorism and fostering societal resilience.

The study concludes that a holistic approach to counter-terrorism is essential, one that combines security measures with governance reforms. Governments must address the root causes of terrorism by improving service delivery, promoting political participation, and building trust between state institutions and marginalized communities. In doing so, they can reduce the appeal of extremist ideologies and provide alternatives to violence. This shift in strategy will not only improve the effectiveness of counter-terrorism efforts but also contribute to long-term stability and peace.

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