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Public Perceptions of People on Boko Haram Terrorism in Borno State, Northeastern, Nigeria

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Abstract

The persistence of terrorism in northeastern Nigeria remains one of the gravest challenges to peace, governance, and human development in West Africa. Despite extensive counterterrorism efforts, the Boko Haram insurgency continues to destabilize Borno State, the conflict's epicenter. This study explores public perceptions of the root causes of Boko Haram terrorism, focusing on socio-economic, political, and ideological factors shaping the insurgency's emergence and resilience. Using a mixed-method approach, data were collected from 420 respondents across Maiduguri, Bama, and Gwoza Local Government Areas through questionnaires, focus group discussions, and key informant interviews. Findings revealed that 76% of respondents attributed the rise of Boko Haram to poverty and youth unemployment, 68% linked it to corruption and government neglect, and 54% identified religious manipulation and ideological extremism as central drivers. Qualitative narratives further emphasized the role of governance failures, marginalization, and the erosion of social trust as underlying catalysts of radicalization. The study concludes that Boko Haram's roots are deeply embedded in structural deprivation, perceived injustice, and ideological exploitation of socio-economic grievances. Addressing these root causes requires a multidimensional peace building strategy that prioritizes inclusive governance, youth empowerment, interfaith dialogue, and social justice. The paper contributes to the theoretical understanding of terrorism by linking Relative Deprivation Theory and Frustration–Aggression Hypothesis to the lived perceptions of affected populations. It also offers critical insights for policymakers seeking to design sustainable counterterrorism and radicalization frameworks grounded in local realities.

Keywords: Boko Haram; Public Perception; Radicalization; Poverty; Religious Extremism; Governance; Borno State; Nigeria

Introduction

Terrorism has evolved into one of the most pervasive threats to peace, stability, and human development across Africa. In Nigeria, the emergence of Boko Haram an extremist movement that rejects Western education and secular governance has produced far-reaching humanitarian, economic, and psychological consequences. Since the group's violent insurgency began in 2009, Boko Haram has transformed from a localized religious movement in Maiduguri, Borno State, into one of the world's deadliest non-state armed groups. Its campaign of terror has claimed over 35,000 lives, displaced millions, and destabilized the socio-political fabric of the entire Lake Chad Basin region (UNDP, 2023).

Despite extensive military operations and international counterterrorism support, Boko Haram continues to sustain pockets of resistance and ideological influence. This persistence raises fundamental questions about why the insurgency emerged and what underlying conditions continue to sustain it. Understanding the root causes of terrorism from the perspective of the affected population is therefore vital for developing locally grounded peace building strategies.

Historically, the rise of Boko Haram can be traced to the complex intersection of structural poverty, youth unemployment, corruption, religious manipulation, and governance failure. Scholars such as Agbiboa (2013) and Mustapha (2019) have argued that the insurgency is less about religion per se and more about social injustice, exclusion, and the collapse of state legitimacy. In northern Nigeria, decades of uneven development, high illiteracy, and limited access to economic opportunities have created conditions conducive to radical ideologies. For many marginalized youths, Boko Haram offered a distorted sense of belonging, empowerment, and justice in a context of institutional neglect.

Borno State located in northeastern Nigeria has long been characterized by economic deprivation and weak governance. The region's predominantly agrarian economy has suffered from decades of environmental degradation, declining public investment, and systemic poverty. Prior to the insurgency, youth unemployment in the state exceeded 45%, and access to quality education and health services remained among the lowest in Nigeria (NBS, 2018). These conditions fostered frustration, resentment, and disillusionment with the state, providing fertile ground for extremist mobilization.

The ideological foundation of Boko Haram originated with the teachings of Mohammed Yusuf, who criticized Western education, government corruption, and the moral decay of Nigerian society. While initially peaceful, the group's confrontation with security forces in 2009 and the extrajudicial killing of Yusuf triggered a cycle of violence that evolved into a full-scale insurgency under Abubakar Shekau. Over time, Boko Haram's narrative of spiritual purification merged with political grievances, transforming the movement into both a religious revolt and a social protest against perceived marginalization.

Statement of the Problem

Despite over a decade of counterinsurgency operations, the structural conditions that nurtured Boko Haram's emergence remain largely unresolved. Extreme poverty, youth unemployment, poor governance, and religious misinterpretation continue to shape the lived experiences of many communities in Borno State. The government's response has largely focused on military suppression rather than addressing the socio-economic roots of radicalization. Consequently, Boko Haram's ideology persists among disenfranchised groups, while new offshoots such as ISWAP (Islamic State West Africa Province) continue to recruit from vulnerable populations.

Existing research has often examined Boko Haram from security or theological perspectives, with limited focus on how ordinary citizens perceive its causes. Yet, understanding local perceptions is essential because they influence community attitudes toward peace building, reconciliation, and reintegration. Misdiagnosing the root causes risks perpetuating the same cycles of alienation that fuel radicalization. This study therefore fills a critical gap by examining public perceptions of the socio-economic and ideological factors driving Boko Haram terrorism in Borno State.

Significance of the Study

This study contributes to both academic and policy discourse on terrorism by centering local perceptions in understanding the dynamics of violent extremism. It bridges the gap between top-down state narratives and bottom-up community realities. By linking Relative Deprivation Theory with the Frustration–Aggression Hypothesis, the paper conceptualizes terrorism as an outcome of perceived inequality, social frustration, and ideological exploitation.

The findings are expected to inform policymakers, security agencies, and development partners seeking to design inclusive counterterrorism frameworks that go beyond military solutions. Furthermore, the study contributes to Nigeria's pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) particularly SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions) by emphasizing the developmental dimensions of peace and security.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

Understanding the public perception of Boko Haram's root causes requires a multidimensional theoretical approach that links structural deprivation, psychological frustration, and social disintegration. To this end, the study draws on three complementary theories Relative Deprivation Theory (Gurr, 1970), Frustration–Aggression Hypothesis (Dollard et al., 1939), and Social Disorganization Theory (Shaw & McKay, 1942) to explain how socio-economic inequality, perceived injustice, and institutional decay collectively create fertile ground for extremism in Borno State.

Relative Deprivation Theory

Relative Deprivation Theory, advanced by Ted Robert Gurr (1970) in his classic work *Why Men Rebel*, posits that individuals or groups are likely to engage in rebellion or violence when there is a perceived gap between their expected and achieved socio-economic conditions. It is not absolute poverty but the perception of inequality and exclusion that drives collective frustration.

In the context of Borno State, widespread unemployment, poverty, and corruption have created a strong sense of relative deprivation, particularly among youths who compare their bleak realities with the privileges of political elites. Many respondents in this study perceived Boko Haram's emergence as a response to decades of socio-economic neglect and government failure. The group's anti-establishment rhetoric resonated with those who felt cheated by the system.

This theory therefore provides a psychological and structural foundation for understanding why many disenfranchised youths in Borno viewed Boko Haram not only as a religious movement but also as a symbolic protest against injustice. The theory aligns with empirical evidence showing that economic deprivation, when coupled with limited political voice, fosters environments conducive to violent mobilization.

Frustration–Aggression Hypothesis

The Frustration–Aggression Hypothesis, first articulated by Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mowrer, and Sears (1939), posits that aggression is often the result of frustration caused by blocked aspirations or unfulfilled goals. When individuals are prevented from achieving socially valued objectives such as employment, education, or social mobility they may redirect their aggression toward perceived oppressors or symbolic targets.

Applied to this study, the hypothesis helps explain the psychological pathway from deprivation to violence. Many youths in Borno internalize frustration stemming from chronic unemployment, systemic corruption, and lack of opportunities. Religious leaders and extremist ideologues exploit this frustration by framing the conflict in moral and spiritual terms, channeling aggression toward the state and its institutions.

The theory thus complements Relative Deprivation Theory by highlighting how perceived injustice transforms into emotional hostility, which can be manipulated into violent or radical behaviors. In FGDs conducted in Maiduguri and Bama, respondents frequently described feelings of "hopelessness," "anger at government lies," and "betrayal," illustrating the frustration-aggression link as a driver of radicalization.

Social Disorganization Theory

Social Disorganization Theory, developed by Clifford Shaw and Henry McKay (1942), focuses on the breakdown of social institutions and community structures as a cause of crime and deviance. The theory argues that when social institutions such as the family, schools, and religious bodies weaken, communities lose the capacity to regulate behavior, creating spaces where deviant subcultures can flourish.

In Borno State, decades of poverty, illiteracy, and weak governance have eroded traditional social structures. Many communities have lost the social control mechanisms elders' councils, religious moderation, and youth mentorship that once guided moral behavior. The collapse of local governance systems created an institutional vacuum that extremist ideologues filled with alternative moral orders and radical interpretations of Islam.

This theory provides the community-level explanation for Boko Haram's growth. The absence of effective social organization allowed extremist preachers to thrive, especially among unemployed youths seeking identity and belonging. Qualitative interviews revealed that respondents associated Boko Haram's success with the breakdown of community trust, lack of role models, and state neglect.

Integrated Conceptual Model

The three theoretical perspectives converge to form an integrated framework for understanding the **root causes of Boko Haram terrorism** as perceived by residents of Borno State.

- **Relative Deprivation Theory** explains the *structural inequality and perceived injustice* that generated resentment.
- **Frustration–Aggression Hypothesis** explains the *emotional and psychological conversion* of deprivation into violent impulses.
- **Social Disorganization Theory** explains the *institutional collapse* that allowed extremist networks to spread.

Together, these frameworks suggest that Boko Haram's rise was not spontaneous but the outcome of long-standing socio-economic deprivation, psychological frustration, and community disintegration, which extremist actors exploited to mobilize vulnerable populations.

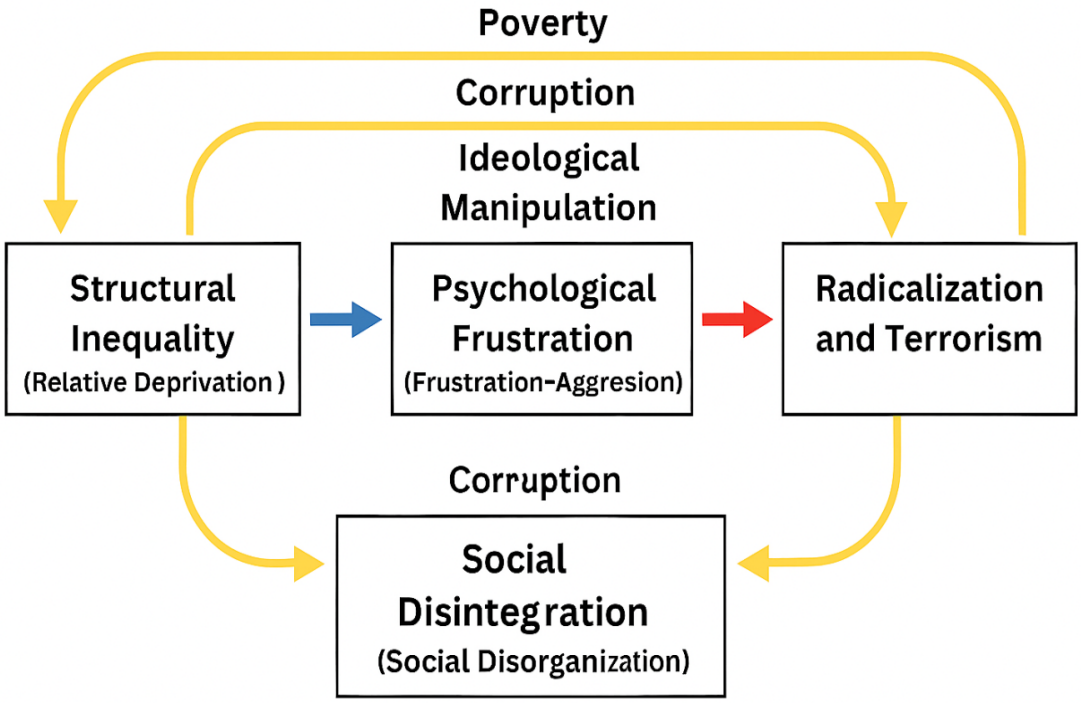


Figure 1. Conceptual Model of the Perceived Root Causes of Boko Haram Terrorism in Borno State

(A diagram showing interlinked boxes labeled: "Structural Inequality (Relative Deprivation)" → "Psychological Frustration (Frustration–Aggression)" → "Social Disintegration (Social Disorganization)" → "Radicalization and Terrorism." Arrows show feedback loops, with 'Poverty,' 'Corruption,' and 'Ideological Manipulation' as mediating variables.)

This integrated conceptual model underscores that Boko Haram's endurance cannot be fully understood without considering people's perceptions of deprivation, injustice, and moral decay. It also highlights that effective counterterrorism must therefore combine economic empowerment, psychosocial rehabilitation, and community rebuilding to address both the symptoms and the roots of extremism.

Study Area

The study was conducted in Borno State, the epicenter of Boko Haram's insurgency in northeastern Nigeria. Borno shares international boundaries with Niger, Chad, and Cameroon, and internal borders with Yobe, Gombe, and Adamawa States. It covers a landmass of approximately 70,898 square kilometers, lying between latitudes 10°00′ and 13°50′N and longitudes 11°00′ and 14°45′E.

Borno's population, estimated at over 5.8 million (NBS, 2023), is predominantly engaged in agriculture, fishing, and petty trading. The state's capital, Maiduguri, historically served as a regional hub for Islamic scholarship and cross-border commerce before the onset of the Boko Haram insurgency. The prolonged conflict has, however, devastated its socio-economic base, destroyed infrastructure, and displaced millions.

Three Local Government Areas (LGAs) were selected for this study: Maiduguri Metropolitan Council, Bama, and Gwoza. These locations were chosen because they represent varying degrees of conflict exposure and ideological penetration. Maiduguri remains the symbolic birthplace of Boko Haram; Bama and Gwoza have witnessed some of the most violent attacks and also host large populations of internally displaced persons (IDPs).



Figure 2. Borno State Showing Selected Study Areas (Maiduguri, Bama, and Gwoza) *(An academic map showing Borno State with key towns, LGA boundaries, and roads.)*

Research Design

The study adopted a mixed-method research design, combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews to obtain a nuanced understanding of public perceptions regarding the causes of Boko Haram terrorism.

- The **quantitative component** used structured questionnaires to collect measurable data on respondents' socio-economic backgrounds and their perceptions of political, economic, and religious factors contributing to the insurgency.
- The **qualitative component** through **Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)** and **Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)** captured community-level narratives, personal experiences, and collective interpretations of Boko Haram's emergence.

This design enabled triangulation, enhancing the validity and contextual richness of the findings.

Population and Sampling Procedure

The study population comprised residents of conflict-affected communities across the three selected LGAs. This included:

- **Community leaders and elders**,
- **Youth and women's groups**,

- **Religious leaders**,
- **Local government officials**, and
- **Internally displaced persons (IDPs)** in both camps and host communities.

A **multi-stage sampling technique** was employed.

- ✓ **Stage 1:** The three LGAs (Maiduguri, Bama, Gwoza) were purposively selected.
- ✓ **Stage 2:** Within each LGA, wards and IDP clusters were randomly selected.
- ✓ **Stage 3:** Respondents were systematically sampled from households and IDP centers using a random interval selection.

A total of 420 respondents participated in the survey (180 from Maiduguri, 140 from Bama, and 100 from Gwoza). In addition, 15 key informant interviews (KIIs) were conducted with local scholars, NGO officers, and government officials, alongside 6 focus group discussions (FGDs) representing different demographic categories (men, women, and youths).

Instrumentation and Data Collection

Data collection instruments were tailored to measure both perceived causes of Boko Haram and attitudinal responses toward government and religious institutions.

- ✓ **Structured Questionnaire:**
  - Divided into four sections: socio-demographic data, perceived socio-economic causes, political/governance causes, and religious/ideological influences.
  - Items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree).
- ✓ **Interview and FGD Guides:**
  - Open-ended questions explored participants' narratives on how poverty, injustice, and ideology shaped the rise of Boko Haram.
  - Probing questions examined how respondents view government responsibility and community complicity.

The data were collected between March and May 2024 by trained research assistants proficient in Hausa and Kanuri, ensuring accurate translation and interpretation of sensitive issues.

Validity and Reliability

Instrument validity was ensured through expert review and a pilot test conducted in Mafa LGA. Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient for the survey instrument was 0.86, indicating high internal consistency. To enhance credibility, qualitative data were triangulated across different respondent categories and cross-verified with secondary sources such as policy reports and NGO assessments.

Data Analysis

- **Quantitative data** were analyzed using SPSS Version 26, employing descriptive statistics (frequency, mean, and percentage) and inferential analysis (chi-square tests) to examine relationships between socio-economic status and perceptions of terrorism causes.
- **Qualitative data** from KIIs and FGDs were transcribed and analyzed thematically using **NVivo software**, identifying recurring themes such as "poverty," "government neglect," and "religious manipulation."

Results from both data strands were integrated to provide a comprehensive understanding of how Borno residents perceive the drivers of Boko Haram's emergence and persistence.

Results and Discussion

This section presents the findings on how residents of Borno State perceive the root causes of Boko Haram terrorism. The discussion integrates both quantitative results (survey data) and qualitative insights (interviews and FGDs) to provide a comprehensive interpretation of public perceptions.

Four major thematic categories emerged:

- ✓ **Socio-economic deprivation and unemployment**,
- ✓ **Corruption and governance failure**,
- ✓ **Religious manipulation and ideological distortion**, and
- ✓ **Community disintegration and erosion of traditional control systems.**

Socio-Economic Deprivation and Unemployment

Findings revealed that the majority of respondents viewed economic hardship and youth unemployment as the primary causes of Boko Haram's emergence. As shown in Table 1, 76% of respondents strongly agreed that poverty and lack of jobs among youths were central to the insurgency, while 68% linked the group's appeal to economic inequality and hopelessness.

Table 1. Respondents' Perceptions of Socio-Economic Causes of Boko Haram Insurgency (n = 420)

Perceived Cause	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)
Poverty and unemployment	56	20	12	8	4
Economic inequality	47	21	18	9	5
Lack of education	44	25	15	10	6
Youth marginalization	49	23	13	9	6
Collapse of local markets	38	26	19	10	7

A male FGD participant from Bama remarked:

"When you have young people without jobs or hope, and they see politicians getting rich overnight, anger builds. Boko Haram only used that anger to recruit them."

This perception aligns with Relative Deprivation Theory (Gurr, 1970), which posits that perceived inequality and unmet expectations generate resentment and collective aggression. For many participants, Boko Haram symbolized a misguided rebellion against a system that had long excluded them from the benefits of governance and modernization.

Corruption and Governance Failure

The second major category was **poor governance and corruption**, cited by **68%** of respondents as a key driver of the insurgency. Many participants attributed Boko Haram's rise to the loss of public trust in political institutions and the perceived moral decay of leaders.

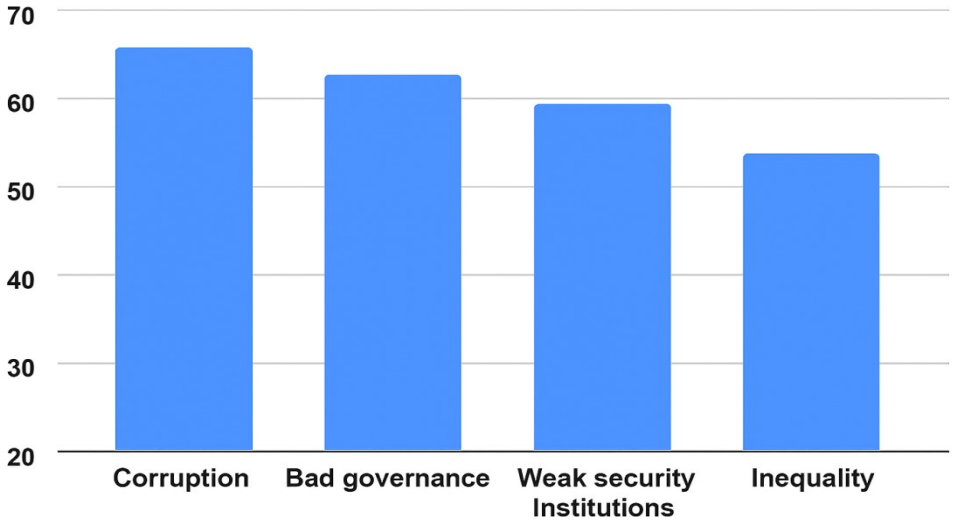


Figure 3. Perceived Political and Governance-Related Causes of Boko Haram Terrorism *(A bar chart showing: Corruption – 68%, Bad governance – 64%, Weak security institutions – 59%, Inequality – 53%.)*

Qualitative evidence reinforced this view. A community leader in Maiduguri explained:

"Before Boko Haram, people had already lost faith in government. No jobs, no electricity, no schools. When leaders live in luxury and the poor suffer, resentment grows."

This finding supports Frustration–Aggression Hypothesis (Dollard et al., 1939), which explains how sustained frustration due to blocked aspirations leads to aggression, rebellion, or radicalization. The perceived corruption of political elites thus became a symbolic grievance that extremist groups exploited to justify violence against state structures.

Religious Manipulation and Ideological Distortion

While poverty and corruption were widely acknowledged, 54% of respondents identified religious manipulation and misinterpretation of Islamic teachings as central to Boko Haram's ideological appeal. Respondents emphasized that extremist leaders distorted religious texts to legitimize violence and recruit followers.

Table 2. Respondents' Perceptions of Religious and Ideological Causes of Boko Haram Insurgency

Perceived Cause	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)
Religious manipulation	38	16	19	17	10
Ignorance of true Islam	40	22	15	12	11
Influence of radical preachers	37	18	20	15	10
External jihadist influence	32	20	18	17	13

A cleric interviewed in Gwoza explained:

"The real Islam does not teach violence. The problem is ignorance. Many youths who followed Boko Haram never studied the Qur'an deeply; they were deceived by people who promised paradise through killing."

This aligns with findings by Olojo (2020) and Mustapha (2019) that ideological extremism in Nigeria thrives where religious education is weak and socio-economic frustration is high. It also supports the Social Disorganization Theory, which emphasizes that weakened family, educational, and religious institutions create environments where deviant ideologies flourish unchecked.

Community Disintegration and Weak Social Control

About 59% of respondents agreed that the collapse of traditional authority and weak community institutions contributed to Boko Haram's spread. FGDs revealed that before the conflict, community elders, Islamic scholars, and youth groups played mediating roles in dispute resolution and moral guidance. However, years of poverty, migration, and political interference weakened these traditional structures.

A youth leader in Maiduguri noted:

"In the past, our elders guided us. But now, the family system has broken down. Everyone is on their own. That is why young people follow anyone who promises help even extremists."

This echoes Social Disorganization Theory (Shaw & McKay, 1942), highlighting how structural disintegration and moral vacuum at the community level create fertile ground for deviant or extremist movements.

Integrated Analysis

The results reveal a multi-causal perception of Boko Haram's roots among the people of Borno State. Respondents did not attribute the insurgency to a single factor but to a combination of economic deprivation, political corruption, religious manipulation, and social breakdown. These perceptions align with a structural-psychological model of terrorism, where material grievances (Relative Deprivation) combine with emotional frustration (Frustration–Aggression) and weakened institutions (Social Disorganization) to produce radical outcomes.

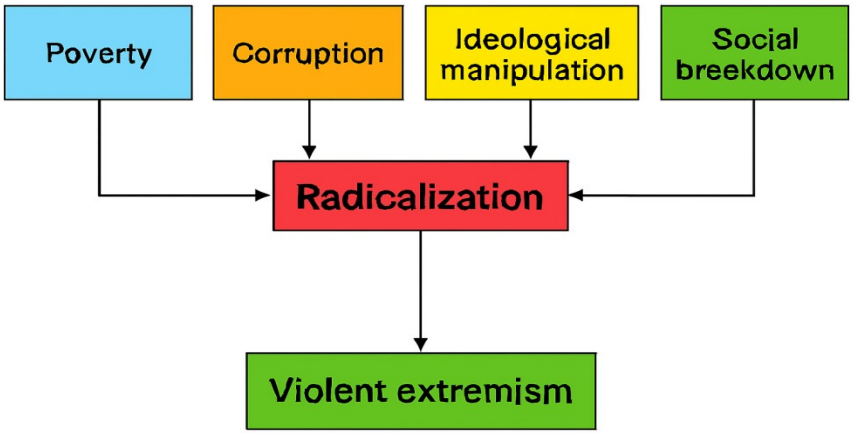


Figure 4. Integrated Model of Perceived Root Causes of Boko Haram Terrorism in Borno State
(A conceptual diagram showing interconnected boxes for Poverty, Corruption, Ideological Manipulation, and Social Breakdown feeding into "Radicalization" → "Violent Extremism.")

Discussion in Relation to Theory

- **Relative Deprivation Theory:** The study confirms that perceived inequality and injustice were powerful psychological motivators for radicalization. Boko Haram exploited this sense of exclusion to frame its ideology as resistance to corrupt governance.
- **Frustration–Aggression Hypothesis:** The emotional anger and hopelessness among unemployed youth transformed into aggression, which extremist leaders redirected toward the state and its institutions.
- **Social Disorganization Theory:** The weakening of family, religious, and local governance institutions eroded social control, creating a void filled by extremist movements offering identity and purpose.

Together, these theoretical interpretations demonstrate that terrorism is not simply the product of ideology, but a **symptom of deeper socio-economic and institutional failures**.

Summary of Findings

- **76%** of respondents identified poverty and unemployment as key causes.
- **68%** linked the insurgency to corruption and governance failure.
- **54%** attributed it to religious manipulation and ideological distortion.
- **59%** highlighted the breakdown of traditional social structures.
- Qualitative data revealed a shared narrative of exclusion, frustration, and loss of faith in institutions.

Conclusion

The findings of this study demonstrate that Boko Haram terrorism in Borno State is deeply rooted in structural poverty, political corruption, ideological distortion, and social disintegration. Public perceptions strongly suggest that the insurgency did not arise in isolation, but rather as the consequence of decades of economic neglect, unemployment, and moral decay within both state and community institutions. The majority of respondents attributed the emergence of Boko Haram to the cumulative effects of youth marginalization, governance failure, and the manipulation of religion for political and personal gain.

These findings reaffirm the propositions of Relative Deprivation Theory and the Frustration–Aggression Hypothesis, which link perceived inequality and blocked aspirations to collective resentment and violence. When coupled with the insights from Social Disorganization Theory, it becomes evident that the erosion of social institutions and moral order in Borno created an enabling environment for radical ideologies to thrive.

The study therefore concludes that Boko Haram is not merely a religious or ideological phenomenon, but a social protest movement turned violent born from systemic exclusion, nurtured by institutional decay, and sustained by the failure of the state to provide equitable opportunities and justice.

Addressing terrorism in Borno State thus requires more than military intervention; it calls for deep socio-economic reforms, moral reorientation, and community rebuilding. Unless the underlying drivers poverty, corruption, and ignorance are effectively tackled, the conditions that gave rise to Boko Haram will continue to produce cycles of extremism and instability in the region.

Recommendations

- **Economic Empowerment and Job Creation:** Sustainable counterterrorism efforts must include targeted **youth employment programs** and **microenterprise initiatives** that address structural poverty. Government and NGOs should prioritize vocational training, microcredit access, and small business development in Borno's post-conflict recovery agenda.
- **Governance Reforms and Anti-Corruption Accountability**: Strengthening transparency and reducing corruption are essential to rebuilding trust between citizens and the state. Local governance structures should be reformed to ensure **inclusive participation**, **budget accountability**, and **responsive public service delivery**.
- **Religious Reorientation and Interfaith Dialogue**: Religious institutions must play a central role in **countering extremist narratives**. Investment in **Islamic education reform** emphasizing peace, tolerance, and civic responsibility is vital. Collaboration between traditional scholars (*ulama*), youth preachers, and government agencies can help demystify extremist ideologies.
- **Community Rebuilding and Social Cohesion**: Post-insurgency recovery programs should focus on restoring **traditional leadership structures**, **community dialogue forums**, and **youth mentorship programs**. Reviving these systems of moral guidance will help reestablish collective identity and reduce vulnerability to radical recruitment.
- **Education and Ideological Literacy**: Expanding access to quality education, especially for rural and displaced youth, remains the most sustainable defense against extremist ideologies. Curriculum reforms should incorporate **peace education**, **civic studies**, and **critical thinking skills** to build resilience against indoctrination.
- **Integrated Psychosocial and Deradicalization Programs**: Rehabilitation of ex-combatants and reintegration of displaced persons must include **mental health support**, **skills training**, and **community reconciliation mechanisms** to prevent re-radicalization and ensure sustainable peace.
- **Partnership between State and Civil Society**: Effective prevention of terrorism requires synergy between **government, community organizations, faith leaders, and international partners**. Multi-stakeholder approaches should ensure that counterterrorism policies are culturally sensitive and locally owned.

Policy Implications

The implications of these findings are both practical and strategic. To achieve lasting peace and stability, Nigerian policymakers must reframe counterterrorism as **a human development challenge rather than a purely security concern**. This paradigm shift demands coordinated investment in education, youth empowerment, and local governance reforms.

Such an approach aligns with the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):**

- **SDG 1 (No Poverty):** By addressing economic inequality and joblessness.
- **SDG 4 (Quality Education):** By providing ideological literacy and moral education.
- **SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth):** Through livelihood restoration and skills development.
- **SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions):** By rebuilding trust, justice, and community resilience.

Final Reflection

Boko Haram's story is ultimately the story of a people left behind. The voices from Borno State make it clear that terrorism is not born in mosques or madrassas it is born in poverty, injustice, and broken trust. Rebuilding peace therefore means rebuilding the human spirit: through fairness, opportunity, and faith in shared humanity.

Only when governance becomes inclusive, education becomes enlightening, and justice becomes real will the ideology of violence lose its grip on the people of the northeast.

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