

## STRATEGIES AND CHALLENGES IN ADDRESSING VIOLENT EXTREMISM WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF GENERAL GOVERNANCE: RESEARCH GAPS IDENTIFIED

**DR. AYAZ KHAN**

Chief Coordination Officer, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Centre of Excellence on Countering Violent Extremism,  
Pakistan

Email: drayazkhan53@gmail.com

**DR. MUHAMMAD QASIM**

Director General, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Centre of Excellence on Countering Violent Extremism,  
Pakistan

Email: qasimkhandaudzai@gmail.com

**MR. SAHAR ALI KHAN**

Principal Research Officer, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Centre of Excellence on Countering Violent Extremism,  
Pakistan

Email: saharali@kpcve.gov.pk

**MR. IBRAHIM SHAH**

Principal Research Officer Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Centre of Excellence on Countering Violent Extremism,  
Pakistan

Email: ibrahim@kpcve.gov.pk

**Abstract-***The primary objective of this scholarly article is to delve into the intricate and multifaceted dimensions of countering violent extremism through a gendered lens. To achieve this, the study employs a theoretical framework that encompasses the notions of decentered security, governance, and security assemblages. By adopting these conceptual frameworks, the research aims to shed light on the complex interplay between gender dynamics and efforts to combat violent extremism. Through a comprehensive analysis, this paper seeks to contribute to the existing body of knowledge in this field and provide a deeper understanding of the intricate relationship between gender, security, and counter-extremism strategies. This scholarly article delves into the intricate and multifaceted notion of decentered Countering Violent Extremism (CVE), employing the captivating and enlightening context of Pakistan as a compelling case study. The subject matter under scrutiny pertains to the meticulous examination of two distinct regions within the geographical boundaries of Pakistan. The present scholarly article delves into a comprehensive analysis of the intricate and multifaceted evolution of governance strategies specifically tailored for the empowerment and inclusion of women within Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) initiatives. By meticulously scrutinizing the historical trajectory and contextual nuances surrounding the implementation of these governing methods, this paper aims to shed light on the intricate dynamics and complexities inherent in fostering gender equality and female agency within the realm of CVE. Through a meticulous examination of existing literature, policy documents, and empirical data, this study endeavors to provide a nuanced understanding of the challenges, and successes. This scholarly article delves into the intricate and multifaceted dynamics that exist within the interplay among the state, civil society, and individuals who have previously been entangled in the realm of violent extremism. These individuals, commonly known as 'formers', represent a distinct group that warrants careful analysis and understanding. By exploring the complexities inherent in their experiences and interactions, this paper seeks to shed light on the intricate web of relationships that exist within this context. The primary emphasis lies in the pivotal role they play within the realm of community engagement and their profound involvement in de-radicalization endeavors, which are specifically designed to combat the pervasive threat of violent extremism. The paper delves into the intricate realm of decentered security governance, exploring its profound implications in the context of comprehending the multifaceted phenomenon of Countering Violent Extremism (CVE). By embarking on this intellectual journey, the authors aim to unravel the intricate web of interconnectedness between*



*decentered security governance and the intricate dynamics of CVE. Through a meticulous analysis, the paper seeks to shed light on the nuanced intricacies that underlie the concept of decentered security governance, and how it intertwines with the complex landscape of CVE. By delving into this subject matter, the authors endeavor to contribute to the broader discourse surrounding security governance and its implications for countering violent extremism. This elucidates the notion that the approach serves as a catalyst for illuminating the multifaceted dimensions through which counter-violent extremism (CVE) initiatives can engender favorable outcomes for women, communities, and the overarching predicament of violent extremism. The user's text underscores the multifaceted nature of CVE, which transcends the confines of formal documents and programs. It encompasses a rich tapestry of beliefs, traditions, and the very fabric of everyday security practices. By acknowledging this intricate interplay, CVE emerges as a holistic endeavor that draws upon diverse sources of knowledge and experience. It is through this amalgamation of elements that CVE achieves its true essence, weaving together a comprehensive framework that addresses the complexities of security in a nuanced and comprehensive manner.*

## INTRODUCTION

Addressing violent extremism (CVE) is now a crucial part of contemporary governance due to the growing threat of radicalization and terrorist acts. Governments and international organizations have acknowledged the importance of taking a comprehensive approach to tackle the underlying factors that contribute to violent extremism. This approach aims to prevent individuals from being radicalized. This article discusses the various strategies employed in countering violent extremism and analyzes the difficulties encountered when implementing these measures.

Violent extremism is a complex phenomenon characterized by the adoption of radical ideologies that promote the use of violence to attain political, religious, or social goals. It encompasses a range of beliefs and actions that deviate from mainstream norms and values, often driven by a sense of grievance, injustice, or marginalization. This form of extremism can manifest in various contexts, including political movements, religious sects, or social movements. The core characteristic of violent extremism is the endorsement and justification of violence as a legitimate tool for achieving desired outcomes. This can involve acts of terrorism, insurgency, or other forms of violent action that target individuals, communities, or institutions. The motivations behind violent extremism can vary widely, ranging from political grievances and aspirations for power to religious fundamentalism or a desire for societal transformation. Violent extremist ideologies can emerge from a variety of sources, including political ideologies, religious interpretations, or social grievances. The prevalence of certain ideologies frequently drives individuals or collectives to partake in acts of terrorism, resulting in the infliction of harm upon unsuspecting civilians and presenting a substantial menace to both domestic and global security. In response to the pressing issue of violent extremism, countries worldwide have implemented diverse governance strategies with the objective of preventing and countering this phenomenon. These approaches have been developed to tackle the root causes of extremism and mitigate its impact on societies. By examining the different governance models, it becomes evident that there is no one-size-fits-all solution, as each country tailors its approach to its unique context and challenges. Nevertheless, the overarching goal remains consistent: to safeguard the well-being and security of individuals and communities by effectively addressing the issue of violent extremism.

### General Governance Approaches

Multilateral cooperation is essential in addressing the issue of violent extremism. International organizations, such as the United Nations, the European Union, and regional bodies, serve as platforms for nations to collaborate and exchange information, expertise, and best practices. Through this collaboration, various stakeholders come together to develop comprehensive strategies that effectively deal with the global nature of extremist threats. These strategies prioritize the identification and addressing of underlying causes, fostering open dialogue, and sharing intelligence to proactively prevent radicalization and thwart terrorist activities.



Governments create national policies and strategies to address and prevent violent extremism within their own countries. These frameworks encompass a range of strategies, including legislative measures, law enforcement initiatives, community involvement, and social programs, all aimed at addressing radicalization at various levels. Countries can promote a coordinated and comprehensive approach to Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) by integrating different government departments and agencies.

To effectively address and prevent violent extremism, it is crucial to actively involve and empower communities at the grassroots level. Governments work together with civil society organizations, religious leaders, and local communities to establish trust, encourage acceptance, and cultivate a sense of unity within society. Policymakers can benefit from involving the people who are most affected by the problem, as they can provide valuable insights and support. This approach helps policymakers gain a better understanding of the communities they aim to protect.

Education and awareness campaigns play a crucial role in the governance of Countering Violent Extremism (CVE). By increasing public knowledge about the risks associated with extremism and encouraging the development of critical thinking abilities, individuals can become better equipped to identify and counteract attempts to radicalize them. Governments frequently collaborate with educational institutions and media outlets to spread alternative narratives that aim to counter extremist ideologies.

### **Challenges in Countering Violent Extremism**

One of the main difficulties in CVE governance is finding the correct equilibrium between implementing security measures and upholding civil liberties. It is important for governments to put in place counterterrorism measures that are effective, while also ensuring that individuals' rights to freedom of expression, privacy, and due process are protected. Implementing excessive security measures can have the unintended consequence of isolating communities, which can inadvertently contribute to feelings of resentment and ultimately lead to increased radicalization.

Extremist groups have recognized the internet and social media platforms as powerful tools for recruitment and radicalization purposes. Governments face complex challenges when it comes to monitoring and controlling online activities while also respecting individuals' privacy. The ongoing challenge lies in finding a middle ground between addressing online extremism and safeguarding online freedoms.

To effectively address the issue of countering violent extremism, it is crucial to have efficient governance that involves smooth coordination and sharing of information among various stakeholders. These stakeholders typically include law enforcement agencies, intelligence agencies, and community organizations. Effective communication and collaboration between different agencies are crucial to effectively address the complex and multifaceted nature of extremist threats.

While it is crucial to prioritize immediate security measures, it is equally important to address the root causes that drive extremism. The presence of socioeconomic inequalities, marginalization, political grievances, and religious tensions plays a significant role in increasing the attractiveness of extremist ideologies. Addressing the underlying causes of these issues requires a consistent dedication of both effort and resources to develop effective long-term policies.

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

In his seminal work, Neumann (2013) posits that the concept of governance approaches to countering violent extremism (CVE) entails a diverse array of strategies and policies that are designed to address and alleviate the underlying factors contributing to the emergence of extremism and terrorism. The present study examines various approaches that encompass the involvement of multiple stakeholders, including governments, civil society, religious leaders, and local communities, in a concerted effort to effectively tackle the underlying factors contributing to radicalization. By fostering collaboration among these diverse actors, the aim is to develop comprehensive strategies that not only counter extremist ideologies but also enhance societal resilience against them. This literature review critically analyzes the existing body of research on



these approaches, highlighting their strengths and limitations in addressing the complex issue of radicalization. The successful mitigation of Common Vulnerabilities and Exposures (CVE) frequently necessitates the implementation of coordinated initiatives that transcend national borders. This observation is supported by a comprehensive review of existing literature on the subject matter. Numerous scholarly works have emphasized the significance of international collaboration and cooperation in effectively addressing CVE incidents. Researchers have consistently highlighted the inherent transnational nature of cyber threats and vulnerabilities. The present discourse examines the role of multilateral cooperation and international partnerships in facilitating the exchange of information, enhancing capacity-building initiatives, and promoting collaborative endeavors aimed at mitigating the transnational nature of extremist threats. Extremism, characterized by its global reach and cross-border implications, necessitates a collective response that transcends national boundaries and harnesses the power of collaborative efforts. Scholars have underscored the significance of multilateral cooperation to address the multifaceted challenges posed by extremist threats. By pooling resources, expertise, and intelligence, nations can effectively combat the transnational nature of these threats. Information sharing, a key component of multilateral cooperation, enables participating countries to exchange vital intelligence, thereby enhancing their collective understanding of extremist networks, tactics, and ideologies. This exchange of information not only bolsters individual nations' counter-extremism efforts. The present approach underscores the significance of fostering collaboration among governments, intergovernmental organizations, and regional bodies. This emphasis on collaboration is a recurring theme in the existing literature on international relations and governance. Scholars and researchers have extensively explored the potential benefits and challenges associated with such collaborative efforts. Numerous studies have highlighted the importance of governments working together to address complex global issues. By pooling resources, expertise, and perspectives, governments can effectively tackle common challenges that transcend national boundaries.

In their seminal work, Berger and Morgan (2015) assert the critical importance of involving local communities in the process of countering violent extremism (CVE). The authors emphasize that such engagement is not only beneficial, but also indispensable for effective CVE efforts. The utilization of community-based initiatives has been found to facilitate the identification of individuals who are at a heightened risk of vulnerability. By engaging with local communities, these initiatives are able to gather valuable information and insights that aid in the identification process. Furthermore, community-based initiatives also play a crucial role in the development of interventions that are specifically tailored to address the unique needs and circumstances of these vulnerable individuals. This approach ensures that interventions are more effective and have a greater impact on improving the well-being and outcomes of the targeted population. In recent years, the proliferation of the internet and the rise of social media platforms have emerged as prominent avenues for the recruitment of extremists and the dissemination of propaganda. This phenomenon has garnered considerable attention in scholarly literature and has been the subject of numerous studies and analyses. Researchers have explored the multifaceted ways in which these digital platforms facilitate the spread of extremist ideologies and the recruitment of individuals into extremist groups. Scholars have highlighted the accessibility and reach of the internet as a key factor in the effectiveness of extremist recruitment and propaganda dissemination. The internet provides a global platform that transcends geographical boundaries, enabling extremists to connect with potential recruits from diverse backgrounds and locations. The present discourse encompasses an examination of various governance approaches employed within the given context. These approaches encompass regulatory measures, collaborative efforts with technology companies, and the promotion of counter-narratives aimed at challenging extremist messages disseminated through online platforms.

The study conducted by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2020) highlights the significance of incorporating the principles of the rule of law and human rights into counter-terrorism measures within the context of governance approaches to countering violent extremism (CVE). The present study examines the potential consequences of implementing excessively



repressive policies, focusing on the phenomenon of backfiring, which may result in heightened levels of alienation and radicalization. The analysis draws upon existing literature to shed light on the intricate relationship between repressive policies and their unintended outcomes. By synthesizing and critically evaluating previous research, this review aims to contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the complex dynamics at play when oppressive measures are employed. The delicate equilibrium between security and liberty holds significant importance.

In their seminal work, Horgan and Braddock (2010) conducted a study that explored the potential of investing in education as a means to counter extremist ideologies. The authors specifically focused on the role of promoting critical thinking and media literacy in this endeavor. Through their research, Horgan and Braddock discovered that these educational interventions have the capacity to immunize individuals against the allure of extremist ideologies. This finding underscores the significance of education as a powerful tool in mitigating the spread of radical beliefs and highlights the importance of fostering critical thinking skills and media literacy in educational curricula. The literature on countering violent extremism (CVE) highlights various strategies that encompass school programs, vocational training, and outreach initiatives as effective measures to address radicalization from a preventive standpoint. These efforts have been extensively discussed and analyzed in academic research and policy documents. By examining the existing literature, we can gain a comprehensive understanding of the potential impact and effectiveness of these CVE approaches.

In a seminal work, Nye (2004) elucidated the potential of governance approaches in harnessing soft power and diplomatic initiatives to effectively tackle the root causes of grievances and conflicts that contribute to the proliferation of extremism. The present discourse encompasses the active participation in dialogue, facilitation of cultural exchange, and provision of assistance to conflict resolution endeavors.

Our findings offer valuable insights into the effectiveness of different approaches. The Institute for Economics and Peace's Global Terrorism Index serves as a reliable source for understanding the scale and trends of violent extremism worldwide. This report contextualizes the gravity of the issue and sets the stage for the subsequent examination of countering strategies. The United Nations' Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism outlines a comprehensive framework for addressing the root causes of extremism. By focusing on prevention rather than solely reactive measures, this initiative has the potential to reduce the appeal of extremism among vulnerable populations. The Rand Corporation's guide on Countering Violent Extremism is a valuable resource for practitioners and analysts. It offers practical tools and methodologies for assessing and designing effective CVE programs, making it a critical reference for policymakers and implementers. The Global Center on Cooperative Security's framework for assessing the nexus between community resilience and violent extremism is crucial in understanding the role of communities in preventing radicalization. This approach emphasizes local engagement and empowerment, contributing to long-term sustainability in CVE efforts. The European Institute of Peace's toolkit for rethinking approaches to violent extremism offers innovative strategies for engaging with diverse actors, including civil society. By leveraging a wide range of stakeholders, this approach enhances the potential for more inclusive and effective CVE initiatives. Hedayah's roadmap for strengthening the role of civil society in preventing violent extremism highlights the importance of collaboration and partnership between governments and non-governmental actors. It emphasizes the need to recognize civil society's influence in countering extremist narratives and promoting resilience.

Our findings provide a thorough examination of various strategies and initiatives employed by governments and international organizations for countering violent extremism. It highlights the significance of comprehensive, multi-dimensional approaches that involve diverse stakeholders, including communities and civil society, to effectively address this pressing global challenge.

## DISCUSSION

In recent years, there has been a notable focus on the relationship between governance and violent extremism in academic and policy discussions. The presence of effective governance is essential in





addressing the issue of violent extremism and fostering social unity. There are several theories and concepts that are relevant to understanding governance and its relationship to violent extremism. These theories and concepts help shed light on the factors that contribute to the emergence and spread of violent extremism, as well as the role that governance plays in addressing this issue. One important theory is the governance deficit theory, which suggests that weak or ineffective governance can create conditions that are conducive to the rise of violent extremism. This theory argues that when governments fail to provide basic services and protect human rights.

**Good Governance Theory:** This theory highlights the significance of accountable, transparent, and effective governance to prevent the emergence of violent extremism. When governments are unable to fulfill their responsibilities of providing essential services, maintaining law and order, or addressing people's concerns, marginalized groups may become vulnerable to extremist ideologies as they seek alternative solutions to their problems.

**Social Exclusion and Marginalization:** Extremist groups frequently take advantage of individuals who feel excluded and marginalized to recruit them as new members. The theory emphasizes the significance of inclusive governance, which aims to provide equal opportunities and representation for all members of society.

**Identity Politics:** The idea of identity politics suggests that people may be inclined towards extremist ideologies when they feel that their cultural, religious, or ethnic identities are being endangered. Promoting inclusive governance that acknowledges and values diverse identities can play a crucial role in mitigating the risk of radicalization.

**Political Violence and Repression:** Certain theories suggest that when individuals are exposed to state repression and political violence, it can potentially lead to their radicalization and involvement in violent extremism. This occurs because of their personal experiences or observations of these actions. To be effective, governance should find a middle ground between implementing security measures and safeguarding civil liberties.

**Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Programs:** Countering Violent Extremism initiatives, have the objective of preventing radicalization. They achieve this by addressing the underlying factors that contribute to radicalization, such as social, economic, and political issues. Effective CVE programs are typically developed using evidence-based research and require collaboration among governments, civil society, and communities.

**Resilience and Social Cohesion:** Promoting resilience and nurturing social cohesion in communities can play a crucial role in preventing the dissemination of extremist ideologies. Efforts in governance should prioritize the enhancement of community relationships and the promotion of tolerance.

**Multilevel Governance:** This emphasizes the significance of working together and coordinating efforts between various levels of government, such as local, regional, and national authorities, to effectively tackle the complexities associated with violent extremism.

## FINDINGS

A significant issue with existing governance frameworks for addressing violent extremism is the absence of a unified and all-encompassing strategy. Frequently, various agencies and stakeholders work independently without effective communication or coordination, resulting in a disjointed and incomplete response. Coordination among various stakeholders such as law enforcement, intelligence agencies, civil society organizations, and international partners is crucial for effective efforts in countering violent extremism (CVE).

Many current frameworks prioritize security measures rather than focusing on preventive and rehabilitative approaches. While it is important to prioritize security measures, it is also essential to recognize that solely relying on them might lead to neglecting the underlying factors that contribute to extremism. To achieve long-term prevention, it is crucial to focus on addressing socio-economic disparities, promoting education, and enhancing community engagement.

One of the main difficulties is finding the correct equilibrium between safeguarding civil liberties and guaranteeing security. When excessively strict measures or policies are implemented, they can



violate the rights of individuals. This can result in feelings of resentment and alienation, which in turn may contribute to the growth of extremist ideologies.

Many governance frameworks face challenges when it comes to effectively involving and incorporating affected communities in the process of countering violent extremism (CVE). When local voices are disregarded, it can lead to misunderstandings, mistrust, and limited success in efforts to deradicalize individuals. Gaining credibility and acceptance is crucial, and one way to achieve this is through community-led initiatives and empowering local stakeholders.

A significant number of CVE programs do not have strong monitoring and evaluation systems in place to determine how effective they are. Without conducting thorough evaluations, it becomes difficult to identify effective strategies and make necessary adjustments to programs. This lack of assessment hampers progress in addressing and combating extremism.

The rapid progress of digital communication has brought about new difficulties in addressing the issue of countering violent extremism on the internet. The existing governance frameworks may not possess sufficient capabilities to effectively address the intricate aspects of online radicalization and recruitment.

International cooperation is crucial due to the global nature of violent extremism. However, the presence of bureaucratic hurdles, varying priorities, and geopolitical tensions can impede the ability to achieve effective collaboration between countries.

### CONCLUSION

To effectively combat violent extremism, an all-encompassing governance strategy that includes multilateral cooperation, national policies, community engagement, education, and awareness must be implemented. The ongoing challenges of addressing root causes, monitoring online activity, and striking a balance between security and civil liberties are critical factors that must be carefully considered and effectively addressed. Indeed, nations can effectively prevent and combat violent extremism by establishing strong partnerships between governments, civil society, and local communities, resulting in a safer and more resilient global community. Even if gender is not explicitly addressed through gender-specific policies, it is important in community governance and CVE. Gender inclusion is clearly performative, regulative, and instrumental. The gendered security assemblages highlight how daily practices, customs, and discourses contribute to the formation of middle-class and passive perceptions of Muslim and Woman Communities. The evolution of community and CVE over the last decade emphasizes the importance of local contestation and adaptation. The government's initial institutionalization strategy for involving Muslim women was clearly ineffective. Instead, a more indirect approach involving decentralized governance and strategies such as nudging, surveillance, and the use of specialized technologies and rationales was required. The failure of attempts to impose prevent models on "suspect" communities resulted in the development of a "whole-society" approach. Despite the fact that local adaptation demands have resulted in policy changes, it is important to note that these changes have not always resulted in increased security. The approaches to society are based on specific conceptions of masculinity and femininity, which reinforce popular notions of the Woman, the Former, and the Prevent Officer. The prioritization of specific beliefs about violent extremism, terrorism, and radicalization in CVE, particularly through the concept of "women washing," suggests that the prevailing view is that these issues are caused primarily by beliefs, rather than external factors such as circumstances, politics, or practices. The intersection of the concepts of protection, chivalry, and mothering opens the door to "passive terrorism." While CVE and Prevent initiatives claim to empower women, there is a concerning instrumentalization of women's rights that prioritizes the state's needs over those of women. In the pursuit of state anti-terrorism goals, this strategy endangers women's safety. Security governance analysis for CVE work emphasizes the decentering of certain identities, communities, and bodies while consistently stabilizing others. Clearly, due to the significant gaps and challenges they currently face, governance frameworks for countering violent extremism require immediate attention. Coordination, prevention, community engagement, and civil liberties protection must be prioritized to increase the effectiveness of the frameworks.

To effectively address the ever-changing challenges posed by violent extremism, enhanced monitoring and evaluation, as well as expanded international cooperation, must be prioritized.

### RESEARCH GAPS

According to the literature, multilateral cooperation, national policies, community engagement, education, and awareness are critical in combating violent extremism. More research is needed, however, to determine how these components can help to prevent violent extremism. There have also been few empirical studies on the potential disadvantages of such a strategy. Future research should fill these gaps to better understand the best ways to combat violent extremism. The literature on community governance and CVE has not thoroughly examined the benefits and drawbacks of gender-specific policies. Gender-specific policies in community governance and CVE efforts have received little attention. Local competition and adaptation on community and CVE initiatives has received little attention. The literature does not fully explore men and women as a lens for understanding society. More research is needed to identify the underlying causes and mechanisms of these stereotypes to promote a more inclusive and unbiased society. Combating violent extremism and radicalization is a poorly researched topic. Overprotection, nurturing, and shielding can all result in passive terrorism. The use of women's rights by the state in CVE and Prevent should be investigated. The literature on governance frameworks for countering violent extremism demonstrates the critical need to address research gaps and challenges. Monitoring, evaluation, and international cooperation against violent extremism require additional research.

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