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Original Article

(Re)Articulating the Islamic Model of Security and Peacebuilding Mechanisms Amid a Deteriorating Security Climate in Northwest Nigeria

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Abstract: Islamic abstraction of peacebuilding cannot be sequestered from the total experiences within the broader normative developments and comprehensive framework that galvanized the international action that has reimagined the security agenda to focus on human security over the past decades. At the instance of the deterioration of the security climate owing to the protracted menace of armed banditry and other associated crimes in Northwest Nigeria, the UN among other international actors, introduced an integrated peacebuilding approach to deal with security and development issues. This led to the operationalization of peacebuilding in the region. Peacebuilding has been an uphill struggle in the Northwest. Moments of reconciliatory openings have ended with a relapse to violent conflict; the amnesty programs in both Zamfara and Katsina states are a clear pointer to this peril. Studies have explained that the failure of preventive mechanisms for violent conflicts and post-conflict reconstruction (peacebuilding structures) is largely due to the lack of an articulate and integrated engagement culture. One that will accommodate the needs of the operating environment taking into cognizance the religion, culture, and history of the social setting. The paper uses the semi-structured interview involving thirty participants from three states in the region; Katsina, Sokoto, and Zamfara as instrument for data collection. Using the qualitative, constructivist grounded theory approach, the paper analyzes the responses from the research participants (respondents) about the region's peacebuilding predicaments. It thus indicates the foundational- historical, socio-political, and security contexts that made violent conflict resilient. Simply put, the paper amplifies the failure of learning to learn from history. The respondents singled out the distortion of rural sociology as the major trigger. To a tune of almost 100%, the rural economy in the Northwest is agriculture-dependent. Thus, the adage; "*noma na duke tshohon ciniki, kowa yazo duniya kai ya tarar*". To forestall the escalation of insecurity, we must begin to search for pathways to restore the pristine rural sociology of the region which was put together by the Sokoto jihad leaders. Nonetheless, the respondents have identified the pathways within the peacebuilding structures and the relative hindrances within them. These include; half-hearted peacebuilding structures and the (dis)articulated Islamic peacebuilding mechanisms. To overcome this drawback, the paper recommends the re-articulation of the Islamic model and its integration into the existing peacebuilding framework.

Keywords: Re-articulation, Islamic, Model, Security, Peacebuilding, Mechanisms, Rural, Sociology.

Introduction: Since the first republic i.e., from independence, it has become glaring that violent religious extremism in the Northern Nigerian region is indeed a potent phenomenon to be reckoned with. The Maitatsine phenomenon, the first violent religious movement reared its ugly head in Kano province circa 1950. By the second republic, 1979-1983, the movement had metamorphosed into a full-blown insurgency. Followers of the group did not see any legitimacy in the Nigerian project, they were disillusioned and thus stayed aloof from the overall social contract. The fractured social contract entered a phase that is characterized by uneasy calm, due to violent repressions of the group by successive military administrations. However, the ideology of the group, notably, Takfiri tendencies, found its way into the doctrinal leanings of various extreme elements. It is therefore not surprising to see that after the return to democracy in 1999, violent religious extremism resurfaced in the form of the Boko-haram insurgency. Which though started in the Northeastern region, has now metastasized to the Northwest.

Before the advent of the Boko-haram insurgency in the Northwest, the region grappled with armed banditry. Now the region contends with a double tragedy; the banditry-terrorism nexus resulting from the unholy alliance between the bandits and insurgents. Peacebuilding has been an uphill struggle in the Northwest. Moments of reconciliatory openings have so far ended with a relapse to violent extremism; the amnesty programs in both Zamfara and Katsina states are a clear pointer to this peril. In Katsina state, for example, the peace and dialogue process was first initiated in 2016 to pacify bandits to disarm them in return for amnesty. Bandit kingpins such as Buharin Daji participated in the initiative and surrendered over three thousand assorted rifles. The initiative was said to have ushered in a period of respite. But this respite was short-lived because it ended with a relapse to banditry, thus requiring yet another process. In 2018, a fresh process was kick-started. This time around agitations from the bandits were collected; mostly, loss of livelihood resulting from pastureland shrinkage and livestock rustling by criminal elements, as well as lack of government investment toward the revitalization of grazing areas along other associated infrastructure. Yet, this initiative did not yield results, as by December 11, 2020, barely two years into the consummation of the amnesty scheme, three hundred school children from Government Science Secondary School Kankara were abducted by the bandits, allegedly in collaboration with the Boko-haram terrorists. Thenceforward, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) launched a peacebuilding initiative in the region covering four states; Kaduna, Katsina, Sokoto, and Zamfara states. Owing to the intricate link between security and development, the UN among other international actors moved to address these twin imperatives and has since broadened the scope of peacebuilding away from post-conflict reconstruction to include the overlapping agendas for peace and development toward conflict prevention, conflict management, and post-conflict reconstruction. UNDP in close collaboration with stakeholders; institutions and communities is seeking pathways to improve the security situation in the region. Will this initiative yield meaningful results, this remains to be seen. The reason is not far-fetched. Studies have

explained that the failure of both the preventive mechanisms to violent conflicts and the post-conflict reconstruction is largely due to reasons associated with the lack of an articulate and integrated engagement culture. One that will accommodate the needs of the operating environment taking into cognizance the religion, culture, and history of the social setting. While analyzing the region's peacebuilding predicaments, this study indicates the foundational- historical, socio-political, and security contexts that made violent conflict resilient. Simply put, the study amplifies the failure of learning to learn from history. The state institutions'- "society" incoherence and the duos' seeming neglect of religion in dealing with what appears "religious" and/or "cultural" amounts to wanting to bury the problem in a fog of denial. The duo cast aspersions to everything religious or cultural in dealing with the mounting agitations from rural areas particularly, the transhumance pastoral communities who decried the shrinking pasture resources. In this study, transhumance pastoralism is considered "a culture" and a way of life to these communities which dates back centuries, and which also is considered a fundamental right in the 1999 constitution, but only not enforceable. This fact is further reinforced by the Islamic experience which sought to make pasture resources and water bodies protected sanctuaries. If only the religio-cultural aspect is leveraged and embedded into the integrated peacebuilding structure, the stakeholders within the peace architecture will appreciate the nature of the sociology of agriculture and food systems in the rural north. Hence, this paper leveraged the Islamic model of peacebuilding with the view to reinforce the current initiative being pursued by both the government and the international actors. But in so doing, the paper argued that for the Islamic model to reinforce the existing peacebuilding framework effectively, it must be rearticulated within the purview of extant international standards and conventions.

Literature Review: To dwell on Security and Peacebuilding amid the deteriorating security climate in Northwest Nigeria, it is pertinent for us to briefly analyze security and development in Central Bilad Al-Sudan from the Kanem-Borno period to the Sokoto Caliphate. For almost a millennium until the 1800s, some kingdoms constituted a distinct geography known as central Sudan. These included the Kanem-Borno and the fourteen Hausa states. Historically, most local agitations leading to conflicts in the Sudan boil down to the prevailing socio-climatic conditions in the region.¹ The landscape relative to the conflict dynamics is intrinsically tied to the changes within the context of the social contract, which in turn is in no small measure influenced by changes within the eco-zone in terms of weather and agriculture resources. The most enduring dynasty in the world is traced to the central Sudanic region, the Sefawa dynasty in Kanem- Borno which lasted over a millennium.² The climate crises which resulted in the shrinkage of Lake Chad and the associated agro-fishery resources are believed to have raised a specter of agitations and insurgencies that truncated the dynasty.³ Since then, peace and development have been intricately linked in the region. Thus, Shehu Usmanu Dan Fodio addressed these twin imperatives; security and development through targeted policies and programs that are carried throughout the caliphate. Farmers'-herders' conflicts were swiftly approached.⁴ The rights of each group were considered sacrosanct and adequately legislated and attended to at least at emirate levels. The somewhat isolated and remote heathen farming communities were labeled *Maguzawa*,⁵ a disambiguation from the concept of *Majus*, the Hijazi Zoroastrian communities that were granted the guarantee of *Mu'āhadah* by Umar (RA), according to

some *āthār*, the authenticity of which is doubted, though. The *Maguzawa* were protected, their lands and forests were equally protected as sanctuaries by law – Islamic law.⁶ Likewise, the pasture resources for the transhumance herders (*burtulla*) were also protected. The caliphate used the community-based management model (*shūra*) to manage natural resources notably, pasture and water resources. *Himā* (nature conservation) became the preoccupation of the emirates to prevent perennial conflicts.⁷ This policy draws from the prophetic example of nature conservation and environmental justice for equitable usage of pasture and water resources as indicated in the following hadith. This is aimed at the protection of rural livelihoods which is dependent on these resources for farming, livestock production, and fishing. Narrated a man of the Companions (RA): I went on an expedition with the Prophet (*Ḥaḍrat Muhammad Rasūlullah Khātām un Nabiyyīn Ṣallallahu ‘alaihi wa ‘alā Ālihi wa Aṣḥābihi wa Ṣallam*), and heard him say,

"People are partners in three things: grazing, pasture, water and fire." [Reported by Ahmad and Abū Dāwud, and its narrators are reliable (thiqah)].⁸

According to Abubakar, Abdullahi bn Fodio emphasized that the Imam should always move to create reserves (Hima and Harims) to serve public utilities.⁹ Al-kala’ alluded to in the above hadith refers to pasture, while Al-mā’ refers to water bodies and Al-nār means; fire firewood.¹⁰ Abdullahi further gave conditions for the creation of Himā, these include;

- i. Only the Imam can authorize its establishment since the Prophet (*Ḥaḍrat Muhammad Rasūlullah Khātām un Nabiyyīn Ṣallallahu ‘alaihi wa ‘alā Ālihi wa Aṣḥābihi wa Ṣallam*) said Himā is for Allah and His messenger. Thus, as the Khalifa of Rasūlullah, the imam has the prerogative to authorize its establishment to the exclusion of others.
- ii. The Himā must be meant for the welfare of the people.
- iii. Once designated, it becomes a sanctuary protected by law. It should not be arbitrarily transferred to anyone, but should rather remain as a public utility.

For us to fully appreciate the Sokoto caliphate’s expansive policy disposition on the land management system, we need to reflect on the sociology of agriculture and food systems in the Hausa states. Agriculture and tending to livestock were the mainstay of the economy of central Sudan. Arabs and North African Muslim merchants were attracted to the region for its horses, salt, hides and skin, and cotton, among other agri-commodities. Agriculture was believed to be the sole employer of labor, and any other trade is meant to serve agriculture; blacksmith for production of farming implements, slaves for farm labor, etc. Judging from Abdullahi bn Fodio’s taxonomy of conditions necessary for the creation of *Hima* and *Harims* (precincts) in the Sudan hitherto mentioned, one tends to understand its rural sociological character. Since rural sociology has as its primary aim improving the well-being of the farming population, food, and agriculture are one of its chief concerns. It also focuses on the sociology of natural resources, and land tenurial systems vis-à-vis social cohesion and/or social disruption, among others.¹¹ The primacy of the land tenure system in the setting of the Sokoto jihad is a significant aspect of the historical context. This is evident in the works of various scholars who have studied the Sokoto Caliphate and its role in shaping the region's land use practices. For instance, Ibrahim emphasizes the significance of land

use policies in the Sokoto Caliphate.¹² This emphasis is rooted in the Caliphate's unique approach to land management that prioritized the common ownership of land by citizens across generations. The Caliphate's land policy prohibited private ownership and monopolization of land, ensuring that it remained a vital resource for the economic and social well-being of its citizens. Similarly, Lovejoy examines the role of plantations in the economy of the Sokoto Caliphate, which underscores the significance of land tenure in the region's development.¹³ Moreover, studies have shown that the Sokoto jihad was instrumental in clearing land for cultivation and establishing settlements. This is reflected in the works of De Lancey, who discusses the role of Islam as an intercultural mediator in urban planning in the Sokoto Empire,¹⁴ and Zehnle, who explores the animal discourse in the Sokoto jihad and its implications for land use.¹⁵

Although the Sokoto jihad leaders gave religious and moral reasons as precursors to the jihad, some scholars argued that there were shreds of evidence of skirmishes between farmers and herders particularly along the Sokoto Rima basin before the jihad period.¹⁶ Indicated that pastoral land degradation and excessive deforestation coupled with climate variabilities were evident centuries before the jihad. The land tenure system was somewhat arbitrarily controlled by the aristocracy, which for the most part is guided by precedence among theero Habe kingdoms.¹⁷ The shrinking pasture resources in the Zamfara valley led to violent agitations and confrontations between the Gobir state and Tuareg groups; Kel-Geres, Itesen among others on the one hand, and the Allibawa Fulani.¹⁸ The Tuaregs allied with the Gobir aristocracy to fight the Fulanis and deny them access to grazing lands in return for an exclusive right to these lands. The Tuaregs are camel herders. The peasant farmers were not also immune from a land grab by the aristocrats who arbitrarily gave permanent land titles in exchange for gifts. In Kitab Al-Farq, Shehu Usmanu accused the aristocrats (Sarakunan Habe) for levying exorbitant taxes on peasant lands. Various Fulani groups including the Kasarawa were inspired by Shehu's social justice mantra. In a bid to secure their grazing lands and water joined the jihad.¹⁹ Jumare further highlighted the deep contestations between the jihadists and the Habe aristocrats concerning strategic alliances in the build-up to the jihad.²⁰ He however lamented the neglect of economic developments within the context of the factors responsible for the jihad:

The jihad [was] a turning point in the social, economic and political history of the Sokoto Rima basin...[and] that to understand the totality of the Sokoto jihad movement, it is necessary not to separate it from the widespread changes that swept across the Sokoto Rima basin in the pre-jihad period.²¹

Hence, it was widely held that the jihad was the climax of the changes that swept across central and western Sudan. Despite the major role played by the twin imperative (security and development), particularly as it affects the land tenure system in the setting of the jihad, this issue received very little attention within the purview of the historiography of the Sokoto jihad movement. The whole character of the agitations that pitched the conflicting sides against one another, has some security cum development tones. These agitations reflect the discourse in the rural sociology of central and western Sudan at that time. The triumvirate knew pretty well that to manage an already tense atmosphere relative to security and development, even though they

had succeeded in establishing a political order, they must pay attention to post-conflict reconstruction through reinvigorated rural sociology. To appreciate the role of the Sokoto jihad leaders in setting the new agenda for security, we need to rearticulate their literary contributions in light of contemporary developments. Thus, the bulk of their take on *Himā*, *Ribāt*, and *Harims*, among other related subjects are rationalized in this study within the context of rural sociology cum security and development, which together constitute an important aspect of the non-kinetic security strategy.

The Sokoto Caliphate Rural Sociology - A Means Toward the Furtherance of the Twin Imperatives: By the twin imperatives, we are referring to security and development. The cardinals upon which peacebuilding is based. Rural sociology focuses on how rural people and communities are socially, culturally, politically, and economically organized. And since historically agriculture has been the major preoccupation of Hausa land, it's therefore not out of place to assert that anything that disrupts agriculture will have a ripple effect on the health of the socio-political, and economic fabric of Hausa society. Throughout their writings, the triumvirate (Shehu Usmanu, Abdullahi Gwandu, and Muhammadu Bello) treated agriculture and livestock keeping as a culture. And by so doing, they were able to project the right policies to regulate the affairs of the caliphate. For as much as the Sultans remained committed to these twin imperatives throughout the reign of the caliphate spanning around 1804 to 1903, the society remained relatively peaceful and prosperous.²² Even the remnants of the Gobirawa who continuously engaged in a brutal insurgency, could not win the hearts of their kins (Habes) since their land tenurial rights were guaranteed. The Habes among other ethnic groups, though most farmers, did not join the insurgency of the Gobirarwa. This insurgency was subdued at the battle of Tsibiri where Sultan Abu Bkar Atiku sustained an injury that caused his death shortly after the battle in 1842. The caliphate was said to have embarked on an ambitious policy of transhumance herders' resettlements. By granting them tenancy rights to grazing areas popularly known as Ribāts (frontier settlements) to limit herders' trespasses into farmlands to forestall farmers' and herders' conflicts.²³ Traces of these Ribāts are still visible in places like Kurfi and Ummadau all in the Katsina emirate.

This era ushered in a period of advanced social, cultural, political, and economic organization in central and western Sudan. Thanks to the renewed architecture of rural sociology offered by the triumvirate.

Ribāts and the Shift in Security Policy Dynamics - From Frontier Settlements to Special Economic Zones: In both the classical and modern *Sīrah*, as well as Maghāzī literature, ribāts are portrayed as frontier settlements built for the purpose of military and intensive religious training. Most activities in ribāts are directed toward the defense of the Muslim homeland, and jihad toward the expansion of the Islamic state:

'O ye who Believe, be patient, and race in patience, be steadfast, fear Allah, in order that you will be victorious (Q 3:200)'.²⁴

Major ribāts were built after the founding of the Sokoto caliphate, particularly along the Sokoto Rima basin for the defense of the Muslim homeland from the aggression of the four enemy principalities; Gobir, Kebbi, Tuareg, and Zamfara. Before the end of Sultan

Muhammadu Bello's reign in 1837, there were at least sixteen such ribāts, and he was reported to have lived in at least two of such ribāts; Wurno and Magarya. These ribāts served as cordon sanitaire against incursions from mostly the raiding cavalries. The ribāts had also served their purpose; for as long as the security climate remained volatile, it retained its kinetic tinge. But not long after the enemies were pushed further and buffers were established far afield, the policy administration of the ribāts tilted toward the transformation of rural economies through targeted policy reforms that saw these frontier settlements being transformed into special economic zones. In a sophisticated display of policy and administrative acumen, which is by no means less advanced than a 21st-century approach, these ribāts were exempted from taxes (save Zakat which is a religious duty) on land, cattle, and crafts, under the pretext that its inhabitants were Al-Murābitūn (those who gave their all to service of Allah). By so doing the ribāts were turned into Special Economic Zones (SEZs).

By today's standards, SEZs are usually created to facilitate rapid economic growth in certain geographic regions. This economic growth is accomplished by leveraging tax incentives as a way of attracting direct foreign investment and technological advancement. Sultan Muhammadu Bello pursued a policy activity of enhancing pastoral activities which became embedded in the economies of these ribāts, the surrounding communities of which were largely agrarian. Livestock markets were developed in those areas which attracted merchants. Some of these ribāts like the famous Kware and Wurno flourished within the trans-Saharan trade route in the nineteenth century. The ribāts turned SEZs attracted artisans, scholars, farmers, and pastoral communities in greater numbers. The caliphate's policy disposition relative to land tenure administration, the central theme of rural sociology, manifested not long after the establishment of the caliphate. Where all lands and territories, save what is owned such as farmlands, were declared as endowment lands (*Al arḍ Al- mahbūsa*). This made it easier for authorities at emirate levels to quash future quarrels emanating from land disputes and to administer the land tenure system efficiently. It also enabled them to settle pastoral communities whose wandering caused lots of friction with settled farming communities.

The Colonial Period and the Return of the Aristocratic Land Tenurial System : In a bid to reform the land tenure administration, the colonial administration established a lands committee in 1910 that issued its report, which though unintelligible, abolished private ownership of lands, the colonial government considered this recommendation cautiously, though. Because it will cause a major disruption in the rural sociological character of the protectorate. Discoveries and studies into the Sokoto caliphate legal literature on land tenure administration by the Acting Resident Richard Palmer, made the colonialists understand and appreciate the nature of the land tenure system under the Sokoto caliphate. Not long after this, the colonial administration changed its stance on land ownership.²⁵ It began to recognize private ownership while at the same time asserting control over lands that were designated state-owned by British conquest since under Islamic law and as provided also in the *Ta'lim Al- arādhī* by Abdullahi bn Fodio, land tenure is guaranteed through private ownership and state control. However, the state control ended up with landed aristocracy to maintain the loyalty of the ruling aristocrats. The Native authorities punitively fractured the system and arbitrarily

truncated the already established land tenure regime under the Sokoto caliphate. Social justice was even more punitively upended by colonial boundaries and demarcation. Which affected tenurial rights that further complicated agriculture and food systems within rural sociology. Communal conflicts over tenurial rights have been commonplace until today. This has also exacerbated the natives-settlers' menace which is at the heart of farmers-herders clashes, particularly in central Nigeria. Revenue maximization was the preoccupation of the crown, thus there were no exemptions in taxes; land and agricultural produce, as well as livestock, were all taxable. These coupled with labor crises arising from the abolishment of slavery dealt serious blows to an already fragile economy.²⁶ Northwest Nigeria is still reeling in this mess. Compounded by colonial boundaries and demarcations, the transhumance stock routes suffer an even worse obstruction as a result of the recalibration of land tenancy structure by several overlapping jurisdictions. With the birth of nation-states comprising regions with varying civilizational worldviews amalgamated by colonial antecedents, co-habitation between various ethnic nationalities proved a difficult undertaking. Thus, the post-colonial experiences are enmeshed in serious contestations that assume a violent character. This led to the adoption in 1998 of the ECOWAS Protocol on Transhumance, which fashioned out strategies for livestock production in the Sahel.²⁷ The protocol intends to safeguard the fulbe's right to seasonal pastoral migratory activities which were part of local experiences and culture for centuries.

Post-colonial Experiences and the Exacerbation of Resource Conflict in Semi-arid Nigeria: One of the most potent aspects of the colonial and post-colonial era that seems to exacerbate conflict in pastoral areas in semi-arid Africa is the changing social structure which led to the breakdown in the acceptance of former hierarchical relations. The Islamic legal tradition that governed the land tenure administration was replaced with a system based on colonial arrangements. Some studies have prejudicially singled out Islamic law for allegedly making farmers subservient to pastoralists:

Since the local judicial system is controlled by Hausa/Fulani, court cases between farmers and herders tended almost invariably to be decided in favor of the herders. However, after independence, farmers began gradually to take control of local authorities and thus judicial systems and their appointees made decisions in courts. The result has often been a reversal of the previous bias.²⁸

Nigeria's return to democracy in 1999 has made the situation more complex. State governments in both central and southern Nigeria are beginning to adopt policies that will stop the pastoralists from reaching their territories. This contravenes the ECOWAS Protocol on transhumance which guarantees seasonal movements of pastoralists. The protocol calls for the reclamation of primary stock routes linking nation-states and the secondary routes linking states within each country. Strangely, however, what the agitating states are bent on doing, is denying even Nigerian pastoral citizens from transhumance culture which is guaranteed by the 1999 constitution. However, according to Oliko:

[Even though the constitution] provides for economic, social, and cultural rights in rather grand and lofty terms in the form of the Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy in Chapter II of the Constitution. These rights

are however denied enforceability under the Constitution as it prefers to see them as goals and objectives which the Government is to strive to attain. This denial of enforceability of these rights contained in this Chapter of the Constitution poses a major problem to human rights activism in the Country, as the specific rights contained in that Chapter of the Constitution are worthy of enforcement in this age and time. Some of those rights include; cultural, labor, economic, political, environmental, and educational rights.²⁹

The reason why polemical literature is castigating Sokoto caliphate's judicial disposition for bias is that it considers the right of transhumance as a cultural right. From the moment the post-colonial administrations began to tinker with those rights, the rural sociological landscape became seriously distorted.

Security and Development in Islam: A Conceptual Recalibration: Traditionally, security and development formed distinct discourses in "Islamic abstraction". Paradoxically, however, scholars tend to treat these twin imperatives inversely and agreeably. Most of the Islamic literature both classical and modern that treated the twin subjects did so in a harmonious agreeable manner, as though they are inseparable entities. However, the only problem militating against their consideration as a twin subject is the lack of systematization within the rationalization process. For this reason, people tend to see them as forming distinct discourses. Development is often described as economic growth and well-being. In modern reconceptualization, the concept is expanded to include capabilities, opportunities, and choices. Security, on the other hand, is described as the state of being secure from danger or threat. Interestingly, if we look closely at the primary sources of Islamic information; the Qur'an and Sunnah, we will come to terms with the fact that the twin imperatives are treated in unison. Ubaydullāh ibn Mihsan al-Ansāri al-Khatmi (may Allah be pleased with him) reported that the Prophet (*Ḥaḍrat Muhammad Rasūlullah Khātam un Nabiyyīn Ṣallallahu 'alaihi wa 'alā Ālihi wa Aṣḥābihi wa Ṣallam*) said:

"Whoever among you wakes up in the morning secure in his dwelling, healthy in his body, and he has his food for the day, then it is as if the whole world has been given to him."³⁰

The hadith clearly outlines three security domains and their surrogates. First, the hadith depicted security as a process in tandem with progression. It also delineates security as a proactive activity "whoever amongst you wakes up in the morning" suggesting investment toward securing one's future. *Al-sarb* alluded to in the hadith is interpreted to mean both dwelling and road, thus it has a wider connotation, simply put the homeland. Then the two other domains cover health and food security. And given the aphorism which emphasizes that "consideration is in the generic implications, not in particular connotations of texts", bringing within each domain surrogates (proxies) that will add impetus to it is desirable. Hence in most classical *fiqh* literature, we find all legal subjects treated as sub-heads within *muā'malāt* to the exclusion of *ibādāt* only. The *ibādāt* cover; salat, zakat, sawm and hajj. These rituals are also given some socio-technological coloration, to give the ummah a sense of identity, belonging, and team spirit (*ummah*). Issues of marriage, food systems (*al-ad'imah wal-sayd, bab al-aradhi wa ihya al-murwāt*), trade, and *al-hirābah* (insurgency) among others, were all treated as sub-heads within the

larger discourse of security and development, and though lacking in systematization. To situate and reimagine the Islamic discourse within the contemporary intellectual garb, we need to rearticulate the distinct entities of security and development, such that they will be treated in unison. And in doing so, we also should be conscious of proxies within each domain.

These proxies may be treated as a cluster that reinforces the major domains within which they are subsumed. This is what we mean by systematization. Systematization bequeaths the intellectual progression necessary to advance productive knowledge. Based on the Sokoto caliphate experience, we concluded that security and development are inseparable entities; the absence of one necessarily negates the presence of another, and the presence of one necessarily advances the course of the other. The caliphate's policy disposition is knowledge-driven. In the preceding arguments, we saw how the hopelessness that surrounds the colonial land tenurial system was salvaged by Palmer's discovery of *Kitabu Ta'lim Al-arādhī* of Abdullahi bn Fodio, which the colonial administration unwittingly adopted, though, grudgingly and half-heartedly. There was never a time in the recorded history of central and western Sudan when rural sociology was aptly delineated like during the Sokoto caliphate. Thus, the period was characterized by security, communal harmony, and peace. The distortion within the architecture of rural sociology of the region ushered in a climate of communal suspicion and conflicts.

Setting the Stage for the Rationalization of the Current Security Climate in Northwest Nigeria: In a recent report published by the UNDP based on a survey of eight Sub-Saharan African states, it was discovered that rural deprivation, poverty, and lack of development are the drivers of conflicts, not religion. Religion is often brought in as a pseudo-justifier to violence, not because it was the major driver in the first place. The report further contends that, "Sub-Saharan Africa has become the new global epicenter of violent extremism with 48% of global terrorism deaths in 2021. This surge not only adversely impacts lives, security, and peace but also threatens to reverse hard-won development gains for generations to come."³¹

In Nigeria, the Northwest region is perhaps the most destabilized in terms of security, this may not be unconnected with the region's abysmal performance within Nigeria's economic indices. Of the seven states that make up the region, 5 are considered the frontline states as far as the armed banditry menace is concerned. These include; Kaduna, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto, and Zamfara states.³²

Area	MPI	Incidence (H, %)	Intensity (A, %)	Population share (%)	Number of poor people (million)
National	0.257	62.9	40.9	100.0	132.92
North Central	0.272	66.3	41.0	14.4	20.19
North East	0.324	76.5	42.4	12.7	20.47
North West	0.324	75.8	42.7	28.4	45.49
South East	0.183	49.0	37.3	10.5	10.85
South South	0.250	62.6	39.8	14.8	19.66
South West	0.151	40.0	37.7	19.2	16.27

Source: National Bureau of Statistics multi-dimensional poverty index 2022

Table 1: Multidimensional poverty by zone

The indicators used include; Nutrition, Security, shock, Underemployment, Unemployment, Assets, Cooking fuel, Housing materials, Sanitation, Water reliability, Water, School lag, Food insecurity, Time to healthcare, School attendance, and Years of schooling.³³ In the glorious Qurān, these indicators were referenced in several verses as serious deprivations resulting lack of social justice. For example:

‘For here you have quite a few facilities: you neither starve nor remain naked (Q 20:118).’³⁴

Say: "Are those equal, those who know and those who do not know? It is those who are endued with understanding that receive admonition (Q 39:9)”³⁵

If We willed, We verily could make it salt (and undrinkable), why then do you not give thanks (to Allah)? (Q 56:70).³⁶

(He) Who has fed them against hunger, and has made them safe from fear (Q 104:6).³⁷

As indicated in the table, Northwest is trailing behind other regions in all the indicators, except for MPI which measures acute poverty where it tallies with Northeast, thereby suggesting high poverty intensity in the zone occasioned by serious multi-dimensional deprivations. This has raised the specter of violent extremism even higher in the region. According to the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED), armed bandit groups killed more than 2,600 civilians in 2021, an increase of over 250 percent compared with 2020 in the region. ACLED further stresses that climate and weather extremes are causing increased competition over and exploitation of scarce resources (Global Center for the Responsibility to Protect 2023). Populations are at risk of plunging into an even more dire security situation in the region due to these multi-dimensional deprivations.³⁸ Given this reality, the United Nations has focused its attention on the region through investments in peacebuilding initiatives. In the last few years, the UN became fully involved in engaging stakeholders to improve the security situation, through investments in capacity building and infrastructure development. However, neglecting the cultural and religious undercurrents of the region makes some observers cast aspersions on the peace initiative. Will the current arrangement address the myriad of security challenges facing the region? This question is addressed in the following segment of the study.

Framing the Thesis: This segment constitutes the empirical aspect of the paper. It pragmatically dwells on the problems at stake that breed regional insecurity. While at the same time, assessing the efficacy of current peacebuilding arrangements.

Research Design: The research design used in the study is a qualitative, constructivist grounded theory approach. Its appropriateness lies in its potential to provide a systematic and flexible framework for analyzing the Islamic model of peacebuilding in Northwest Nigeria.

Materials and Methods: A semi-structured interview was used to gather the appropriate data for the study. The semi-structured interview is a type of interview that has become

the most familiar strategy for collecting qualitative data. A semi-structured interview is a qualitative research approach that combines a prepared set of open questions with the opportunity for researchers to dig deeper into specific responses; it's used to figure out how interventions work and how they might be improved. The population of the study comprises 30 respondents from three states viz; Katsina, Sokoto, and Zamfara. The participants were purposively selected from major stakeholders in the peacebuilding structures; local council officials, traditional leaders, scholars, action agencies, and NGOs.

Data Collection: For each participant, a semi-structured interview was conducted. The interview was a thirty minutes session that asked exploratory questions on five key thematic areas; conflict drivers in the region, extant peacebuilding structures, limitations of the (dis)articulated “Islamic” security and peacebuilding mechanisms, (re)articulated Islamic model and its potential toward reinforcing the integrated peacebuilding structures.

Approach to Data Analysis: In consonance with the constructivist grounded theory approach, participants’ own words were processed and coded through pattern identification. This process begins with an open coding where each line or paragraph of a text is read analytically by the researcher thereby creating a window of conceptual engagement with participants’ data. Constant probing and comparisons were done oft-repeatedly to decipher themes, categories, subcategories, and codes until no new such codes were arrived at. The interview was conducted in the Hausa language. The codes, themes, and categories were translated into English. To verify the credibility of the data, two methods were employed; prolonged engagement with the data, and thorough checking.

Results: After analyzing the data, the five main themes; conflict drivers in the region, extant peacebuilding structures, limitations of the (dis)articulated “Islamic” security and peacebuilding mechanisms, (re)articulated Islamic model, and its potential toward reinforcing the integrated peacebuilding structures were obtained. The main theme, categories, subcategories, and coding samples are shown in Table 2.

Theme	Main Category	Subcategory	Code
Conflict drivers	Distortion of rural sociology	Arbitrariness within the land tenurial system Personal experiences	1. Resource-based conflicts 2. Rights-based approach to dealing with farmer-herder disputes at the expense of responsibility
Extant peacebuilding structures	Half-hearted structures	Top-bottom approach to dealing with conflict prevention, conflict management, and post-conflict reconstruction	Superimposition of standards
Limitations of the (dis)articulated “Islamic” security & peacebuilding mechanisms	Disjointed peacebuilding structures	Discontinuities within the strategic engagement processes	The conflict prevention, management, and post-conflict reconstruction processes are treated as distinct entities

The (re)articulated Islamic model	Reimagining the Islamic peace structures	Establishment of strategic link between the security domains	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Articulating an Islamic security & development model 2. One that carries along all elements within the processes; conflict prevention, management, and post-conflict reconstruction
The Islamic potential toward reinforcing the integrated peacebuilding structures	Creating a more open model	Democratization of the peacebuilding process	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Community participation 2. Recognition of cultural and religious sensitivities 3. Rights cum responsibility-based approach to the delineation of rural sociology

Conflict Drivers: The theme of conflict drivers consists of one main category; distortion of rural sociology. Which in turn has two sub-categories; arbitrariness within the land tenurial system, and personal experiences. The codes that emerged from these include; resource-based conflicts and a rights-based approach to dealing with farmer-herder disputes at the expense of responsibility.

Some participants in the interview may not have explained the arbitrariness within the land tenurial system in the strictest formal sense of the term but were able to delineate the concept in different ways based on their experiences of its effects and consequences. It was, however, discovered that most participants have firsthand experience of the devastating consequences of the half-hearted land tenure regime on the rural sociology of the region. “This monster (land tenurial system distortion) is the major driver of farmer-herder conflicts” the participants affirmed.

Resource-based Conflicts: The ubiquity of resource-based conflicts fuels the agitations that are at the heart of armed banditry in the region. A participant retorted: “Agreed, there are not enough pasture resources for the herders, but do we [local farmers] have enough farmlands? We are all trapped in this resource saga. It has become a vicious circle”.

Rights-based Approach to Dealing with Farmer-herder Conflicts: Astonishingly, all the stakeholders involved in this study who had some strategic engagements with the farmers and the herders said: “Each side considers its rights over the disputed resources as sacrosanct to the exclusion of the other. And no one is willing to take some responsibility”. The emotional stakes are high; “I am afraid there is that tendency that the process might be biased, particularly among arbitration structures”. No doubt, the rights-heavy arbitral process does not reflect the Islamic spirit of *Ukhūwwah* (brotherliness) which is responsibility-driven. Within the Islamic framework of social responsibility, there is a need for a balanced approach to the delineation and demarcation of rights and responsibilities. Emphasizing one at the expense of the other will lead to unbalanced and biased results, which is a recipe for agitation and conflicts.

Extant peacebuilding structures: This theme has one main category; half-hearted structures, which also has a lone sub-category; top-bottom approach to dealing with conflict prevention, conflict management, and post-conflict reconstruction. This leads to the superimposition of standards, the only code that was deciphered from the conversational probing and investigation. The institutions involved in the peace process do so according to their institutional jurisdictions. Some have an overlapping role. But synergy is indeed a scarce capital in their relationship. “We are constrained by lack of cooperation” a participant from an action agency complained. The structures within the peacebuilding mechanisms involve various sub-structures which include;

- The response structure (action agencies)
- The arbitration/mediation structure (joint commissions and traditional institutions)
- And the litigation structure (judiciary/sharia judicature)

For the structure to become effective, these sub-structures must work in harmony, otherwise, no meaningful progress will be recorded in the fight against violent conflicts in the region. The Katsina state three-tier security structure which was established through a legislative process is a positive development within the framework of the peacebuilding drive. The structure articulated three peace and security committees at the local government, district, and village/ward levels. The composition of the committees cut across various layers of the society and institutions; local council administrators, traditional rulers, action agencies, vigilante groups, ulama, youths, women, and professional bodies. These committees are subsumed within the law that establishes them. The law replaced Katsina state local government law, 2000, and is cited as the Katsina state local government amendment (amendment) law, 2020. It provided the functions of the committees to include; information gathering and intelligence sharing relating to security situations and other suspicious criminal activities in local governments. The law aims at building synergies between the peace structures for the maintenance of security, public peace, order, and safety in the local governments. If this instrument is leveraged, as well as replicated in other states across the region, we may see some improvements in the security situation. A participant from Zamfara said: “Though we have our peculiar approaches, the Katsina experience appears awesome”. When fully articulated the Katsina structure may address the standards’ imposition syndrome. And as well as further democratize the existing framework toward the integration of local content into the structure.

Imposition of Standards: Though the UN is involved non-kinetically in trying to build the capacity of stakeholders to be able to respond appropriately, the template upon which it relies is exclusionary. Since it does not consider the nuances of the environment, at least religio-culturally. Any process that treats the Islamic culture as an “other” will not be effective in dealing with the complex social issues in central and western Sudan. In the last one hundred years, reforms within the sociology of agriculture and food systems in the region have failed, because the institutions and the society have failed to learn from history.

Limitations of the (dis)articulated “Islamic” security & peacebuilding mechanisms: This theme has one major category which is disjointed peacebuilding structures. The

subcategory associated with this theme, however, is the discontinuity within the strategic engagement processes.

A Disarticulated Peacebuilding Structure: The conflict prevention, management, and post-conflict reconstruction processes are treated as distinct entities, thereby hindering the Islamic intellectual heritage from productively engaging the discourse. “Wisdom is the lost property of the believer, or as [the prophet] has said” a participant emphasized. Islam does not claim a monopoly of wisdom, we, therefore, need to reinvent the Islamic discourse if it is to fit into the contemporary age. “There is a disjoint in the current approach as evident in the literature dealing with security. It is not rationalized along the development path”. A participant queried. Only a broader approach to the rationalization of the Islamic peacebuilding structure will overcome this myopia. To achieve this, there is a need for reimagining, and reconceptualizing the Islamic peace structures to adequately reflect the current realities relative to the rural sociology. We aren’t in any way short of models. The Sokoto caliphate has left us abundant literary footprint to derive inspiration and to guide us toward understanding the sociology of this clime.

The (re)articulated Islamic model: This theme has reimagined the Islamic peace structures as its main category. The establishment of strategic links between the security domains is its subcategory. “We need to evolve a process that will create a nod for various structures within the domains to interact”. This submission by a participant, aptly reflects the nature of the security system in Islam. The whole system is akin to a living organism whose parts are dependent on one another. Ibn Khaldun recounted how developmental failures, as well as the failure to manage these failures, led to the demise of human civilizations in both the ancient and medieval periods.³⁹

Articulating an Islamic Security and Development Model: While probing submissions from participants, we arrived at this code which emphasizes the need to articulate an Islamic model of security and development. “The founding leaders of the Sokoto caliphate treated these subjects as an amalgamated whole” a participant reiterated. By viewing it as a unified subject entwined in the Islamic security and development discourse, the caliphate was able to articulate an actionable policy that guides the conflict prevention, conflict management, and post-conflict reconstruction processes that are in tune with rural sociology. The caliphate focused on fighting poverty through integrated rural development. And by so doing, it succeeded in growing the economy which in turn helped toward the entrenchment of greater stability. The security climate is to a very large extent associated with rural deprivation and underdevelopment which are the triggers of armed banditry in the rural north, while at the same time, fueling crimes in the urban centers. “Poverty has always been a hindrance to security in the region” most respondents observed.

The Islamic potential toward reinforcing the integrated peacebuilding structures: This is the last theme upon which the semi-structured interview was premised. It has a main category, creating a more open model within the peacebuilding structure. Which in turn, ensures the democratization of the peacebuilding process (the sub-category). Some participants confirmed that “Muslims’ affairs are guided by mutual consultation”.

Leveraging the Islamic Model will Entrench a Participatory Process: This is the code we arrived at. The respondents unanimously agreed that integrating the Islamic experience will entrench a more open and democratic process (sub-category). They also confirmed that the articulated Islamic model when integrated into the existing structure will naturally lead to the following: community participation, recognition of cultural and religious sensitivities, and rights cum responsibility-based approach to the delineation of rural sociology.

Discussion: Islamic abstraction of peacebuilding cannot be sequestered from the total experiences within the broader normative developments and comprehensive framework that galvanized the international action that has rearticulated the security agenda to focus on human security over the past decades. This paper looks at the Islamic experiences of peacebuilding through the lens of security and development. These twin imperatives (peace and development) are the heart of the security predicaments of Northwest Nigeria. In this regard, the pathways to unraveling the myriad of problems that are believed to be the trigger of armed banditry sweeping across the region were analyzed. These pathways are subsumed in the alternatives that manifested within the arguments put forward by our respondents in the study. As evident from the research findings, perceptions of the conflict drivers are hinged on the participants' own experiences about the deteriorating security climate in the region. The participants have demonstrated a deep sense of understanding of the challenges at hand. The distortion within the rural sociology that started during the colonial period has changed the region's socio-political landscape with some devastating consequences. By casting aspersion over the structures within the rural sociology and food systems that glued the region's diverse communities together, there is no end in sight to these problems that seem to be fueling local agitations that exacerbate the armed banditry.

The Islamic legal tradition represented in the Maliki law that guides the Muslim personal ordinance throughout the region reflects the true character of the region's rural sociology. Given that distortion within rural sociology gives rise to local agitations which in turn fuels the armed banditry, the resilience of armed banditry, therefore, is a clear indication that there is a disconnect within the rural sociology. As indicated in research findings, the distortion of the rural sociological character upended the region's centuries-old cultural heritage. This led to the current state; farmer-herder conflicts which if not addressed swiftly may lead to even large-scale ethnic tensions, a recipe for violent communal clashes with genocidal consequences similar to what happened in Rwanda during the 1990s (God forbid). However, in its current disarticulated form, the Islamic model of security and peacebuilding, may not adequately address the problem as it ought to. Thus, the respondents, particularly, the Muslim scholars among them, saw the wisdom in the discourse that argues for a re-articulation of the Islamic peacebuilding mechanisms. But the question that did not cease begging for an answer is; What should be the character of the re-articulation process? Is it going to be an exclusionary process, one that will use traditional clerical Islamic tools only? Or is it going to assume a trans-disciplinary approach to re-articulatory disciplining? To address these questions, we need to adopt an epistemological base. Thus, the paper finds positivism a better episteme. By positivism, we do not in any way suggest rejection of metaphysics or theism. Far from that. In this study, it means confining the

peacebuilding structures to the data of experience that excludes a priori assumption or “clerical” considerations. Anas ibn Malik reported: The Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him, passed by people grafting trees. The Prophet (*Hadrat Muhammad Rasūlullah Khātām un Nabīyyīn Ṣallallahu ‘alaihi wa ‘alā Ālihi wa Aṣḥābihi wa Ṣallam*) said, “It would be better if you did not do that.” They abandoned the practice and there was a decline in the yield. The Prophet (*Hadrat Muhammad Rasūlullah Khātām un Nabīyyīn Ṣallallahu ‘alaihi wa ‘alā Ālihi wa Aṣḥābihi wa Ṣallam*) passed by again and said, “What is wrong with your trees?” They said, “You said not to do so.” The Prophet (*Hadrat Muhammad Rasūlullah Khātām un Nabīyyīn Ṣallallahu ‘alaihi wa ‘alā Ālihi wa Aṣḥābihi wa Ṣallam*) said, “You have better knowledge of the affairs of your world.” Hence, the process should be knowledge-driven guided by data and experience, and rooted in multi-domain disciplining. It was obvious that the Sokoto jihad leaders must have turned to the social and historical antecedents of the time for guidance. As a result, they articulated policies that proved resilient as they provided security and lasting peace that is revered today.

Conclusion: It was found that participants have first-hand experience with the triggers of violent conflicts such as armed banditry and other associated crimes. They singled out the distortion of rural sociology as the major trigger. To a tune of almost 100%, the rural economy in the Northwest is agriculture-dependent. Hence, the adage; “*noma na duke tshohon ciniki, kowa yazo duniya kai ya tarar*”. Thus, the region’s poverty rating as indicated in Table 1, may not be unconnected with the rural sociological woes which characterize the trends across states in the region. Many farmers are barred from their farms due to the activities of the bandits. And those who enjoy relative peace are also counting huge losses as a result of climate crises. In Katsina state for example, during the 2021 wet season, hectareage losses from banditry were 58,000ha, while losses from climate change were 572,300ha. Therefore, the combined hectareage losses from both climate change and armed banditry is 630,300ha. The following table indicates losses from climate change during the 2021 wet season.

Crop	Area Cultivated (Ha)	Area Affected (Ha)	Crop Loss (Mt.)
Sorghum	190,250	114,000	148,850
Millet	190,800	114,500	761,000
Cowpea	140,833	84,500	200,000
Rice	160,295	96,000	92,000
Soybean	153,750	92,000	105,100
Maize	178,650	107,000	137,100
Groundnut	67,166	40,300	310,000
TOTAL	1,082,374	572,300	1,754,050

Source: Ministry of Agriculture & Natural Resources, Katsina

Table 3: Crop Losses from Climate Change In 2021

The region’s agriculture-driven rural economy which employs over 80% of its population is battered by banditry and climate change with devastating consequences on human security. And to forestall the escalation of insecurity, we must begin to search for pathways to restore the pristine rural sociology of the region. Nonetheless, the participants have identified the pathways within the peacebuilding structures and the relative hindrances within them. These include; half-hearted peacebuilding structures

and the (dis)articulated Islamic peacebuilding mechanisms. To overcome this drawback, the paper recommends the re-articulation of the Islamic model and its integration into the existing peacebuilding framework.

Ethical consideration: Consent was obtained first, in the form of oral acceptance from all participants and subsequently in writing. Consent forms were issued, which they signed. Participants were informed that all data collected would be treated with confidentiality and that they had the right to withdraw from the research at any time. Research protocols were adhered to, and the research instrument has met the extant ethical requirements of the Umaru Musa Yar'adua University, Katsina, and was thus approved.

Conflicts of Interest: There are no conflicts of interest.

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