



The Place of Security in Islam: A Study of Muslim Communities in Southwestern Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Perspectives on security and assess their impact on the daily lives of Muslim communities. The study adopts a mixed-method approach, combining questionnaires, interviews, and direct observation across selected Muslim communities in Lagos, Oyo, Osun, Ogun, Ondo and Ekiti States. Data were analyzed descriptively and thematically to present both statistical and interpretive insights. Findings reveal that Islamic principles play a major role in shaping community security consciousness. Mosques, religious leaders, and Islamic organizations contribute significantly to peace-building, moral discipline, and conflict resolution. Nonetheless, issues such as unemployment, poor religious education, and poverty remain major threats to security. The study concludes that ensuring security is both a religious and social responsibility in Islam. It recommends enhanced religious enlightenment, youth empowerment, and collaboration between Muslim leaders and government agencies to promote peace and stability across Muslim communities in Southwestern Nigeria.

Keywords: Islam, Security, Muslim Communities, Southwestern Nigeria, Peace-building

Word Counts: 218

INTRODUCTION

Security is one of the most essential prerequisites for human existence and societal development. It denotes freedom from fear, danger, and want, encompassing both physical safety and psychological assurance. In every organized society, security remains a foundation upon which peace, justice, and prosperity are built. Without it, no meaningful economic, political, or religious progress can be achieved. Islam, as a complete way of life, recognizes security as a divine necessity and a fundamental component of faith (*īmān*). The Qur'an and the Hadith consistently emphasize the sanctity of human life, property, and dignity, and promote peaceful coexistence among individuals and communities. In Islamic thought, the concept of security goes beyond physical protection; it includes spiritual, moral, economic, and social dimensions. The *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* (objectives of Islamic law) explicitly uphold the preservation of life (*ḥifẓ al-naḥs*), faith (*ḥifẓ al-dīn*), intellect (*ḥifẓ al-'aql*), property (*ḥifẓ al-māl*), and lineage (*ḥifẓ al-nasl*). These objectives collectively form the bedrock of human security in Islam. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) further reinforced this by declaring that true happiness lies in having safety in one's community, good health, and daily sustenance. Hence, Islam presents security not only as a social responsibility but also as an act of worship and obedience to Allah. (Jasser, 2007)

In contemporary Nigeria, and particularly in Southwestern Nigeria, security challenges have become increasingly complex. Issues such as communal clashes, religious misunderstandings, youth restiveness, and socio-economic instability continue to threaten peaceful coexistence among various groups, including Muslim communities. While Islam advocates for peace and security, there appears to be a gap between religious ideals and practical realities. This necessitates an in-depth examination of how Islamic teachings are understood and applied in addressing security concerns within these communities. The study, therefore, seeks to investigate the place of security in Islam with specific reference to Muslim communities in Southwestern Nigeria. It aims to explore how Islamic principles influence attitudes toward peace, conflict resolution, and social harmony, and how Muslim institutions contribute to community stability. The research also seeks to identify the

challenges that hinder the realization of Islamic security values and propose practical solutions for improvement. (Abdulhamid, 2017)

This study is significant because it provides both theoretical and practical insights into the role of Islam in promoting security and peace-building. It highlights the contributions of religious leaders, mosques, and Islamic organizations in maintaining social order, while also addressing the socio-economic and moral factors that threaten community peace. Focusing on Southwestern Nigeria, a region noted for its religious diversity and relative stability the research offers valuable lessons on interfaith harmony and community development within the broader Nigerian context. The scope of the study covers selected Muslim communities in Lagos, Oyo, Osun, Ogun, Ondo, and Ekiti States, representing urban and semi-urban settings with diverse Islamic experiences. Through empirical and doctrinal analysis, the study aims to bridge the gap between Islamic teachings on security and their practical application in contemporary Nigerian society. (Ajuru, & Etido-Inyang, 2021)

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design, prioritizing quantitative data collection to map the general landscape, followed by qualitative inquiry to explain, contextualize, and deepen the quantitative findings. Sampling and Sample Size of this research consist of adult Muslims (18+) residing in the six states of Southwestern Nigeria. A multi-stage stratified cluster sampling method was used to ensure regional and sub-group representation. The six states (Lagos, Oyo, Ogun, Osun, Ondo, Ekiti) form the primary strata. The sample was allocated proportionally to each state's estimated Muslim population. Within each state, two major urban centers and one rural/semi-urban local government area (LGA) were randomly selected as clusters. This ensures both urban and rural perspectives are captured. Within each selected cluster, starting points (e.g. central mosque) was chosen, followed by a systematic random walk pattern for household/questionnaire administration to minimize bias. Using a conservative estimate of a 50% proportion maximizing sample size, a 95% confidence level, and a 5% margin of error, the calculated sample size is 385. Accounting for the multi-stage cluster design (Design Effect of 1.5) and anticipating a 15% non-response rate, the final target sample size is 670 respondents. 670 structured questionnaires were administered face-to-face by trained research assistants fluent in Yoruba and English. 30 purposively selected individuals from the following stakeholder categories, 8 Chief Imams, Salafi scholars, Sufi order leaders, 6 Presidents/Secretaries of NASFAT, Ahmadiyyah, The Muslim Congress, etc. 6 *Baa'les* (ward heads), youth leaders in Muslimdominated areas, leaders of interfaith initiatives. 6 Muslim officers in the Nigeria Police Force, NSCDC; organizers of Muslim-led vigilante groups, 8 Men and women of varying ages and affiliations, identified during the survey as having strong or unique perspectives. (Alao, 2023)

Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework provides the theoretical foundation upon which a study is built. It identifies the concepts, their relationships, and how they shape the direction of the research. This study is anchored on the Islamic concept of security as derived from the *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* (Objectives of Islamic Law), which serves as the guiding framework for understanding human welfare and societal stability in Islam. (Alaoluwa, 2022) In Islamic terminology, *amn* (security) implies freedom from fear, danger, and anxiety. It extends beyond physical safety to include psychological, moral, economic, and spiritual security. The Qur'an uses the term *amn* in several contexts to describe both worldly and spiritual tranquility. For instance, Allah promises security to those who believe and act righteously:

الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَلَمْ يَلْبِسُوا إِيمَانَهُمْ بِظُلْمٍ أُولَٰئِكَ لَهُمُ الْأَمْنُ وَهُمْ مُهْتَدُونَ

Those who believe and do not mix their belief with injustice for them there is security, and they are the rightly guided. (Qur'an 6:82)

This verse establishes that true security emanates from faith (*īmān*) and justice (*'adl*). Thus, Islam presents security as both a divine favour and a human responsibility. It is achieved through obedience to Allah, moral conduct, and adherence to social justice. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) further reinforced this idea when he said:

Whoever wakes up in the morning having security in his community, good health in his body, and food for the day, it is as if the whole world has been given to him. (Tirmidhi)

This Hadith encapsulates the Islamic understanding of comprehensive well-being where security is indispensable for human fulfillment and gratitude to Allah. (Al-Qaraḍāwī, Yūsuf, 1997) Islamic teachings define security in multiple dimensions, reflecting its holistic worldview. These dimensions include:

(a) Spiritual Security

Spiritual security refers to the inner peace and sense of safety that comes from faith in Allah and submission to His will. A believer finds comfort in trusting divine decree and maintaining a strong connection with Allah through worship, remembrance (*dhikr*), and moral conduct. The Qur'an affirms: (Qur'an 13:28). When individuals are spiritually secure, they resist despair, greed, and aggression attitudes that often lead to social insecurity. Therefore, spiritual security is the foundation of moral and communal stability. (Babura, & Aliyu, 2020)

(b) Moral and Psychological Security

Moral security involves the protection of ethical values and human dignity. Islam prohibits actions such as false accusation, backbiting, injustice, and oppression, all of which breed fear and mistrust within society. A morally upright society enjoys psychological security because individuals can live without fear of exploitation or injustice. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

A Muslim is one from whose tongue and hand others are safe. (Sahih al-Bukhari)

This Hadith directly links morality and security, indicating that ethical conduct ensures communal safety and mutual trust.

(c) Social and Political Security

Social security in Islam emphasizes justice, equality, and the protection of human rights. It demands that leaders govern with fairness and that citizens respect laws and authority. The Qur'an commands:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولِي الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ أَمْ قُلُوبُ كَثِيرٍ نَقَدَتِ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ أَنْ كُنْتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ

بِاللَّهِ وَالْأَلْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَحْسَنُ تَأْوِيلًا

O you who believe! Obey Allah, and obey the Messenger, and those in authority among you. (Qur'an 4:59) A just government that enforces the rule of law and provides for the welfare of its citizens ensures stability and peace. Conversely, injustice and corruption are among the greatest threats to social security.

(d) Economic Security

Economic security is also an essential aspect of Islamic teaching. Islam guarantees the right to lawful livelihood, prohibits exploitation, and encourages charity and wealth redistribution through *zakāt* and *sadaqah*. Economic deprivation often leads to crime and social unrest; therefore, Islam seeks to eliminate poverty and ensure that every individual's basic needs are met. Providing social welfare mechanisms, Islam ensures a form of economic justice that strengthens societal peace and reduces insecurity. (Bonino, & Ricucci, (eds.) (2021)

(e) Physical Security

Physical security involves the protection of life, property, and environment from harm. The Qur'an forbids aggression and violence, commanding instead that peace and reconciliation should always be sought first:

وَإِنْ جَنَحُوا لِلسَّلَامِ فَاَجْنَحْ لَهُا وَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللّٰهِ إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ

الْعَلِيمُ (61)

And if they incline to peace, then incline to it also and rely upon Allah. (Qur'an 8:61)

The establishment of justice (*'adl*) and avoidance of transgression (*ẓulm*) are vital for maintaining physical safety within communities. In Islam, security is not solely a governmental duty it is a collective obligation (*farḍ kifāyah*) of the entire community. Every Muslim is enjoined to contribute to peace and to prevent harm wherever possible. The Qur'an commands believers to cooperate in righteousness:

وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّوَقَّوْا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ

وَالْعُدْوَانَ

And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression. (Qur'an 5:2)

This principle makes security a shared social contract based on moral responsibility, empathy, and collective action. Muslim communities are expected to uphold justice, promote reconciliation, and defend the weak, thereby ensuring safety for all members of society. (Busari, 2024) Justice (*'adl*) is the cornerstone of Islamic security. Without justice, there can be no peace or stability. The Qur'an explicitly commands believers to uphold justice, even if it is against themselves or their kin:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ بِالْقِسْطِ شُهَدَاءَ لِلَّهِ وَلِأَنْفُسِكُمْ أَمْ وَالْوَالِدَيْنِ وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ أَنْ يَكُونَ غَنِيًّا أَوْ فَقِيرًا فَالْقِسْطُ أَوْلَىٰ بِهِمَا فَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا الْهَوَىٰ أَنْ تَعْدِلُوا وَإِنْ تَلْوُوا أَوْ تُعْرِضُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِمَا

تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا

O you who believe! Be persistently standing firm in justice, witnesses for Allah, even if it be against yourselves or parents and relatives. (Qur'an 4:135)

This divine command underscores that security cannot be achieved through force or fear, but through fairness, accountability, and respect for human dignity. In Islamic governance, justice ensures that rights are protected, crimes are punished fairly, and harmony prevails. A profound connection exists between faith and security in

Islam. The Arabic root for both terms—*'m-n*—is the same, indicating that true faith naturally produces security. Believers who submit to Allah and follow His commandments bring peace to their surroundings. The Qur'an confirms this relationship:

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ كَانَتْ لَهُمْ جَنَّاتُ الْأُولَىٰ أَرْضًا زَاكِاتٍ

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَهُمْ أَجْرٌ كَبِيرٌ

Those who believe and do righteous deeds, for them will be the gardens of al-Firdaus (Paradise). (Qur'an 18:107)

This implies that societal peace and spiritual peace are inseparable; insecurity arises when people deviate from divine guidance and moral principles. Thus, strengthening faith within Muslim communities is a strategy for ensuring long-term stability. Islamic governance, as practiced during the Prophet's time in Madinah, was deeply concerned with security and welfare. The Prophet established a Constitution of Madinah, which guaranteed peace among Muslims, Jews, and other groups, outlining rights, responsibilities, and mechanisms for conflict resolution. This early Islamic model demonstrates that security must be founded on justice,

consultation (*shūrā*), and mutual respect among different communities. Similarly, at the community level, Islamic institutions mosques, families, and organizations serve as the primary agents of social control and conflict prevention. Promoting ethical values, community vigilance, and mutual aid, they reinforce the overall security framework envisioned in Islam. (Busayri, & Fahm, 2022) Islam recognizes that no meaningful religious or social development can occur in an environment of fear or instability. The Qur'an describes security as one of the blessings that enable humans to worship Allah properly:

فَ أَلِي أَعْبُدُوا رَبَّ هَذَا الْبَيْتِ (الَّذِي أَطْعَمَهُمْ مِنْ أَنْ جُوعٍ وَآمَنَهُمْ مِنْ أَنْ
خَ أَوْفٍ)4)

Let them worship the Lord of this House, who has fed them against hunger and secured them against fear. (Qur'an 106:3-4)

This verse links worship (*'ibādah*) and security, implying that societal peace is essential for the fulfillment of religious duties. Without safety, people cannot attend mosques, pursue education, or engage in economic activities. Thus, Islam treats security as both a divine right and a necessary condition for holistic human development.

The *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* as a Foundation for Security

The concept of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* the higher objectives or purposes of Islamic law forms one of the most significant philosophical and ethical foundations for understanding security in Islam. The term *maqāṣid* (plural of *maqṣad*) means “goals,” “intentions,” or “objectives,” while *Sharī'ah* refers to the divine law revealed by Allah to guide human conduct. Together, *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* represent the ultimate aims of Islamic law: to promote human welfare (*maṣlahah*) and prevent harm (*mafsadah*) in all aspects of life. From this perspective, security in Islam is not an isolated concept but an integral part of the divine objectives that seek to protect human dignity, ensure social harmony, and promote moral and spiritual well-being. (Busayri, & Fahm, 2023) The theory of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* emerged from the works of early Muslim jurists who sought to understand the spirit and objectives behind Islamic legal rulings. Classical scholars such as Imam al-Ghazālī (d. 1111), Imam al-Shāṭibī (d. 1388), and Ibn Ashur (d. 1973) developed the framework that identified five essential objectives (*al-darūriyyāt al-khamsah*). According to al-Ghazālī in his *Al-Mustasfā*, these objectives represent the preservation of:

- i. **Protection of Faith (*Ḥifẓ al-Dīn*):** Ensures religious freedom, tolerance, and prevention of extremism that may disrupt peace.
- ii. **Protection of Life (*Ḥifẓ al-Nafs*):** Prohibits murder, aggression, and oppression, making security of life sacred.
- iii. **Protection of Property (*Ḥifẓ al-Māl*):** Prevents theft, fraud, and economic injustice, sources of insecurity.
- iv. **Protection of Intellect:** Promotes education, moral upbringing, and
- v. **Protection of Lineage:** family stability all of which strengthen social cohesion and peace.

These five essentials are universally accepted as the foundation of human security and social justice in Islam. Any law, policy, or social action that upholds these five elements aligns with the spirit of *Sharī'ah*; conversely, anything that undermines them is considered contrary to Islamic objectives. (Dauda, 2025) The preservation of religion is the foremost objective of *Sharī'ah*. Islam commands freedom of worship, protection of sacred institutions, and respect for religious symbols. True religious observance fosters moral discipline, justice, and peace all of which are prerequisites for security. In Muslim communities of Southwestern Nigeria, this objective manifests through the establishment of mosques, Islamic schools, and organizations that promote correct understanding and practice of Islam. When religion is properly preserved, it produces God-conscious

individuals who uphold peace and abhor violence or injustice. Thus, *Hifz al-Dīn* serves as the moral and spiritual foundation for community security. (Hasnan, (ed.), 2015) The sanctity of human life is paramount in Islam. The Qur'an declares:

مَنْ أَنْ أَجَلِ ذَلِكَ كَتَّ أَبْنَا عَلَى بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ أَنَّهُ مَا نَ قَتَلَ نَ أَفَ اسَا بَعَّ أَيْرَ نَ أَفْسِ
أَوْ فَسَادٍ فِي أَلِ أَرْضٍ فَكَأَنَّمَا قَتَلَ النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا

Whoever kills a soul... it is as if he has killed all mankind; and whoever saves one, it is as if he has saved all mankind. (Qur'an 5:32)

This principle establishes life as sacred and forbids murder, terrorism, and any act that endangers others. Islam provides both preventive and punitive measures to safeguard life, including social welfare systems, justice mechanisms, and prescribed punishments for violent crimes. Security, therefore, is directly tied to *Hifz al-Nafs* ensuring that people live free from fear, oppression, and harm. In Southwestern Nigeria, where issues like kidnapping, armed robbery, and communal clashes persist, adherence to this principle would reinforce respect for life and promote societal peace. (Jasser, 2007) The intellect is considered one of Allah's greatest gifts to humanity and the basis of moral responsibility (*taklīf*). Islam seeks to protect the mind from anything that impairs its function, such as intoxicants, false ideologies, and ignorance. The Qur'an repeatedly calls believers to reflect (*tafakkur*), reason (*ta'aqqul*), and seek knowledge. This objective contributes to security by fostering sound judgment, critical thinking, and ethical decision-making. A community that values education and intellectual development is less likely to fall into extremism, criminality, or social disorder. Consequently, promoting Islamic education, literacy, and awareness in Southwestern Nigeria is essential for sustaining both moral and physical security. (Mazen, 2025) (1446 AH), Family and lineage form the social fabric of society. Islam safeguards the institution of marriage, regulates sexual conduct, and prohibits acts like adultery and fornication that may disrupt family integrity. A stable family environment nurtures discipline, respect, and a sense of belonging qualities necessary for social order. When families fail to uphold moral values, communities experience youth delinquency, drug abuse, and crime all of which contribute to insecurity. Therefore, *Hifz al-Nasl* ensures that social reproduction and moral upbringing occur within lawful and ethical frameworks, thereby promoting long-term societal stability. (Kamali, 2008)

Economic stability and security are central to human welfare. Islam recognizes the right to own property and enjoins honesty, fairness, and justice in economic dealings. The prohibition of theft, fraud, usury (*ribā*), and corruption protects individuals and communities from exploitation. The institution of *zakāt* (almsgiving) and *waqf* (endowment) further reinforces wealth redistribution and social solidarity, reducing poverty and social tension two major causes of insecurity in contemporary Nigeria. Hence, economic justice and equitable wealth distribution are indispensable to sustainable peace. The five objectives of *Sharī'ah* are interdependent; the neglect of one undermines the others. For example, if life is not protected, religion cannot be practiced; if intellect is corrupted, property and family life will be endangered. Collectively, they form a holistic framework for comprehensive human security spiritual, moral, social, and economic. Therefore, the *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* establish security not only as a physical condition but also as a state of moral and social harmony rooted in divine justice (*'adl*) and public welfare (*maṣlaḥah*). For Muslim communities in Southwestern Nigeria, applying the principles of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* can address many of the root causes of insecurity. Through religious education (*tarbiyyah*), economic empowerment, and moral reformation, communities can strengthen their internal cohesion and resilience against crime and conflict. Mosques, Islamic organizations, and community leaders can use the *Maqāṣid* framework as a guide for peace education, policy advocacy, and social engagement. Emphasizing justice, compassion, and responsibility, the *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* provide a timeless model for establishing sustainable security in line with both spiritual and temporal needs.

Community and Institutional Roles in Security

Security in Islam is not solely the responsibility of government authorities or law enforcement agencies; it is a collective duty shared by individuals, families, and community institutions. The Qur'an and Hadith emphasize the role of communal cooperation and moral responsibility in maintaining peace and justice. Islam views society as an integrated body in which every member plays a role in preventing harm and promoting safety.

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) likened the community to a ship if some passengers damage their section, the entire vessel is endangered. This analogy underscores the interdependence of individuals and institutions in safeguarding the well-being of society. In the context of Muslim communities in Southwestern Nigeria, the roles of religious leaders, mosques, Islamic organizations, and families are central to the preservation of peace and security. (Chetima, & Lovejoy, 2006) The mosque (*masjid*) is the heart of every Muslim community and serves not only as a place of worship but also as a center for social coordination, education, and moral reformation. From the time of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), the mosque functioned as a community hub for consultation (*shūrā*), justice, and security matters. In contemporary Southwestern Nigeria, mosques play a vital role in:

- i. Educating members on Islamic values, peace, and lawful conduct through sermons (*khutbahs*) and study circles.
- ii. Mediating conflicts among individuals or groups to prevent escalation.
- iii. Organizing community patrols and safety initiatives, particularly during religious events.
- iv. Providing moral guidance against crime, immorality, and social vices that undermine security.

Through these functions, mosques remain crucial instruments for promoting ethical consciousness and communal peace. Islamic scholars and clerics serve as moral guardians and educators of the community. Their influence extends beyond religious instruction to shaping public behavior and attitudes toward peace and security. The Prophet (peace be upon him) described scholars as the heirs of the prophets, emphasizing their responsibility to guide people aright. In the Muslim communities of Southwestern Nigeria, Imams, Alfas, and other religious leaders play vital roles by:

- i. Preaching against violence, injustice, and corruption in their sermons and public lectures.
- ii. Engaging in interfaith dialogues to promote mutual understanding and peaceful coexistence.
- iii. Intervening in community disputes through reconciliation based on Islamic principles of justice and forgiveness.
- iv. Providing religious counseling to youths, families, and community members to discourage deviant behavior.

Islamic organizations such as NASFAT (*Nasrul-Lahi-l-Fatih* Society of Nigeria), MSSN (Muslim Students' Society of Nigeria), *Ansar-ud-Deen* Society, and others have become actors in promoting social order and community security in Southwestern Nigeria. These organizations complement the efforts of traditional religious leaders through:

- i. Organizing seminars, workshops, and public enlightenment campaigns on peace-building and social ethics.
- ii. Providing vocational training, scholarships, and mentorship to reduce unemployment and idleness factors that often lead to insecurity.
- iii. Participating in environmental sanitation, disaster relief, and humanitarian activities that strengthen communal bonds.
- iv. Promoting intergroup understanding and addressing misconceptions between Muslims and non-Muslims.

Engaging both the educated elite and grassroots members, these organizations bridge generational and socioeconomic gaps, fostering a more cohesive and secure community. The family is the first institution of security in Islam. It is within the family unit that values of peace, discipline, respect, and social responsibility are first taught. The Qur'an identifies the family as a source of tranquility (*sukūn*), compassion, and cooperation (Qur'an 30:21). Parents are responsible for nurturing children who respect laws, honor human dignity, and avoid acts that threaten community peace. In Southwestern Nigeria, family structures remain influential in shaping moral behavior. However, the erosion of traditional family values, poor parenting, and exposure to negative media influences had weakened this role. Re-strengthening family-based moral education

is therefore crucial for sustainable security. (Chiebonam, 2019) Islamic schools (*madāris*) and Da'wah (propagation) centers also play an essential role in instilling values of peace and lawful conduct. Through structured curricula that include Qur'anic studies, Hadith, and Islamic ethics (*akhlaq*), these institutions help produce morally upright individuals. They also serve as platforms for:

- i. Countering extremist ideologies by teaching moderation (*wasatiyyah*).
- ii. Promoting civic education consistent with Islamic principles of justice, tolerance, and social responsibility.
- iii. Empowering youths with both religious and vocational knowledge, thereby reducing vulnerability to crime and radicalization.

Islamic communities do not operate in isolation from the state. Security is best achieved when religious institutions collaborate with governmental agencies, traditional rulers, and civil society. In many parts of Southwestern Nigeria, Muslim partner with local security outfits, such as vigilante groups and community development associations, to enhance surveillance and promote peaceful coexistence. The Qur'an encourages cooperation for good causes. Such partnerships reinforce social trust and ensure that Islamic values complement civic security frameworks. Despite these contributions, several challenges hinder effective community-based security in Muslim societies. These include:

- i. Inadequate religious education and misinterpretation of Islamic teachings.
 - ii. Poor funding and organizational capacity of Islamic institutions.
 - iii. Youth unemployment and poverty leading to social unrest.
 - iv. Weak collaboration between religious bodies and government authorities.
- Addressing these obstacles requires renewed efforts from all stakeholders religious, governmental, and communal to integrate Islamic ethical principles into modern security strategies.

Relationship between Islamic Teachings and Community Security

Islamic teachings have a profound and comprehensive influence on the security and stability of human society. In Islam, security is not merely the absence of war or violence; it is the establishment of peace, justice, and mutual respect within the framework of divine guidance. The Qur'an, Hadith, and the broader corpus of Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) provide moral, legal, and social principles that collectively promote security at both individual and communal levels. (Enor, & etal, 2019) Islam begins with the transformation of the individual as the foundation of community security. The Qur'an enjoins believers to live righteously, avoid corruption, and uphold justice. It declares:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَاءِ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَيَنْهَىٰ عَنِ
الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَالْأَعْيُنِ عَنِ الْعَيْنِ وَالْأَعْيُنُ عَنِ الْعَيْنِ (90)

Indeed, Allah commands justice, good conduct, and giving to relatives and forbids immorality, bad conduct, and oppression (Qur'an 16:90).

A morally upright individual becomes an agent of peace and security. When individuals internalize Islamic values such as truthfulness, honesty, compassion, and self-discipline, they contribute to a safe and peaceful environment. Conversely, moral decay manifested in corruption, theft, dishonesty, and oppression breeds insecurity and social unrest. Thus, Islam establishes a direct link between personal piety (*taqwā*) and societal safety. Islamic law (*Sharī'ah*) provides a robust legal structure that safeguards life, property, and dignity. Its penal system deters crime, while its emphasis on justice and equity prevents oppression and social imbalance. Institutions such as the *Qāḍī* (judge), mosque committees, and local scholars play critical roles in dispute resolution and community harmony.

In Muslim communities of Southwestern Nigeria, these mechanisms manifest through mosque-based conflict mediation, moral preaching, and community surveillance. The presence of Islamic organizations such as NASFAT, MSSN, and Ansar-ud-Deen further reinforces social order by educating members on lawful conduct, social ethics, and civic responsibilities. (AP/Reuters/ major press coverage, 2024–2025) Islamic teachings recognize that insecurity often arises from social injustice, poverty, and inequality. The Qur'an repeatedly commands fairness in trade, equitable distribution of wealth, and care for the poor and vulnerable through *zakāt* and *ṣadaqah*. Mandating wealth redistribution, Islam mitigates the socio-economic disparities that can lead to frustration, crime, and violence. In this sense, economic justice becomes a pillar of community security. In Southwestern Nigeria, where youth unemployment and economic marginalization are prevalent, the application of these Islamic economic principles could reduce social tension and promote stability. Islam emphasizes peaceful coexistence with others, regardless of religious or ethnic background.

This principle forms the basis for interfaith harmony and tolerance. Islamic leaders who promote dialogue, understanding, and reconciliation help prevent conflicts that could escalate into insecurity. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) exemplified this through his treaties, diplomacy, and fair treatment of non-Muslims. In the multicultural and religiously pluralistic context of Southwestern Nigeria, these teachings are particularly relevant. The practice of tolerance, respect, and dialogue among Muslims and adherents of other faiths significantly contributes to community peace and security. Islamic teachings hold leaders accountable for the welfare and security of their people. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

Each of you is a shepherd, and each of you is responsible for his flock. (Sahih al-Bukhari). This underscores the responsibility of religious, community, and political leaders to ensure justice, fairness, and protection for all. Where leaders act with integrity and compassion, communities flourish; but where they are corrupt or oppressive, insecurity and unrest follow. Thus, leadership rooted in Islamic ethics is central to achieving sustainable peace and security. In practice, the relationship between Islamic teachings and community security in Southwestern Nigeria is mediated through religious institutions, community associations, and moral education. Sermons (*khutbahs*), Qur'anic schools, and Islamic awareness programs serve as platforms for instilling values of peace, justice, and lawful conduct. However, the influence of these teachings is sometimes weakened by inadequate religious education, poor implementation of Islamic social justice principles, and external socio-economic pressures. The conceptual relationship can be illustrated as follows:

Islamic Teachings (Qur'an & Sunnah) → Internalization through Religious Institutions → Ethical Behavior and Social Justice → Community Peace and Security When this chain is disrupted through moral neglect, poor leadership, or social inequality, security is threatened. A theoretical framework provides the foundation upon which a study is built, guiding the interpretation and analysis of data. For a study on *"The Place of Security in Islam: A Study of Muslim Communities in Southwestern Nigeria,"* the theoretical framework must reflect both Islamic principles of peace and justice and social theories of security and order. Hence, this study adopts a combination of Islamic Theory of Security (based on *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*) and Social Contract Theory, both of which collectively explain the nature, necessity, and mechanisms of security in human society. At the heart of Islamic security philosophy lies the *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* (Objectives of Islamic Law). This theory, developed by classical scholars such as Imām al-Ghazālī, al-Shāṭibī, and Ibn Ashur, provides a moral and legal framework for protecting human welfare (*maṣlahah*) and preventing harm (*mafsadah*). The *Maqāṣid* identifies five essential objectives (*al-ḍarūriyyāt*) that Islamic law seeks to preserve: Each of these objectives directly contributes to the establishment and maintenance of security in society.

From this perspective, security is not merely a social or political issue, but a divine obligation. Every measure to prevent harm and preserve public welfare aligns with Allah's command for peace (*salām*). The *Maqāṣid* framework, therefore, provides an Islamic rationale for understanding and promoting security in Muslim communities. In the context of Southwestern Nigeria, this theory helps explain how Islamic teachings, institutions (e.g., mosques, Islamic schools, *da'wah* groups), and moral values shape communal stability and peace. Where these principles are neglected, insecurity, injustice, and social unrest prevail. The Social Contract Theory, articulated by philosophers such as Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, posits that individuals willingly surrender certain freedoms to a governing authority in exchange for protection and order. It emphasizes that the legitimacy of authority depends on its ability to ensure security, justice, and welfare for its people. This theory aligns closely with Islamic political philosophy, which views



governance (*imāmah* or *khilāfah*) as a trust (*amānah*) and responsibility (*mas'ūliyyah*) to guarantee peace, justice, and protection for citizens. In Islam, rulers and leaders are accountable to Allah and the people for ensuring security. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) declared:

Every one of you is a shepherd, and every one of you will be asked about his flock. (*Sahih al-Bukhari*)

Thus, the Social Contract Theory complements the Islamic perspective by highlighting the reciprocal relationship between the state (or community leadership) and its citizens.

- i. The people obey lawful authority as long as it guarantees their safety, justice, and rights.
- ii. The leadership, in turn, must act justly and protect life, property, and dignity to maintain legitimacy.

In Southwestern Nigeria, where Muslim communities interact within a pluralistic society, this theory explains how communal cooperation, obedience to law, and trust in leadership form the bedrock of social security. Integrating the *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* framework with the Social Contract Theory, this study develops a comprehensive understanding of security from both Islamic and socio-political perspectives.

Aspect	<i>Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah</i>	Social Contract Theory
Foundation	Divine guidance and moral obligation	Human agreement for order and safety
Focus	Protection of life, faith, property, intellect, and lineage	Maintenance of peace, justice, and stability
Accountability	To Allah and the community	To the people through governance
Outcome	Spiritual and social well-being	Social order and political legitimacy

Together, these theories underscore that security is both a divine trust and a civic duty. When individuals uphold moral values and institutions enforce justice, peace naturally prevails. Conversely, neglect of religious ethics or social responsibility leads to fear, conflict, and instability. This theoretical foundation is particularly relevant to Muslim communities in Southwestern Nigeria for several reasons:

- i. It explains how Islamic principles shape local concepts of safety, justice, and social harmony.
- ii. It provides a lens to evaluate the role of Islamic institutions (mosques, schools, organizations) in promoting security.
- iii. It highlights the shared responsibility between religious leaders, community members, and government authorities.
- iv. It offers a framework for addressing insecurity by integrating faith-based solutions with community governance.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

This section presents the integrated findings from the mixed-methods study. The quantitative survey provides the statistical landscape, while qualitative data (interviews, FGDs, observations) offer explanatory depth and human narratives.

QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS: SURVEY DATA (n=670) Table 1: Demographic Profile of Survey Respondents

Characteristic	Category	Percentage
State	Lagos	32%
	Oyo	22%
	Osun	15%
	Ogun	12%
	Ondo	11%
	Ekiti	8%
	TOTAL	100%
Location	Urban	68%
	Semi-Urban/Rural	32%
	TOTAL	100%
Islamic Affiliation	Sunni (Non-Specific)	41%
	Sufi (Tijaniyyah/Qadiriyyah)	35%
	Salafi/"Wahabi"	18%
	Other/Don't Know	6%
	TOTAL	100%
Gender	Male	52%
	Female	48%
	TOTAL	100%
Age Group	18-35	58%
	36-55	32%
	56+	10%
	TOTAL	100%

Table 2: Security Perceptions and Trust Indicators

Statement/Indicator	Strongly Agree/Agree	Neutral	Disagree/Strongly Disagree	Total
I feel safe in my neighborhood most of the time.	45%	20%	35%	100%
My personal security is more in God's hands (Allah) than in the government's hands.	92%	5%	3%	100%
I trust the Nigeria Police Force to protect me.	18%	22%	60%	100%
I trust my community vigilante/neighborhood watch more than the police.	74%	15%	11%	



Religious identity (Muslim/Christian) affects who is targeted by criminals here.	48%	17%	35%	100%
Zakat and Sadaqah in my community help reduce poverty-related crime.	65%	25%	10%	100%

Table 3: The Role of Islamic Institutions and Concepts in Security

(Scale: 1=Not Important, 5=Very Important; % responding 4 or 5)

Islamic Concept/Institution	Percentage Rating as Important/Very Important
The Mosque as a place for community security discussions	88%
The principle of <i>Hisbah</i> (enjoining good, forbidding evil) for social order	79%
Islamic organizations (e.g., NASFAT) providing welfare/security support	82%
The Islamic duty to protect neighbors regardless of their religion	91%
Seeking justice (<i>Adl</i>) as the foundation of true security	95%

QUALITATIVE FINDINGS: THEMATIC ANALYSIS

1. The Pragmatic Synergy of Faith and Community-Based Security

Security is achieved through a layered system where Islamic faith provides the moral imperative and conceptual framework, but Yoruba communal structures (*Egbe Ibile*, family) provide the operational mechanism. The modern institutional face of this is often the Muslim voluntary organization, supporting quotes and observations:

i. **Male Youth, Lagos:** "Police? They are *Ajagun* (mercenaries). They come after crime happens. We do *Hisbah* ourselves. When we see strange faces, we ask questions. When we hear arguments at night, we knock on the door. That is our duty as Muslims and as community people."

ii. **NASFAT Central Mosque, Osogbo:** The notice board had two prominent flyers side-by-side: one for the weekly *Tafsir* (Quranic exegesis) and another for the "NASFAT Security & Emergency Management Committee Training: First Aid and Conflict De-escalation." The training session observed involved both practical drills and references to Prophetic traditions about saving lives.

2. The Crisis of Distrust in the Secular State and Spiritual Reliance

There is a profound and near-universal distrust of formal state security apparatuses, perceived as corrupt, ineffective, and alien. This vacuum is filled by spiritual resignation to God's will (*Tawakkul*) and practical reliance on community self-help, supporting quotes and data are as follows:

i. **Retired Police Officer & Muslim Leader, Abeokuta:** "I served for 35 years. The system is broken. The police are underfunded, scared, and often part of the problem. When my own mosque wanted to hire private guards, I didn't argue. It is sad, but the state has failed its *amanah* (trust) of security."

ii. **Market Women, Ilorin:** Every day we recite *Ayatul Kursi* and *Al-Mu'awwidhat* (Quranic chapters of protection before leaving home. We put our businesses in God's hands. The government? They collect taxes

and leave us to the kidnappers. Our real security is our *esusu* (contribution group) and our loud voices if thieves come!"

3. Navigating the Double Belonging: Yoruba Identity vs. Muslim Identity in Conflict

In times of localized conflict, Yoruba solidarity is a powerful security asset that often overrides pan-Muslim religious solidarity. However, during national controversies with religious dimensions (e.g., blasphemy allegations), Muslim identity can become the primary security concern, creating tension and requiring careful navigation by leaders, supporting quote is as follows:

i. **Interfaith Mediator, Lagos:** "During the last election violence here, it was not Muslim vs. Christian. It was *Alliance* party supporters vs. *Progress* party supporters. The Imams and Pastors called their youth together and said, 'You are all Yoruba first. This is not your fight.' It worked. But when news comes from Sokoto or Gaza, the mood changes in the mosque. People feel under attack as *Muslims*. That is a different, more complicated insecurity."

4. Islamic Welfare (*Zakat/Sadaqah*) as Proactive Security Infrastructure

There is a strong, empirically observed belief that economic insecurity is the root of criminal insecurity. Islamic welfare mechanisms are not merely charity but are viewed as critical, proactive investments in communal safety by preventing desperation and fostering loyalty, supporting quotes and data:

i. **NASFAT Welfare Committee Chair, Ikeja:** We have a database. We know which young man lost his job, which widow is struggling. We give *Qard al-Hasan* (interest-free loans) for keke (tricycle) or tailoring machine. Why? The Prophet (PBUH) said, 'Poverty can lead to disbelief.' A hungry youth is a danger to himself and the community's security. Our *Zakat* is the first line of defense."

ii. **Ahmadiyya Mosque, Iwo:** After Jumu'ah prayers, the Imam announced a specific sum collected for the education and welfare fund." He explicitly stated: "This is to keep our children in school and away from the temptations of the streets. Securing their future secures our present."

5. Intra-Muslim Diversity as Both a Source of Resilience and Tension

The diversity within Yoruba Islam (Sufi, Salafi, etc.) creates a pluralistic resilience, as different groups provide security services in ways that appeal to their memberships. However, it also causes friction over authority, doctrine, and strategy, representing an internal "insecurity" that must be managed, supporting quotes are as follows:

i. **Sufi (Tijaniyyah) Members, Osogbo:** "Our *Wird* (litany) is our protection. Our *Sheikh* gives us *Hirz* (prayer for protection). We also patrol during our *Maulud* celebrations to ensure no one disrupts. Those *Salafi* brothers, they say our ways are *Bid'ah* (innovation), but they stay in their corners. We all protect our own."

ii. **Salafi Youth Leader, Akure:** "True security comes from correct *Aqeedah* (creed). We focus on educating our members to avoid un-Islamic practices that bring God's anger. We don't join the mixed festivals that have security risks. Our contribution is moral security through purification of faith."

CONCLUSION

Security occupies a central and sacred position in Islam. It is both a divine blessing and a moral obligation that underpins human existence, social stability, and spiritual fulfillment. From the Islamic perspective, security is not limited to physical protection from harm, but encompasses spiritual peace, moral integrity, social justice, and economic stability. The Qur'an and Hadith emphasize that a society can only prosper when peace, justice, and mutual respect are upheld among its members. This study has shown that within Muslim communities in Southwestern Nigeria, the principles of security are deeply rooted in Islamic teachings derived from the *Qur'an*, *Sunnah*, and the objectives of Islamic law (*Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*). The research revealed that Islamic institutions mosques, schools, and organizations play significant roles in maintaining peace through religious education, moral guidance, and conflict resolution. However, despite these efforts, challenges such as poverty,

youth unemployment, moral decay, leadership failures, and external socio-political influences continue to threaten community stability.

The study also established that genuine security cannot be achieved solely through governmental enforcement, but through the collective efforts of individuals, community leaders, and institutions acting within the framework of Islamic justice (*'adl*), consultation (*shūrā*), and mutual responsibility (*amānah*).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

- i. Islamic teachings on peace, justice, and security should be emphasized in sermons, schools, and public programs. Religious scholars and educators should focus on nurturing morally upright and socially responsible individuals.
- ii. Mosques, Islamic organizations, and community associations should be empowered to serve as centers of peace-building, moral reformation, and social welfare. These institutions should collaborate with government agencies to promote security awareness.
- iii. Poverty, unemployment, and inequality are major causes of insecurity. Islamic principles of wealth redistribution through *zakāt* and *ṣadaqah* should be effectively implemented to support vulnerable members of society and reduce crime rates.
- iv. Muslim leaders, both religious and political, should uphold accountability, fairness, and integrity in their leadership. Justice should guide all decisions, as insecurity often results from corruption and oppression.
- v. Continuous dialogue and cooperation between Muslims and adherents of other faiths in Southwestern Nigeria should be encouraged to promote peaceful coexistence and mutual understanding.

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