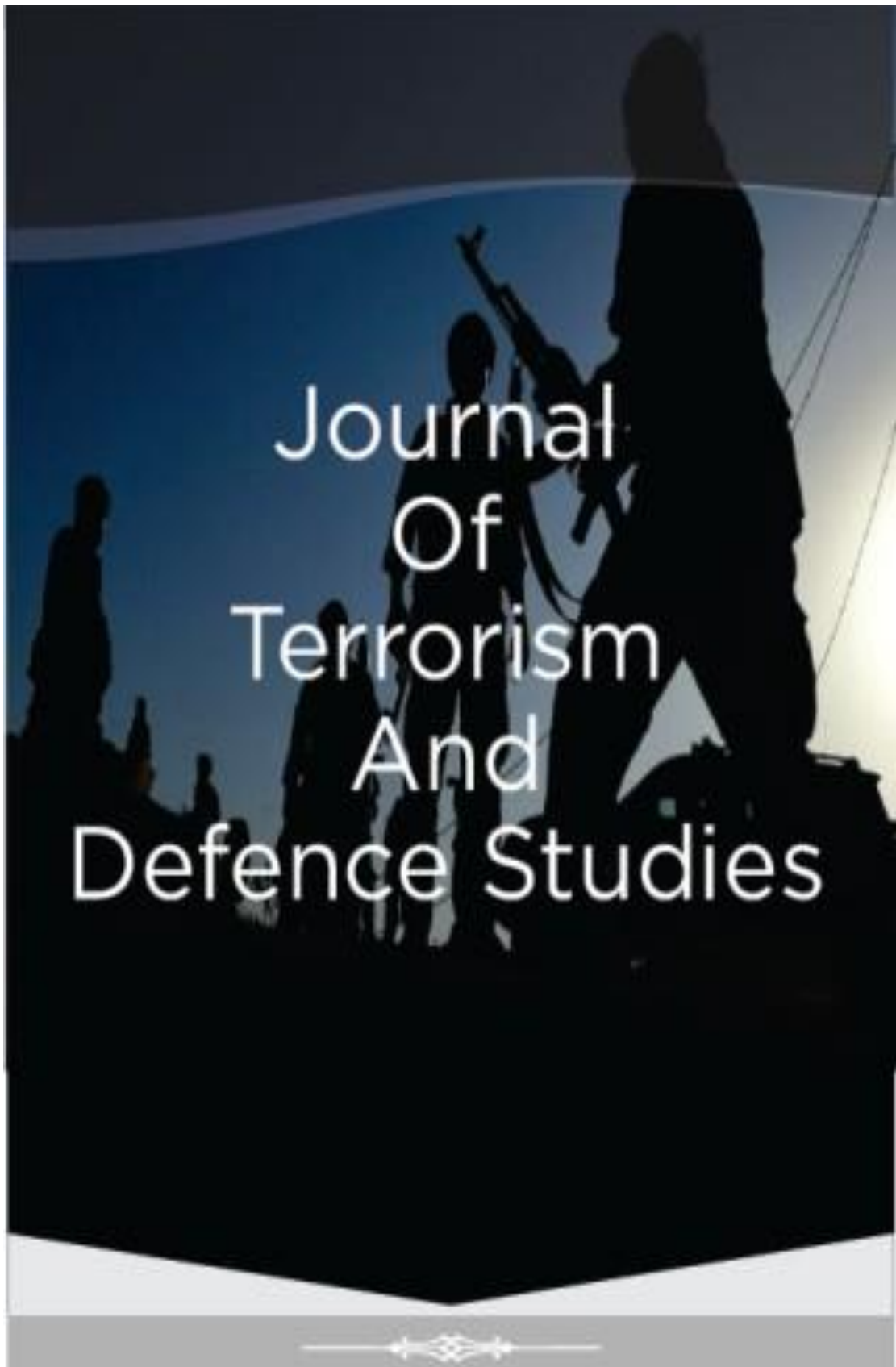




DOI: <https://doi.org/10.69778/3007-7176/2026/3.1/EN>

Editorial Note

Rethinking Security Beyond the Bullet

The Journal of Terrorism and Defence Studies inaugurates this issue with a bracing premise: that security is not merely a tactical problem but a philosophical one. The five articles collected here, spanning Nigerian poverty dynamics, West African coups, and the axiology of peacebuilding, collectively argue that the defence community must move beyond kinetic metrics toward structural and ethical diagnostics.

Nwadike and **Ani's** lead article, *Insecurity and Poverty in Nigeria 1980–2024*, establishes the volume's empirical spine. Using simultaneous equation modelling, they demonstrate that terrorism activity indices directly affect both undernourishment and agricultural output. The policy implication is stark: security spending without poverty reduction is self-limiting. Their call for “security literacy” as a national strategy reframes defence as a civic, not merely coercive, enterprise.

Gontor's *Axiology of Peacebuilding* elevates the discourse into political philosophy. The critique of liberal peace orthodoxy that elections and markets do not automatically produce stability is timely given recent coups in Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, and Guinea-Bissau (the seventh since 2020, which Njoku documents). Gontor's proposal to elevate National Peace Institutions to statutory “Policy Governors” with veto power over conflict-generating legislation is provocative and, in the post-kinetic era, necessary. Peacekeeping opens the gate; axiological governance inhabits the house.

The econometric rigour continues in Nwadike et al.'s VAR analysis of security shocks on Nigerian investment growth (1980–2024). Their finding of positive shock elasticity meaning security disruptions produce measurable, persistent negative responses in investment offers quantitative grounding for what field officers already know: insecurity is a tax on development. The recommendation that security literacy become a “fundamental national strategy” echoes the lead article, suggesting intra-volume consensus.

Njoku's *ECOWAS at 50* provides the geopolitical canvas. Seven coups since 2020, the exit of AES states, jihadist expansion, and renewed great-power resource competition threaten fifty years of regional integration. The Regional Security Complexes framework usefully centers Nigeria as a pivotal state. But the article quietly asks: if ECOMOG's peacekeeping legacy is to survive, what happens when the guarantor state faces its own profound internal crises? That question hangs over the entire issue.

Gontor's second contribution, *Prevention of Post-Election Conflict in Africa*, completes the architecture. Comparing ECOWAS, SADC, IGAD, ECCAS, and AMU, it argues that post-election violence stems not from flawed ballots but from structural injustices exclusion, patrimonialism, and weak accountability. RECs cannot prevent what they cannot diagnose. The insistence on “positive peace” (justice, inclusion, accountability) rather than mere ceasefire is the volume's unifying ethical thread.

Taken together, these five articles move terrorism and defence studies away from exclusive focus on insurgent tactics and toward the deeper question: what makes a political order worth defending? The answer emerging here; value-based governance, security literacy, empowered peace institutions, and regionally anchored conflict prevention is not soft. It is hard in a more demanding way.

Editor

Prof Kelechi Johnmary Ani

General Studies Unit,

Ebonyi State University of ICT Science and Technology,

Oferekpe, Nigeria

Table of Content

1. Insecurity And Poverty In Nigeria 1980 - 2024 Gerald Chimezie Nwadike, Kelechi Johnmary Ani	05
2. The Axiology of Peacebuilding Recalibrating the Developmental-Governance Nexus in Post-Kinetic Security Architectures Gontor. Patience	26
3. Ecowas At 50: Resurgence Of Coups & Geo-Political Challenges Of The Emerging World Order Igwe Kelechi Njoku	51
4. Degree Of Shock Elasticity Responds Of Security Challenges On Investment Growth In Nigeria, 1980 To 2024: Vector Auto-Regression Model (Var) Approach Nwadike, Gerald Chimezie, Azubuike Constance Nnenna, Ewah-Otu Beatrice Ekemma, Ani Kelechi Johnmary	68
5. Prevention Of Post-Election Conflict In Africa: The Role Of Regional Economic Communities (Ecowas, Sadc, Igad, Eccas, Amu) Gontor. Patience	91

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.69778/3007-7176/2026/3.1/a2>

THE AXIOLOGY OF PEACEBUILDING RECALIBRATING THE DEVELOPMENTAL-GOVERNANCE NEXUS IN POST-KINETIC SECURITY ARCHITECTURES

Patience Gontor,

Department of Political Science

Faculty of Social Sciences

Rivers State University

patience.gontor@ust.edu.ng

patiencegontor@gmail.com

Abstract

Post-conflict states frequently relapse into violence not because ceasefires fail, but because governance remains philosophically unchanged. Contemporary peacebuilding frameworks influenced by "liberal peace" orthodoxy treat peace as a technical problem solvable through elections and market reforms. However, recurrence of conflict in sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East suggests an epistemological misdiagnosis: peace has been treated as the absence of violence rather than the presence of value-based governance. This article argues that durable peace is axiological before it is institutional; stability depends on the hierarchy of values embedded in public policy. The "post-kinetic" era requires a recalibration of the developmental-governance nexus, as development programs lacking conflict-sensitivity often exacerbate ethnic competition and distributive anxieties. To address this, the article proposes elevating National Peace Institutions (NPIs) from advisory entities to statutory "Policy Governors." These bodies would possess the legally entrenched authority to conduct Peace Impact Assessments (PIAs) and veto conflict-generating policies. This transformation requires legislative anchoring, fiscal autonomy, and decentralized subsidiarity. By embedding peace as a constitutional value rather than an operational objective, post-conflict states can move beyond security-centric stabilization toward value-based governance architectures. Peacekeeping may open the gate, but only axiological governance can inhabit the house.

Keywords: Peacebuilding, Axiological Governance, Post-conflict Governance

INTRODUCTION

The Epistemological Gap in Modern Peacebuilding

The quest for lasting stability in the aftermath of civil war is often compared to a race that never truly ends. While the arrival of peacekeepers or the signing of a formal treaty can effectively silence the guns, these actions alone rarely address the deep-rooted grievances that

ignited the violence in the first place. In many post-conflict nations, the cessation of active combat is mistaken for the arrival of permanent peace. However, history is replete with examples of societies that successfully transitioned through elections and market reforms, only to slide back into chaos a few years later. This recurring cycle of violence suggests that our current methods for building peace may

be addressing the symptoms of conflict while leaving the underlying disease of social and structural inequality untouched.

To break this cycle, we must rethink how a state is governed once the "kinetic" or physical fighting has stopped. Sustainable peace is not merely a technical achievement reached through administrative checklists; it reflects the values that a government chooses to prioritize in its daily operations. When a state focuses exclusively on military security but ignores how it distributes resources or recognizes its diverse citizens, the foundation of its stability remains fragile. This article argues that for peace to endure, it must move from the battlefield into the very heart of public policy. By embedding justice, equity, and inclusion into the legislative and fiscal frameworks of the state, we can transform governance from a neutral exercise into a powerful instrument for preventing the return of war.

Defining the Post-Kinetic Era

To conceptualize a corrective, it is necessary to define what is meant by the "post-kinetic" era in the context of modern peacebuilding. Kinetic conflict refers to overt, organized, and physically violent confrontation ranging from full-scale civil wars and insurgencies to targeted state repression. Traditionally, international peacekeeping missions focus their primary efforts on halting such violence through standard operational procedures like ceasefire monitoring, demobilization, and disarmament. While the United Nations' multidimensional peacekeeping operations since the 1990s have

expanded this mandate to include electoral assistance and security sector reform, their core orientation remains centered on immediate stabilization (Fortna, 2008). This focus often creates a "security-first" environment that prioritizes the absence of active combat over the presence of sustainable, value-based governance. Consequently, the transition to the post-kinetic stage is frequently marked by a fragile equilibrium where the physical weapons are laid down, but the underlying tensions that fueled the war remain embedded within the state's administrative and social structures.

The post-kinetic era begins once large-scale violence subsides. However, the cessation of hostilities does not equate to the elimination of conflict drivers. Structural inequalities, governance deficits, corruption, and exclusionary policies often persist beneath the surface. Johan Galtung's (1969) distinction between "negative peace" (absence of violence) and "positive peace" (presence of social justice) remains analytically instructive. Most peace operations achieve negative peace; few successfully entrench positive peace.

In the post-kinetic environment, the locus of conflict shifts from the battlefield to the policy arena. Disputes manifest through budgetary debates, resource allocation, administrative appointments, and constitutional interpretation. Political actors may mobilize grievances through rhetoric rather than arms, but the underlying tensions remain combustible. This transition demands a recalibration of security architecture: from military containment to policy governance.

The failure to recognize this shift produces what might be termed the “peacekeeping plateau.” International actors withdraw after observing stable ceasefires and credible elections, assuming institutional consolidation will follow. Yet the absence of ongoing conflict-sensitive governance often allows unresolved grievances to metastasize. In such contexts, relapses are not a sudden aberration but the cumulative outcome of policy misalignments.

The Epistemological Gap

The core contention of this article is that contemporary peacebuilding suffers from an epistemological gap: it conceptualizes peace as a technical outcome rather than a philosophical orientation. By focusing on instruments elections, development projects, security reform without interrogating the value hierarchies guiding them, policymakers risk institutionalizing structural violence within ostensibly peaceful systems.

Axiology, the philosophical study of value, provides a lens through which to reexamine governance. Every state action reflects a prioritization of certain goods over others. Defense budgets signal the weight accorded to external threats; social welfare allocations reveal commitments to distributive justice; anti-corruption measures indicate normative stances on public integrity. In post-conflict societies, these value hierarchies are particularly consequential. They communicate to citizens whose grievances matter and whose do not.

Ontological security theory further enriches this perspective. Anthony Giddens (1991) argued that individuals

require a stable sense of self and continuity to function effectively. Applied to political communities, ontological security implies that citizens need assurance of belonging and recognition within the state. When governance structures fail to provide this reassurance through exclusionary policies or symbolic marginalization latent insecurity may translate into mobilized dissent.

Thus, the transition from military stabilization to sustainable peace necessitates what this article terms an Axiological Governance Model (AGM). Under this model, peace is not merely the byproduct of institutional arrangements but the guiding value that shapes all public policy. Ministries of finance, infrastructure, and education become co-architects of peace alongside defense and interior ministries.

Thesis Statement

This article argues that durable conflict resolution in post-kinetic societies requires a paradigmatic shift from security-centric stabilization to axiological governance. Peace must be institutionalized not as a sectoral objective but as a constitutional value embedded in legislative, fiscal, and administrative processes. Specifically, National Peace Institutions should be elevated from advisory bodies to statutory “Policy Governors” empowered to conduct Peace Impact Assessments and prevent conflict-generating policies.

Such a transformation would recalibrate the developmental-governance nexus, ensuring that economic growth, infrastructural expansion, and public sector reforms are systematically aligned with social cohesion objectives.

Peacekeeping may halt violence, but only value-based governance can prevent its recurrence.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: THE AXIOLOGY OF GOVERNANCE

The Philosophy of Value in Statecraft

Peacebuilding scholarship has long been concerned with institutions, incentives, and power configurations. Far less attention has been paid to the normative architecture underlying these arrangements, the system of values that shapes how institutions prioritize competing goods. Yet governance is never axiologically neutral. Every public policy decision reflects an ordering of values: security over liberty, efficiency over equity, stability over justice, growth over redistribution. In post-conflict environments, these hierarchies determine whether peace becomes self-sustaining or structurally fragile.

Axiology, as a branch of philosophy, interrogates the nature of value and the criteria by which judgments of worth are made. Political theorists from Aristotle to Rawls have argued that the legitimacy of governance depends on the normative principles that animate it. Aristotle's conception of the polis as an association aimed at the highest good implicitly grounded politics in moral purpose. Similarly, Rawls (1971) posited justice as fair as the foundational virtue of social institutions. What is conspicuously absent in contemporary peace operations is an explicit articulation of peace as a primary political value rather than a contingent outcome.

In many post-kinetic contexts, the state's value hierarchy remains implicitly militarized. Even after hostilities cease, national budgets often continue to privilege defense expenditures at the expense of social provisioning. While security sector reform programs may rationalize military structures, they rarely interrogate the normative weight assigned to coercive capacity relative to distributive justice. The persistence of security-dominant value systems can subtly perpetuate a siege mentality, inhibiting the transition toward inclusive governance.

The prioritization of macroeconomic stability offers another illustration. International financial institutions frequently condition post-conflict reconstruction loans on fiscal discipline and austerity measures. While macroeconomic stabilization is essential for long-term sustainability, the axiological elevation of fiscal orthodoxy above social equity can exacerbate grievances in societies emerging from violence. If post-conflict populations perceive that the dividends of peace accrue primarily to political elites or foreign investors, the moral legitimacy of the state erodes. The technical language of reform thus obscures underlying value choices.

The axiology of governance demands transparency regarding these hierarchies. It asks not merely whether institutions function, but whom they serve and what goods they prioritize. In fragile societies, peace must be positioned as a superordinate value guiding these trade-offs. This does not imply the abandonment of security or economic growth, but rather their subordination to a broader normative objective: the cultivation of an inclusive

political community in which grievances are addressed through policy rather than violence.

The concept of “value-based governance” is not synonymous with moral idealism. Rather, it recognizes that policy coherence requires normative clarity. When ministries operate without a shared understanding of peace as a cross-cutting value, bureaucratic fragmentation may unintentionally generate conflict externalities. For example, infrastructure projects that displace communities without adequate consultation can ignite localized unrest, even if they contribute to national growth indicators. An axiological framework would require ex ante evaluation of such trade-offs.

Importantly, value hierarchies are historically contingent. Colonial administrative legacies, authoritarian rule, and war economies often entrench extractive or patronage-oriented norms within state institutions. Transforming governance, therefore, involves not only institutional redesign but normative recalibration. This process is inherently political and cannot be reduced to technocratic reforms.

Ontological Security and the Moral Foundations of Peace

Beyond institutional design, durable peace depends upon citizens’ subjective experiences of belonging and recognition. Ontological security theory, originally developed by Anthony Giddens (1991) and later extended to international relations by scholars such as Mitzen (2006), provides a conceptual bridge between individual psychology and collective political stability. Ontological security

refers to the confidence individuals or groups have in the continuity and coherence of their self-identity. When that continuity is disrupted through displacement, marginalization, or symbolic exclusion anxiety may manifest as defensive or aggressive behavior.

In post-conflict societies, violence often fractures collective identities. Communities may define themselves in opposition to perceived adversaries, reinforcing narratives of victimhood or historical injustice. Peace agreements that address material grievances but neglect symbolic recognition risk leaving ontological insecurities unresolved. Elections alone cannot repair the psychological scars of exclusion.

Governance, therefore, must be attentive not only to distributive justice but also to recognition of politics. Policies regarding language, cultural representation, and historical memory carry axiological significance. A constitution that recognizes minority languages, for example, communicates respect for plural identities. Conversely, homogenizing policies may exacerbate feelings of erasure. Charles Taylor’s politics of recognition underscores that identity affirmation is a precondition for equal participation in the public sphere.

The relationship between ontological security and peace is reciprocal. Stable governance can cultivate a sense of belonging, while widespread insecurity can destabilize institutions. When citizens perceive the state as an impartial guarantor of rights, trust accumulates. This trust, in turn, reduces the likelihood that political competition will escalate into violence. Conversely, when

governance is experienced as predatory or discriminatory, citizens may seek alternative security providers, ethnic militias, religious movements, or secessionist groups.

An axiological governance model thus integrates ontological considerations into policy design. For instance, decentralization initiatives may empower marginalized regions, enhancing their sense of political efficacy. However, decentralization without equitable fiscal transfers can create new inequalities, undermining its symbolic promise. The normative orientation of governance determines whether reforms alleviate or amplify insecurity.

Security sector reform itself must be reconceptualized through this lens. Police forces that operate with transparency and community engagement can foster trust, whereas militarized policing may reinforce adversarial identities. The symbolic posture of security institutions whether they are perceived as protectors or occupiers shapes ontological security. Peacebuilding that neglects these subjective dimensions risks entrenching a brittle stability.

Reimagining the Social Contract as a Peace Instrument

Classical social contract theory from Hobbes to Rousseau posits that individuals relinquish certain freedoms in exchange for protection and order. In fragile states, however, the social contract is often fractured or unevenly distributed. Certain groups may experience the state as absent, others as repressive. Post-conflict reconstruction presents an opportunity to renegotiate this contract on more inclusive terms.

Contemporary scholars argue that legitimacy arises not solely from procedural democracy but from performance specifically, the state's capacity to deliver public goods equitably (Levi, 1997). Yet performance legitimacy is inseparable from normative orientation. Delivery of infrastructure in one region while neglecting another communicates differential valuation of citizens. Peacebuilding must therefore treat social contract renewal as a central objective rather than a byproduct of economic growth.

The social contract can be reconceptualized as a peace covenant. Under this formulation, the state commits to conflict-sensitive governance, and citizens commit to resolving grievances through institutional channels. This mutual commitment requires credible enforcement mechanisms. Anti-corruption institutions, independent judiciaries, and transparent budgeting processes are not merely governance reforms; they are pillars of the peace covenant.

Importantly, social contract renewal must occur at multiple scales. National-level agreements may coexist with localized grievances. Community-based peace committees, traditional dispute resolution mechanisms, and civil society organizations can serve as intermediaries between state and citizen. Embedding these actors within formal governance structures enhances resilience.

Development policy occupies a pivotal role in this recalibrated contract. Infrastructure projects, educational reforms, and employment programs

signal the state's commitment to inclusive prosperity. However, when development is captured by patronage networks, it undermines the covenant. Thus, mainstreaming peace into development planning through mechanisms such as Peace Impact Assessments becomes essential.

The reconceptualization of the social contract as a peace instrument also challenges donor practices. External actors often emphasize measurable outputs schools built, roads paved without assessing their distributive effects. An axiological approach demands that such outputs be evaluated in terms of their contribution to social cohesion. Quantitative growth metrics must be complemented by qualitative assessments of inclusion.

Toward an Integrated Axiological Governance Model (AGM)

Synthesizing these strands, the Axiological Governance Model (AGM) rests on three interlocking propositions:

Normative Primacy of Peace: Peace is elevated as a constitutional and policy-guiding value, shaping budgetary and legislative priorities.

Ontological Inclusion: Governance must cultivate citizens' sense of belonging and recognition, integrating symbolic and material dimensions.

Social Contract Renewal: Development and institutional reforms are framed as components of a peace covenant between state and society.

The AGM does not displace traditional security mechanisms but situates them within a broader normative architecture.

Military and police institutions remain necessary, yet their mandates are subordinated to the overarching objective of inclusive governance. Development ministries, fiscal authorities, and planning commissions become co-custodians of peace.

Operationalizing the AGM requires institutional innovation. National Peace Institutions (NPIs), currently present in various forms across Africa and Asia, often function as advisory bodies with limited enforcement capacity. Under the AGM, NPIs would be empowered to conduct systematic Peace Impact Assessments of major policies, ensuring alignment with axiological principles. Their authority would derive from statutory mandates rather than executive discretion.

The shift from kinetic to axiological security thus represents not a rejection of stabilization but its maturation. Where peacekeeping halts violence, axiological governance prevents its reconstitution. By embedding value hierarchies within institutional design, post-conflict states can move beyond episodic crisis management toward structural resilience.

THE PEACEKEEPING PARADOX: KINETIC SUCCESS VS. INSTITUTIONAL FAILURE

The Security–Governance Gap: When Peacekeepers Depart

One of the most enduring paradoxes in contemporary peacebuilding is the observable disjuncture between short-term kinetic success and long-term institutional fragility. Empirical studies have demonstrated that United Nations peacekeeping missions significantly

reduce the likelihood of immediate conflict recurrence (Fortna, 2008; Hegre, Hultman, & Nygård, 2019). Yet these gains often plateau. Within a decade of mission drawdown, many post-conflict societies exhibit renewed instability, democratic erosion, or localized insurgency (Call, 2012; Walter, 2015). This pattern suggests that while peacekeeping effectively suppresses organized violence, it does not automatically generate governance architectures capable of metabolizing political contestation.

This disjuncture may be conceptualized as the security governance gap. Peacekeeping operations are designed to manage security dilemmas among former belligerents. Drawing from rationalist conflict theory, such missions reduce uncertainty and deter opportunistic defection (Fearon, 1995; Fortna, 2008). However, once the immediate threat of battlefield confrontation subsides, the locus of instability shifts to institutional arenas parliamentary disputes, fiscal allocation battles, and identity-based mobilization. The governance structures that must absorb these tensions are frequently underdeveloped, politicized, or normatively misaligned.

Roland Paris (2004) famously characterized this as the problem of “institutionalization before liberalization,” arguing that premature political and economic competition in weak states may intensify factionalism. Yet even where institutions are formally established, their normative orientation may remain exclusionary. Electoral commissions may conduct credible ballots, but if political elites mobilize ethno-regional grievances without restraint, democratic procedures

become vehicles for polarization rather than integration (Snyder, 2000).

Peacekeeping missions, constrained by mandates and timelines, rarely address this deeper axiological dimension. Their success metrics ceasefire compliance, demobilization numbers, election turnout—capture procedural stabilization but not value transformation. The United Nations’ multidimensional operations have expanded to include rule-of-law promotion and governance assistance, yet these efforts often operate within a technocratic framework (Autesserre, 2014). They prioritize institutional capacity without interrogating the normative hierarchies embedded within policy choices.

Moreover, the political economy of mission drawdown exacerbates the gap. International actors face financial and domestic political pressures to declare success and withdraw (Howard, 2008). The exit strategy is often triggered by improvements in security indicators rather than governance benchmarks. Consequently, post-conflict states may inherit fragile institutions that lack the moral authority or technical capacity to mediate emerging disputes.

This gap is not merely administrative; it is axiological. During active conflict, security is valorized as the supreme good. In the post-kinetic moment, however, the hierarchy must shift toward inclusion, equity, and justice. If governance structures continue to privilege coercive capacity over distributive legitimacy, they risk perpetuating what Galtung (1969) termed structural violence systemic inequalities that generate latent conflict even in the absence of direct force.

The security governance gap thus reveals the limits of a stabilization-centric paradigm. It underscores the necessity of embedding peace as a normative value within governance itself, rather than treating it as a temporary condition secured by external actors.

De-Securitizing Peace: From Hard Power to Institutional Resilience

The persistence of conflict relapse invites a reconsideration of how states conceptualize security in the aftermath of war. The Copenhagen School's securitization theory posits that political actors construct issues as existential threats, thereby legitimizing extraordinary measures (Buzan, Wæver, & de Wilde, 1998). In many post-conflict contexts, the securitization of political competition lingers beyond the cessation of hostilities. Leaders frame dissent as destabilizing, justify expansive executive powers, and maintain elevated defense budgets.

While some degree of vigilance is warranted in fragile environments, excessive securitization can crowd out investments in institutional resilience. Empirical analyses indicate that high military expenditures in low-income post-conflict states often correlate with reduced social spending, undermining human development outcomes (Collier et al., 2003). This imbalance may reinforce grievances, particularly in regions that perceive themselves as marginalized.

De-securitizing peace does not imply demilitarization in the abstract. Rather, it involves recalibrating the value hierarchy within state budgeting and policy discourse. The concept of human security, popularized in the 1994 UNDP

Human Development Report, broadened the understanding of security to include economic, food, health, environmental, and political dimensions. However, the institutionalization of human security has been uneven, frequently overshadowed by traditional defense paradigms (Newman, 2010).

From an axiological standpoint, de-securitization requires embedding peace considerations across ministries. For example, infrastructure development in conflict-affected regions must account for historical patterns of exclusion. Studies on post-conflict reconstruction demonstrate that uneven distribution of aid can intensify intergroup competition (Woodward, 2017). Similarly, public sector appointments that disproportionately favor one ethnic or regional group may undermine perceptions of fairness, even if technically merit-based (Horowitz, 1985).

Budgetary analysis offers a tangible indicator of normative priorities. When post-conflict governments allocate disproportionate resources to defense relative to health and education, they communicate an implicit hierarchy of threat perception. While security threats may persist, failure to invest in social infrastructure may generate the very instability the military is intended to deter. This circularity exemplifies the peacekeeping paradox: hard power may suppress symptoms while neglecting root causes.

Institutional resilience, by contrast, is cultivated through rule-of-law mechanisms, transparent fiscal management, and participatory governance. Independent anti-

corruption agencies, ombuds institutions, and judicial review mechanisms can mitigate elite capture—a frequent driver of post-conflict disillusionment (Johnston, 2005). Yet these institutions require political insulation to function effectively. Without statutory autonomy, they risk becoming instruments of partisan contestation.

De-securitizing peace thus intersects with constitutional design. Power-sharing arrangements, frequently employed in post-conflict settlements, may stabilize elite relations but entrench identity cleavages if not accompanied by integrative mechanisms (Lijphart, 1977; Jarstad & Nilsson, 2008). An axiological approach would assess whether such arrangements reinforce or mitigate ontological insecurities among citizens.

The transition from hard power dominance to institutional resilience is inherently political. Elites benefiting from securitized governance may resist normative recalibration. Consequently, reform efforts must be anchored in legislative frameworks that elevate peace as a guiding principle across sectors. This insight foreshadows the argument advanced later in this article regarding statutory Peace Architectures.

Case Review: Nigeria (1960–Present) and the Recurring Conflict Trap

The Nigerian experience offers a salient illustration of the peacekeeping paradox in a post-colonial context characterized by recurrent conflict. Since independence in 1960, Nigeria has oscillated between military rule and civilian governance, punctuated by civil war (1967–1970), communal violence, insurgency in the Niger Delta, and the

protracted Boko Haram conflict in the northeast (Suberu, 2001; Thurston, 2017).

The Nigerian Civil War ended kinetically in 1970 with the federal government's military victory and the declaration of "No Victor, No Vanquished." While the cessation of hostilities marked a critical stabilization milestone, the post-war governance architecture retained centralized fiscal control over oil revenues. The derivation principle determining revenue allocation to oil-producing states became a persistent source of contention (Watts, 2004). Despite formal reintegration, many communities in the Niger Delta perceived ongoing economic marginalization, fueling militancy decades later.

This trajectory underscores the security governance gap. Military victory secured territorial integrity, but the axiological orientation of revenue governance prioritized federal consolidation over distributive equity. The resulting grievances were not merely economic; they were ontological. Communities interpreted fiscal centralization as symbolic exclusion from national belonging.

Similarly, the return to civilian rule in 1999 was widely celebrated as a democratic breakthrough. Elections were held regularly, and economic reforms pursued liberalization. Yet ethno-religious violence persisted in Plateau State, Kaduna, and other regions (Krause, 2011). While electoral procedures were institutionalized, political mobilization frequently exploited identity cleavages. Patronage networks shaped public sector appointments and resource distribution,

reinforcing perceptions of zero-sum competition.

The Boko Haram insurgency further illustrates the limitations of kinetic responses. The Nigerian state invested heavily in military operations against the insurgent group. While territorial control fluctuated, the underlying drivers—youth unemployment, governance deficits, and distrust of security forces—remained inadequately addressed (Thurston, 2017). Counterinsurgency operations, when accompanied by allegations of human rights abuses, sometimes exacerbated community resentment, complicating stabilization efforts.

Nigeria's establishment of institutions such as the National Human Rights Commission and various peace committees reflects recognition of governance deficits. However, these bodies often lack binding authority or fiscal autonomy. Their advisory status limits their capacity to veto conflict-generating policies. Consequently, peacebuilding remains reactive rather than preventive.

From an axiological perspective, Nigeria's recurring conflict trap reveals the absence of a codified hierarchy elevating peace as a cross-sectoral value. Budgetary allocations, constitutional amendments, and development initiatives are not systematically subjected to peace impact analysis. As a result, policies with latent conflict externalities may proceed unchecked.

The Nigerian case also demonstrates the interaction between corruption and structural violence. Transparency International consistently ranks Nigeria poorly on corruption indices. While

such indices are imperfect, they reflect widespread perceptions of elite capture. Corruption undermines performance legitimacy and erodes the social contract (Levi, 1997; Johnston, 2005). In regions already marked by identity-based grievances, corruption amplifies narratives of exclusion.

Importantly, Nigeria is not an outlier. Similar patterns can be observed in South Sudan, Afghanistan, and parts of the Balkans, where kinetic stabilization did not translate into inclusive governance. The lesson is not that peacekeeping is futile; empirical research confirms its short-term efficacy (Fortna, 2008; Hegre et al., 2019). Rather, the lesson is that peacekeeping must be complemented by normative recalibration.

The peacekeeping paradox thus crystallizes the central thesis of this article: kinetic success without axiological governance produces fragile peace. The transition from battlefield stabilization to institutional resilience requires more than administrative reform; it demands a reordering of value hierarchies within the state.

THE DEVELOPMENTAL–GOVERNANCE NEXUS

Aid as an Instrument of Conflict: When Development Reproduces Fragility

Development assistance has long been framed as a peace dividend. The assumption is intuitive: poverty breeds instability; therefore, economic growth and infrastructure expansion mitigate the structural causes of violence (Collier et al., 2003). However, empirical research complicates this linear causality. While underdevelopment

correlates with civil war onset in certain contexts (Fearon & Laitin, 2003), development interventions themselves can generate distributive tensions, especially in societies characterized by weak institutions and identity-based cleavages (Woodward, 2017; Zürcher, 2011).

The developmental–governance nexus thus presents a paradox: aid intended to consolidate peace may inadvertently intensify conflict drivers if it is not conflict-sensitive. This phenomenon has been observed in multiple post-conflict settings. In Afghanistan, large-scale aid inflows after 2001 contributed to rent-seeking behavior and patronage networks that undermined state legitimacy (Zürcher, 2011). In Bosnia and Herzegovina, reconstruction funds often reinforced ethnically segmented political structures, entrenching rather than dissolving wartime divisions (Paris, 2004).

This dynamic can be understood through the lens of political economy. In fragile states, public resources including foreign aid become strategic assets in elite competition. When institutions lack transparency and accountability, aid flows may be captured by dominant factions, exacerbating perceptions of exclusion (Johnston, 2005). Such capture not only distorts development outcomes but erodes the social contract. Citizens may interpret unequal distribution as confirmation that the state privileges certain identities or regions.

Furthermore, aid can alter local power equilibria. Research on post-conflict Sierra Leone indicates that externally funded projects sometimes bypassed traditional authorities, inadvertently

destabilizing community hierarchies (Autesserre, 2014). While bypass strategies were intended to avoid corruption, they sometimes delegitimized existing governance mechanisms, creating institutional vacuums.

The concept of “horizontal inequalities,” developed by Stewart (2008), is particularly instructive here. Horizontal inequalities refer to disparities among culturally defined groups ethnic, religious, or regional. Unlike vertical inequalities (income differences among individuals), horizontal inequalities are more likely to generate collective mobilization because they map onto identity boundaries. Development interventions that disproportionately benefit one group, even unintentionally, may reinforce such inequalities and heighten grievance salience.

An axiological governance model demands that development planning explicitly evaluate its distributive implications. Infrastructure placement, employment generation programs, and agricultural subsidies must be assessed not only for economic efficiency but for their potential to exacerbate or mitigate horizontal inequalities. In the absence of such assessment, development may function as a conflict multiplier.

Moreover, the temporal dimension of aid matters. Short-term reconstruction projects often prioritize visible outputs roads, schools, and clinics to signal progress. While these are essential, their sustainability depends on governance capacity. Without maintenance budgets, transparent procurement processes, and community engagement, such projects may decay or become symbols of failed

promises. The disillusionment that follows can be politically destabilizing (Call, 2012).

Thus, the developmental governance nexus cannot be reduced to resource infusion. It requires institutional frameworks that align economic initiatives with peace-oriented value hierarchies. Development, in this sense, must be subordinated to axiological coherence rather than treated as an autonomous peace generator.

Mainstreaming Peace into Public Policy: The Case for Peace Impact Assessments (PIAs).

If development can function as both stabilizer and destabilizer, then a preventive mechanism is required to evaluate policy externalities before implementation. Environmental governance offers a useful analogy. Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) became institutionalized after recognition that infrastructure projects could generate ecological harm. Similarly, conflict-sensitive governance requires systematic Peace Impact Assessments (PIAs) to anticipate how policies may affect social cohesion.

The intellectual foundations for PIAs are visible in the “Do No Harm” framework developed by Anderson (1999), which emphasized that humanitarian aid can exacerbate conflict if it interacts negatively with local dividers. Subsequent scholarship on conflict-sensitive development expanded this insight, advocating integration of peace considerations into planning processes (OECD, 2011). However, these approaches often remain voluntary or donor-driven rather than legally mandated within domestic governance systems.

Mainstreaming peace into policy requires moving from project-level sensitivity to systemic obligation. Every major legislative proposal—whether concerning land reform, taxation, education curricula, or infrastructure—should be evaluated for its potential to intensify or mitigate horizontal inequalities, ontological insecurities, and distributive grievances. Such assessments must be interdisciplinary, combining quantitative data with qualitative community consultations.

The logic is preventative rather than reactive. Empirical studies demonstrate that early institutional responses to emerging grievances significantly reduce escalation risks (Walter, 2015). By contrast, delayed responses often allow narratives of exclusion to crystallize. PIAs would function as early warning instruments embedded within governance rather than external monitoring systems.

The institutionalization of PIAs also has symbolic value. It communicates that the state recognizes peace as a guiding principle of governance. Symbolic gestures matter in post-conflict contexts, where trust deficits are pervasive (Levi, 1997). If citizens observe that policies undergo conflict-sensitivity review, their perception of procedural fairness may improve, even when substantive outcomes are contested.

However, the implementation of PIAs faces political obstacles. Elites may resist additional oversight mechanisms that constrain discretionary power. Therefore, PIAs must be anchored in statutory law and insulated from executive interference. Their findings

should be publicly accessible to enhance transparency.

Comparative experience offers tentative support for such institutionalization. Ghana's National Peace Council, though primarily advisory, has played a mediating role in electoral disputes (Aning & Edu-Afful, 2013). Kenya's National Cohesion and Integration Commission, established after the 2007–2008 post-election violence, has sought to monitor hate speech and promote inclusivity. Yet both institutions face limitations in enforcement authority. An upgraded model would grant binding review capacity over high-risk policies.

PIAs also intersect with budgeting processes. Public finance decisions are among the most politically sensitive domains in post-conflict states. Participatory budgeting initiatives in certain Latin American contexts have demonstrated that inclusive fiscal deliberation can enhance trust and reduce conflict potential (Wampler, 2007). Embedding peace criteria within budgetary frameworks ensures that resource allocation aligns with social cohesion objectives.

In effect, mainstreaming peace into public policy transforms peace from a sectoral program into a governance norm. It institutionalizes the axiological shift argued throughout this article.

The theoretical necessity of statutory anchoring is evidenced by the divergent outcomes in West and East Africa. Ghana's National Peace Council (NPC), backed by Act 818, provides a model of "legal legitimacy" that has allowed it to successfully mediate high-stakes electoral disputes where ad-hoc bodies might fail. Conversely, Kenya's

National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC), while proactive in monitoring hate speech, often struggles with "enforcement impotence" because it lacks the statutory veto power over conflict-generating land and ethnic policies advocated in this framework. These cases demonstrate that without the "Policy Governor" status proposed here, peace institutions remain reactive mediators rather than preventive architects.

Corruption as Structural Violence: Governance Failure and the Erosion of Peace Architecture.

No analysis of the developmental–governance nexus is complete without confronting corruption. While often framed as an economic inefficiency, corruption in post-conflict contexts functions as structural violence. It systematically diverts resources from public goods, reinforces horizontal inequalities, and erodes trust in state institutions (Johnston, 2005).

Galtung's (1969) concept of structural violence is instructive here. Structural violence occurs when social arrangements prevent individuals from achieving their full potential. Corruption contributes to such arrangements by distorting service delivery, privileging patronage networks, and institutionalizing exclusion. In fragile societies, where trust is already thin, corruption magnifies ontological insecurity.

Empirical studies link high corruption levels to increased conflict risk, particularly when corruption intersects with identity politics (Fearon & Laitin, 2003; Walter, 2015). Citizens who perceive state institutions as captured by rival groups may interpret corruption as

ethnically or regionally biased, intensifying grievance narratives. Even when corruption is cross-cutting, its visibility undermines performance legitimacy (Levi, 1997).

In Nigeria, for example, oil revenue mismanagement has been repeatedly cited as a driver of unrest in the Niger Delta (Watts, 2004). Anti-corruption agencies have been established, yet their independence has often been questioned. Without credible enforcement, anti-corruption rhetoric risks becoming performative.

From an axiological standpoint, corruption reveals the absence of peace as a superordinate value. When personal enrichment supersedes collective welfare, governance becomes transactional rather than covenantal. The social contract fractures not only because services are undelivered, but because citizens perceive betrayal of normative commitments.

Addressing corruption requires more than technical reforms; it necessitates value transformation within political culture. Transparency mechanisms, open procurement systems, and digital governance tools can reduce opportunities for rent-seeking. However, sustainable reform depends on institutional insulation and civic oversight.

Importantly, anti-corruption measures must themselves be conflict-sensitive. Selective prosecution of political opponents may exacerbate polarization. Therefore, enforcement mechanisms must operate under independent judicial review and clear legal standards.

The integration of anti-corruption frameworks into Peace Impact

Assessments further strengthens preventive architecture. Policies that create opaque discretionary funds or emergency procurement channels should be flagged for conflict risk. In this manner, the developmental–governance nexus becomes mutually reinforcing: governance integrity sustains peace, and peace-oriented governance constrains corruption.

RECALIBRATING THE NEXUS: FROM ECONOMIC GROWTH TO SOCIAL COHESION

The dominant development discourse emphasizes GDP growth as the primary indicator of progress. While economic expansion is indispensable, it is insufficient as a proxy for peace durability. Countries may experience growth alongside rising inequality and political fragmentation. The recalibration proposed in this article shifts evaluative emphasis from aggregate growth to social cohesion.

Social cohesion encompasses trust in institutions, intergroup tolerance, and perceptions of fairness. Although more difficult to quantify, these indicators are directly relevant to conflict prevention. The World Bank and OECD have increasingly acknowledged the importance of inclusive institutions in fragile contexts (OECD, 2011). However, implementation often lags rhetorical commitment.

Recalibrating the nexus entails integrating cohesion metrics into national planning frameworks. Ministries of finance and planning should collaborate with peace institutions to evaluate whether growth strategies reduce horizontal inequalities. For instance, regional development funds can target historically

marginalized areas, accompanied by transparent monitoring.

This approach aligns with Amartya Sen's (1999) capability framework, which emphasizes expanding substantive freedoms rather than merely increasing income. Capabilities—such as access to education, healthcare, and political participation enhance citizens' agency and reduce vulnerability to mobilization by violent entrepreneurs.

In sum, the developmental–governance nexus must be reoriented from output maximization to conflict minimization through inclusive value prioritization. Development that neglects governance integrity and distributive justice risks becoming a destabilizing force. Conversely, development embedded within an axiological governance framework can function as a durable peace pillar.

Proposed Framework: Statutory Peace Architectures

The preceding sections have argued that durable peace in post-kinetic societies requires an axiological shift in governance that elevates peace from a security outcome to a constitutional value embedded across policy domains. The analytical question now becomes institutional: how can such a value shift be operationalized within fragile state architectures? Normative aspirations, absent institutional embodiment, rarely endure. As North (1990) reminds us, institutions are the “rules of the game” that structure incentives and constrain opportunism. If peace is to function as a superordinate value, it must be anchored within the rule-bound frameworks that guide public authority.

This section advances a concrete proposal: the creation or transformation of National Peace Institutions (NPIs) into statutory Peace Policy Authorities (PPAs) autonomous, constitutionally or legislatively entrenched bodies empowered to conduct binding Peace Impact Assessments (PIAs), review major legislation for conflict externalities, and trigger preventive mediation mechanisms. Unlike advisory councils or ad hoc committees, these institutions would possess fiscal autonomy, procedural veto capacity (subject to legislative override thresholds), and decentralized subsidiarity mechanisms extending to state and local levels.

The objective is not bureaucratic proliferation but axiological entrenchment. Peace must be institutionalized as a cross-cutting governance filter in the same manner that constitutional courts review legislation for rights compliance or audit institutions reviews fiscal integrity.

National Peace Institutions (NPI) 2.0: From Advisory Think Tanks to Policy Governors

Across Africa and parts of Asia, various forms of peace councils and reconciliation commissions have emerged over the past three decades. Ghana's National Peace Council, Kenya's National Cohesion and Integration Commission, and Nigeria's Peace Committees represent attempts to institutionalize dialogue and mediation (Aning & Edu-Afful, 2013). While these bodies have contributed to electoral dispute mitigation and civic education, their structural limitations are evident: they are typically advisory,

underfunded, and dependent on executive goodwill.

The proposed NPI 2.0 model departs from this advisory paradigm. It reconceptualizes peace institutions as policy governors rather than mediators alone. Drawing inspiration from independent central banks and constitutional courts, the NPI 2.0 would operate as a quasi-constitutional guardian of social cohesion.

The rationale for such elevation is grounded in conflict recurrence data. Walter (2015) demonstrates that civil wars are increasingly recurring phenomena, with roughly half of post-conflict states relapsing within a decade. This persistence indicates that ad hoc peace committees, while useful for crisis management, are insufficient for structural prevention. Institutionalized early warning and preventive review mechanisms are required.

The NPI 2.0 would exercise three core mandates:

Legislative Review Authority: All major bills with significant distributive, identity, or territorial implications would require a Peace Impact Assessment before enactment.

Budgetary Conflict Screening: National and subnational budgets would be evaluated for horizontal inequality risks (Stewart, 2008).

Preventive Mediation Trigger: Upon identifying high-risk indicators such as escalating hate speech, discriminatory administrative actions, or regional fiscal imbalances the institution could mandate facilitated dialogue processes.

The analogy to constitutional review is instructive. Just as constitutional courts assess rights compatibility, the NPI would assess peace compatibility. Importantly, this authority need not constitute absolute veto power. A supermajority override mechanism within parliament could preserve democratic primacy while ensuring deliberative friction.

Critics may argue that such authority risks bureaucratic overreach. However, the institutional design would be circumscribed by clear statutory criteria defining “peace risk”—including measurable indicators such as disproportionate resource allocation, exclusionary language provisions, or security deployments with documented rights violations. Transparency requirements would mitigate arbitrariness.

Comparative institutional economics suggests that credible commitment mechanisms reduce uncertainty and enhance cooperation (North, 1990). In post-conflict contexts, uncertainty regarding elite intentions often drives defensive mobilization (Fearon, 1995). An autonomous peace authority signals that governance decisions will be scrutinized for distributive fairness, thereby lowering anticipatory insecurity.

The success of independent electoral commissions in consolidating democratic legitimacy offers an instructive precedent. While imperfect, such commissions have, in several African states, improved confidence in electoral outcomes (Lindberg, 2006). A statutory peace authority could perform a parallel function for policy legitimacy.

To clarify the operational mechanics of the proposed NPI 2.0, the following institutional architecture is required:

Feature	Proposed Statutory Specification
Appointment Mechanism	Multi-stakeholder nominations by the Judiciary, Civil Society, and Academic Senates; confirmed by a 2/3 Parliamentary supermajority.
Funding Source	Guaranteed "First-Line Charge" from the Consolidated Revenue Fund to ensure insulation from executive budget cuts.
Override Procedure	Parliamentary override of an NPI policy veto requires a 75% majority vote and a mandatory 30-day public "deliberative cooling-off" period.

Legislative Anchoring: A National Peace Act for Autonomy and Insulation

Institutional credibility depends on insulation from partisan capture. Therefore, the establishment of an NPI 2.0 requires legislative anchoring through a National Peace Act (NPA). This Act would define mandate, appointment procedures, fiscal autonomy provisions, and reporting obligations.

Legislative anchoring serves three functions:

Normative Entrenchment: By codifying peace as a statutory objective, the state symbolically elevates it within the hierarchy of governance values.

Operational Clarity: Clear legal criteria reduce ambiguity in mandate execution.

Political Insulation: Fixed-term appointments and protected budgets shield the institution from executive retaliation.

Appointment mechanisms must balance independence with democratic legitimacy. A multi-actor selection process incorporating executive nomination, parliamentary approval by supermajority, and civil society consultation can enhance credibility.

Term staggering prevents wholesale turnover following elections.

Fiscal autonomy is particularly critical. Many oversight bodies fail due to budgetary manipulation. The NPA should guarantee a constitutionally protected percentage of the national budget or establish an independent funding stream. Transparency in expenditure, audited by supreme audit institutions, would preserve accountability.

The NPA must also define the scope of Peace Impact Assessments. PIAs should apply to:

- Constitutional amendments.*
- National budget frameworks.*
- Large-scale infrastructure projects.*
- Land and natural resource legislation.*
- Security sector deployment policies.*
- Education and language reforms.*

Embedding PIA requirements within legislative procedure ensures that peace considerations are not discretionary. This parallels the institutionalization of

Environmental Impact Assessments in many jurisdictions following recognition of ecological externalities.

One potential critique concerns democratic sovereignty: does granting review authority to a peace institution dilute elected representatives' prerogatives? The response lies in constitutional analogy. Democracies routinely accept judicial review as a safeguard against majoritarian excess. In divided societies, majoritarian decision-making may exacerbate horizontal inequalities (Horowitz, 1985). A peace authority functions as a preventive safeguard rather than an undemocratic constraint.

Furthermore, legislative override mechanisms can preserve parliamentary supremacy. For example, if parliament overrides a negative PIA finding by a two-thirds majority, the decision retains democratic legitimacy while signaling high deliberative consensus.

Subsidiarity in Action: Decentralizing Peace Architecture

Centralized peace oversight alone cannot address localized grievances. Conflict often emerges from subnational dynamics land disputes, communal tensions, or municipal governance failures. Therefore, the proposed framework incorporates subsidiarity: authority exercised at the lowest effective level.

Subsidiarity aligns with federal and decentralized governance principles (Lijphart, 1977). In heterogeneous societies, decentralization can mitigate conflict by granting autonomy to distinct groups. However, decentralization without oversight may entrench local elite capture. Thus, a

multi-tiered peace architecture is required.

Under the proposed model:

National Level: The central Peace Authority conducts legislative review and macro-level risk assessment.

State/Regional Level: Subnational Peace Commissions monitor regional policies, conduct community consultations, and feed early warning data upward.

Local Level: Community Peace Forums facilitate dialogue and dispute resolution.

Vertical coordination mechanisms would ensure information flow. Digital dashboards tracking grievance indicators such as intergroup violence reports, hate speech incidents, or resource allocation disparities could enhance responsiveness.

Evidence from Kenya's county-level peace committees suggests that localized mediation structures can reduce election-related violence when supported by national frameworks (Kanyinga & Long, 2012). However, sustainability depends on institutional integration rather than donor-dependent programming.

Subsidiarity also enhances ontological security. When citizens perceive that grievances can be addressed locally without resort to violence, trust in governance increases (Giddens, 1991). Early intervention prevents escalation to national crises.

Importantly, decentralization must be accompanied by fiscal equity. If subnational peace bodies lack resources, they risk becoming symbolic.

The National Peace Act should mandate intergovernmental transfers dedicated to peace architecture maintenance.

Integrating Peace Architecture into Existing Governance Ecosystems

Institutional innovation must avoid duplication. The proposed peace architecture should complement, not replace, constitutional courts, human rights commissions, and anti-corruption agencies. Memoranda of understanding can delineate jurisdictional boundaries.

For example:

- i. Constitutional courts assess rights compliance.**
- ii. Anti-corruption agencies investigate financial misconduct.**
- iii. Peace Authorities assess distributive and cohesion risks.**

Overlapping mandates may be inevitable, but structured coordination reduces institutional rivalry. Joint task forces could address complex cases involving corruption and horizontal inequality.

Moreover, international partners can align assistance with statutory peace frameworks. Donor-funded projects should be required to undergo domestic PIAs rather than relying solely on external safeguards. This reinforces sovereignty while enhancing coherence.

ANTICIPATED CHALLENGES AND SAFEGUARDS

No institutional design is immune to politicization. Potential risks include:

Appointment capture by ruling parties.

- i. Bureaucratic inertia.
- ii. Overextension of mandate.
- iii. Public skepticism regarding impartiality.

Safeguards includes:

- i. Transparent selection processes.
- ii. Fixed non-renewable terms.
- iii. Public reporting obligations.
- iv. Judicial review of PIA determinations.

Civil society engagement is equally crucial. Public hearings during PIA processes enhance legitimacy and democratize peace oversight.

The proposed Statutory Peace Architecture thus operationalizes the article's central thesis: peace must be embedded as a governing value, not treated as a post-conflict afterthought.

By institutionalizing Peace Impact Assessments, legislative anchoring, and subsidiarity-based decentralization, post-kinetic states can transition from reactive stabilization to preventive governance.

A critical counterargument to the NPI 2.0 model is the risk of "Elite Capture," particularly in states with weak institutional guardrails. To prevent the ruling class from weaponizing the NPI, this framework utilizes Decentralized Subsidiarity. By granting legal standing to local and regional peace committees to challenge national NPI decisions, power is diffused. Furthermore, the requirement for Multi-Stakeholder Appointments and Fiscal Autonomy creates a structural

"firewall," making it significantly more difficult for the executive branch to exert the "pocketbook pressure" typically used to co-opt oversight bodies in developing democracies.

CONCLUSION: TOWARD A VALUE-BASED PEACE

Peacekeeping as Gatekeeper, Governance as Householder

The central argument advanced throughout this article has been that peacebuilding in the post–Cold War era has suffered from a foundational misdiagnosis. While peacekeeping operations have demonstrably reduced the recurrence of immediate kinetic violence (Fortna, 2008; Hegre, Hultman, & Nygård, 2019), the institutional architectures that follow often lack axiological coherence. Peace has been treated as an operational endpoint measured by ceasefires, disarmament statistics, and electoral cycles rather than as a normative principle guiding governance. This epistemological gap has generated what this article termed the peacekeeping paradox: kinetic success accompanied by institutional fragility.

To conceptualize the distinction more precisely, peacekeeping may be understood as a gatekeeping function. It halts violence, contains spoilers, and creates political space for reconstruction. Governance, by contrast, is the householder. It inhabits the political space once violence subsides. If governance is structured around exclusionary value hierarchies privileging security over justice, macroeconomic orthodoxy over distributive equity, or patronage over accountability then the architecture of peace remains brittle.

The empirical record reinforces this insight. Recurring conflict in states such as Nigeria demonstrates that military containment and democratic procedure alone do not guarantee cohesion (Suberu, 2001; Thurston, 2017). Horizontal inequalities, corruption, and symbolic marginalization persist when policy frameworks are not subjected to peace-oriented scrutiny (Stewart, 2008; Johnston, 2005). Similarly, international interventions that prioritize institutional replication without normative transformation risk entrenching superficial stability (Paris, 2004; Richmond, 2014).

The argument here has not been that elections, markets, or security sector reforms are misguided. Rather, it has been that these instruments must be subordinated to a higher-order value commitment. Axiological governance situates peace not as a byproduct of liberalization but as a constitutional objective shaping policy trade-offs. When ministries of finance, infrastructure, and education internalize peace as a guiding norm, the probability that development externalities will exacerbate grievance diminishes.

This shift also reorients the concept of security. De-securitizing peace does not eliminate military institutions; it recalibrates their position within the normative hierarchy (Buzan, Wæver, & de Wilde, 1998). Human security considerations economic opportunity, equitable service delivery, recognition politics become co-equal determinants of stability (Newman, 2010). The transition from hard power dominance to institutional resilience reflects maturation rather than demobilization.

Crucially, this transformation requires institutional embodiment. The proposed Statutory Peace Architecture anchored through a National Peace Act and operationalized via binding Peace Impact

Assessments offers a mechanism for embedding axiological commitments within governance processes. By granting peace institutions review authority analogous to constitutional courts, the state signals that social cohesion is not discretionary. It becomes part of the rule-bound architecture of public decision-making.

The metaphor of gatekeeper and householder captures this dynamic succinctly. Peacekeeping opens the door; governance determines whether the house becomes hospitable or hostile. Without axiological recalibration, the structure may replicate the grievances that originally fueled violence.

The Philosophical Shift: Every Administrative Act as Conflict Resolution

The deeper contribution of this article lies in its philosophical reframing of peacebuilding. Peace is not merely the absence of organized violence a negative condition described by Galtung (1969) but the presence of value-based governance. It is sustained when public policy consistently affirms inclusion, equity, and recognition.

This reframing draws upon multiple intellectual traditions. Social contract theory underscores that legitimacy arises from reciprocal obligations between state and citizen (Levi, 1997). Ontological security theory emphasizes the importance of identity continuity and belonging (Giddens, 1991; Mitzen,

2006). Political economy analyses highlight the destabilizing effects of horizontal inequalities and rent-seeking (Stewart, 2008; Collier et al., 2003). Integrating these strands reveals that peace durability is inseparable from the normative orientation of governance.

The proposed axiological model demands that every administrative act be interpreted through a conflict-sensitive lens. Budget allocations, infrastructure siting, public appointments, curriculum reforms, and land adjudications are not neutral bureaucratic procedures. They are signals of value prioritization. When citizens perceive fairness in these decisions even amid disagreement the likelihood of violent mobilization diminishes (Fearon, 1995; Walter, 2015).

Conversely, when governance communicates exclusion through opaque procurement, selective law enforcement, or disproportionate resource concentration the social contract erodes. Corruption, as structural violence, transforms peace dividends into elite rents, reinforcing grievance narratives (Johnston, 2005). In such contexts, the relapse into conflict is not abrupt but cumulative.

The path forward, therefore, is not merely technical reform but philosophical shift. States emerging from conflict must reconceptualize peace as an organizing principle. Legislative anchoring of peace oversight, fiscal autonomy for peace institutions, and subsidiarity-based decentralization are mechanisms to translate philosophy into practice. Yet their effectiveness ultimately depends on political will and civic engagement.

International actors also bear responsibility. Donor agencies should align assistance with domestic peace architecture rather than imposing parallel safeguards. Peace Impact Assessments should become as routine as financial audits in development programming. Such alignment reinforces sovereignty while strengthening preventive capacity.

It is important to acknowledge potential critiques. Skeptics may argue that elevating peace institutions risks bureaucratic expansion or politicization. These concerns are valid. However, the cost of inaction recurring conflict, humanitarian crises, and protracted instability is far greater. Institutional design must incorporate safeguards, transparency, and democratic oversight. The objective is not technocratic paternalism but structured deliberation.

Ultimately, the axiology of peacebuilding reframes the purpose of the post-kinetic state. The measure of success is not merely the absence of gunfire but the presence of a governance

culture that treats every policy decision as an opportunity to reinforce social cohesion. Peace becomes endogenous to administration rather than exogenous to security forces.

The future of conflict prevention lies in this philosophical reorientation. Peacekeeping will remain indispensable in halting violence. But sustainable peace will depend on whether governance institutions internalize the normative commitment to inclusion and justice. In this sense, the evolution of peacebuilding mirrors the evolution of constitutionalism: from coercive order to rule-bound legitimacy.

To recalibrate the developmental-governance nexus is, therefore, to reimagine the state itself. It is to assert that the legitimacy of public authority rests not solely on electoral mandate or coercive capacity, but on the consistent prioritization of shared value. Where such prioritization becomes habitual embedded in law, budget, and administrative practice, peace ceases to be fragile. It becomes structural.

References

- Anderson, M. B. (1999). *Do no harm: How aid can support peace or war*. Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Aning, K., & Edu-Afful, F. (2013). Ghana's National Peace Council. *Conflict Trends*, 3, 27–32.
- Autesserre, S. (2014). *Peace land: Conflict resolution and the everyday politics of international intervention*. Cambridge University Press.
- Buzan, B., Wæver, O., & de Wilde, J. (1998). *Security: A new framework for analysis*. Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Call, C. T. (2012). *Why peace fails: The causes and prevention of civil war recurrence*. Georgetown University Press.

Collier, P., Hoeffler, A., & Söderbom, M. (2003). On the duration of civil war. *Journal of Peace Research*, 41(3), 253–273.

Fearon, J. D. (1995). Rationalist explanations for war. *International Organization*, 49(3), 379–414.

Fearon, J. D., & Laitin, D. D. (2003). Ethnicity, insurgency, and civil war. *American Political Science Review*, 97(1), 75–90.

Fortna, V. P. (2008). *Does peacekeeping work? Shaping belligerents' choices after civil war*.

Princeton University Press.

Galtung, J. (1969). Violence, peace, and peace research. *Journal of Peace Research*, 6(3), 167– 191.

Giddens, A. (1991). *Modernity and self-identity: Self and society in the late modern age*. Stanford University Press.

Hegre, H., Hultman, L., & Nygård, H. M. (2019). Evaluating the conflict-reducing effect of UN peacekeeping operations. *Journal of Politics*, 81(1), 215–232.

Horowitz, D. L. (1985). *Ethnic groups in conflict*. University of California Press.

Jarstad, A. K., & Nilsson, D. (2008). From words to deeds: The implementation of power-sharing pacts in peace accords. *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, 25(3), 206–223.

Johnston, M. (2005). *Syndromes of corruption: Wealth, power, and democracy*. Cambridge University Press.

Kanyinga, K., & Long, J. D. (2012). The political economy of reforms in Kenya. *African Studies Review*, 55(1), 31–52.

Levi, M. (1997). *Consent, dissent, and patriotism*. Cambridge University Press.

Lijphart, A. (1977). *Democracy in plural societies*. Yale University Press.

Lindberg, S. I. (2006). *Democracy and elections in Africa*. Johns Hopkins University Press. Mitzen, J. (2006). Ontological security in world politics. *European Journal of International*

Relations, 12(3), 341–370.

Newman, E. (2010). Critical human security studies. *Review of International Studies*, 36(1), 77– 94.

North, D. C. (1990). *Institutions, institutional change and economic performance*. Cambridge University Press.

OECD. (2011). *Supporting statebuilding in situations of conflict and fragility*. OECD Publishing. Paris, R. (2004). *At war's end: Building peace after civil conflict*. Cambridge University Press.

Richmond, O. P. (2014). *Failed statebuilding: Intervention, the state, and the dynamics of peace formation*. Yale University Press.

Sen, A. (1999). *Development as freedom*. Oxford University Press.

Stewart, F. (2008). *Horizontal inequalities and conflict: Understanding group violence in multiethnic societies*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Suberu, R. T. (2001). *Federalism and ethnic conflict in Nigeria*. United States Institute of Peace Press.

Thurston, A. (2017). *Boko Haram: The history of an African jihadist movement*. Princeton University Press.

Walter, B. F. (2015). Why bad governance leads to repeat civil war. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 59(7), 1242–1272.

Watts, M. (2004). Resource curse? Governmentality, oil and power in the Niger Delta. *Geopolitics*, 9(1), 50–80.

Woodward, S. L. (2017). *The ideology of failed states: Why intervention fails*. Cambridge University Press.

Zürcher, C. (2011). The liberal peacebuilding agenda: Why do peacebuilding interventions fail?

International Politics, 48(4–5), 478–49