Everyday Peace: Historicising Local Agency in Managing Ethno-Religious Conflicts in Nigeria's Middle Belt

Gloria Na'antoe Longba'am-Alli
Makerere University Kampala, Uganda, gloria.longbaam@chuss.mak.ac.ug

Everyday Peace: Historicising Local Agency in Managing Ethno-Religious Conflicts in Nigeria's Middle Belt

Gloria Na'antoe Longba'am-Alli
Department of History, Archaeology & Heritage Studies
Makerere University Kampala, Uganda
naantoe@gmail.com
gloria.longbaam@chuss.mak.ac.ug

Over the years, critical studies scholars have criticised liberal peacebuilding strategies for their elitist top-down policies, which hardly pay attention to the local concepts and acts of peace. Critical peace and conflict studies scholars' advocacy for 'everyday peace' comes from negotiated governance, where loosely coordinated processes surpass liberal peace's top-down policies. Therefore, everyday peace recognises people's commentaries and practices shaping their resistance, resilience, and negotiation with conflicting groups. In particular, women and people far from city centres are often marginalised or are not included in peacebuilding efforts. In recognising these people's limited involvement, this article draws on oral interviews, archival materials, and secondary data with conflict-affected people in some selected study areas in Nigeria's Middle Belt to understand the dynamics of everyday peace practices. The findings highlight that people in these conflict-affected areas use everyday peace as the hidden script where acts of avoidance, domination, and resistance occur. Naturally, everyday peace has been criticised for emphasising conflict management over resolution. However, this article argues that everyday peace should be examined through the lens of innovation, creativity, and improvision, where citizen agency at the individual and group level takes precedence over state-mandated conflict resolution processes.

Nigeria is a widely diverse country and has always been at an ethno-religious crossroads since independence. Furthermore, the evidence of these ethno-religious differences poses challenges to peace since the return to democracy in 1999, mainly manifesting through the Niger Delta militias in the south-south, the Boko Haram insurgency in the northeast, banditry in the north-west and herder/farmer conflicts in the Middle Belt. In the Middle Belt, the security problems started as sectarian conflicts. The most popular include the 2001, 2008, 2010, and 2014 jos crises, and the Middle Belt remains the theatre of protracted conflicts. The sectarian conflict morphed into occupational herder/farmer conflicts due to restrictions on migration caused by the Boko Haram conflicts ravaging the northeast alongside other climatic issues that have caused the migration of herders to move southwards in search of greener pastures for their cattle. The quest for better vegetation has brought the herders into conflict with farmers who accuse them of destroying crops and displacing communities to grab their land.

Organisations, communities, and individuals have made efforts to foster peace in their daily lives. Moreover, people's actions, mainly at the margins of peace settlements and agreements, have challenged researchers to scrutinise how we study peace beyond the predominant statist, liberal peace that primarily permeates the literature on peacebuilding. The article adopted a broad conceptualisation of everyday peace, which refers to people finding forms of resistance, resilience, and negotiation within the physical, psychological, and social breakdown of relations between conflicting communities. For most people affected by conflicts in Nigeria's Middle Belt, everyday peace responds to elitist manipulations and marginalisation. It fosters

some semblance of sustaining peace because people no longer perceive the state as an unbiased arbiter in managing the conflicts within the region.

The Federal government tried to manage all the conflicts and clashes in the Middle Belt by first deploying military and police forces. It further established special task forces in 2010, such as Operation Safe Haven for Plateau State, Operation Whirl Stroke, Ayem A'kpatuma I and II, and Operation Puff Adder (Duru, 2018b, 2018a). However, all of these had little effect on reducing security threats. The special task force became imperative when reports from humanitarian organisations such as Human rights watch levelled allegations of human rights violations and allegations ethno-religious against the army and police (Human Rights Watch, 2001, 2002, 2013, 2020). However, employing coercive force has had little effect on reducing insecurity threats. Plateau and Benue state established hybrid security structures such as Operation Rainbow and Agro Rangers respectively to take care of context-specific conflict dynamics in their states due to dissatisfaction with the federal government's performance.

Ordinary people have learnt to disrupt intractable violence and conflicts through small acts of peace. These are the acts that Roger Mac Ginty refers to as "everyday peace" (Mac Ginty, 2021). According to an elder in Lafia, the manifestations of everyday peace thrives through local neighbourhood watch and vigilante groups. Using a broad brush, Lar (2015, 2018) argues that the Nigerian state has utilised the everyday peace practices of these vigilante groups to form hybrid and plural policing practices between the police and the vigilante groups to manage crime and insecurity in the peripheries or villages.

This essay underpins its argument to understand further how ordinary people enact everyday peace.The arguments are made for two reasons: to fully comprehend the historical perspective of ordinary people's voices and experiences in resolving intractable conflicts; and to outline a framework for thinking about peace by drawing on Roger Mac Ginty's concepts of solidarity reciprocity, ambiguity, and avoidance. People mainly utilised one or more of these proponents to manage intra-group relationships with their neighbours. Before venturing into this, the article will highlight the conflicts within Nigeria's Middle Belt to contextualise the region's security challenges. The section that follows discusses theoretical perspectives on everyday peace. Finally, we validate everyday people's stories by recognising narratives' vital function in expanding our epistemological understandings. It is vital to recognise their function as contributors to the framing and to comprehend the common peace notions discussed in this essay.

Contextual analysis: Understanding the conflicts in the Middle Belt
Nigeria's Middle Belt, also known as Central Nigeria, is an ethnically diverse zone consisting mainly of minority ethnic groups running across central Nigeria. Comprising of Abuja, Benue, Plateau, Kwara, Kogi, Southern Kaduna, Parts of Niger, Adamawa and Taraba states, the region is a political construct appropriating all non-Hausa-Fulani and Kanuri people of northern Nigeria (Ochonu, 2008). Geographically, it is a region with a distinct climate, located between the Sahel to the north and the forest to the south. Among its prominent features is the Jos Plateau and a lot of hilly terrain than people who live to the north or south.

Some significant features of the Middle Belt's conflict include the massive displacement of people, increasing food insecurity, and the reorganisation of settlement patterns along ethno-religious lines. In the displacement camps are people, especially farmers, who have lost their means of livelihood. These people take up menial jobs in the informal sector in most cases. As Mr Maor, the chairman of the Daudu camp, explained, most men have lost their traditional

roles as breadwinners for their families because they can not farm their land. When women and young girls go street hawking or are hired as house helpers in their host communities, they are especially vulnerable to gender-based abuse. Compounding the insecurity in some areas are bandits and kidnappers who take advantage of the government's marginal presence to continue perpetuating insecurity. The state is hardly present, appearing only through the police, army action or special task force when violence erupts. Even when the federal and state governments initiate non-coercive conflict management strategies, they are mainly elitist and do little to alleviate the people's concerns.

Internal displacement, food insecurity, and persistent eruptions of violence between herders and farmers result from ethno-religious conflicts in the Middle Belt. Fought between the indigenous farming communities or between farmers and Hausa Fulani, the internal conflicts have pre-colonial and colonial antecedents. In the case of Plateau state, the clashes originate more from the problem of ethnic and inter-ethnic relations and interactions between the Hausa-Fulani and other Jos Plateau communities. However, religion is easily the rhetoric used to explain the conflicts (Danfulani & Fwatshak, 2002).

The primary source of the conflict is the contestation for the ownership of Jos among the three main indigenous ethnic groups: the Berom, Anaguta, and Afisare, versus the descendants of the Hausa-Fulani who initially settled in Jos as traders and tin miners. The latter, who refer to themselves as the Jasawa,[i] claim that their forefathers were the first settlers in Jos when it was still virgin land. On the other hand, the Berom, Anaguta, and Afisare also lay claim to the traditional ownership of Jos, which was referred to as Gwosh in the pre-colonial era. The traditional ownership of the three ethnic groups has more credence because the ethnic groups have traditional landmarks and villages within the areas of contestation (Danfulani & Fwatshak, 2002, p. 246). Specifically, Mangvwat (2013) using courtiers, shows that the effects of tin mining policies dispossessed most of them from their ancestral lands. C.G. Ames (1972), a British colonial administrator on the Jos Plateau, confirmed that social and economic transformation led to the marginalisation of the indigenes of the Plateau during the colonial period. In some areas, the indigenous population was placed under some semblance of the Hausa-Fulani emirate system as part of the indirect rule system. This led to internal colonialism (Ochonu, 2008, 2014) and sowed some of the seeds of later conflicts.

Additionally, Adam Higazi (2011) asserts that Nigeria's socio-economic crisis, which has persisted since the 1980s because of declining oil revenues and the effects of Babangida's military regime's 1986 Structural Adjustment Programme, is intricately linked to the escalation of ethnic and religious politics in the Middle Belt. Indigenous peoples were accused by settlers of marginalising them by denying them political positions, scholarships, and employment (Alubo, 2006). There are significant incentives for gaining political positions among the political elite because they form prebendalist opportunities and the chance to "get a share of the national cake." For example, in 1994, the political appointment of Mohammed Muktar Hausa-Fulani as the state coordinator of the poverty alleviation programme(Afolabi & Avasiloae, 2015; Sayne, 2012) sparked off demonstrations from the indigenous Berom, Anaguta, and Afisare populations because they felt that, as indigenes, their political rights and the chance to have a son of the soil represent their interests were taken over by a settler.

Because the government failed to address the indigene/settler dichotomy, it laid the groundwork for the 2001 crisis, followed by the 2002, 2004, 2008, 2010 and 2014 crises, which claimed many lives. And the loss of lives remains unabated because, alongside the aforementioned causes of conflicts, there are allegations of an Islamisation agenda perpetuated

by the Hausa-Fulani (Adurokiya, 2019; Ndujihe & Eyoboka, 2019), worsening climatic conditions which have led to the encroachment of farmers into the cattle routes and the Boko Haram insurgency in the northeast which has mitigated the transhumance movement of herders Crucial to the story of the Middle Belt conflicts is their location. Northern states are particularly aggressive neighbours, responsible for passing bills or sponsoring mercenary attacks. In May 2010, the Bauchi state House of Assembly passed a resolution to expel Plateau indigenes, residents, from Bauchi and voted in favour of the state's dismemberment. These political manoeuvres and the presence of mercenaries heightened tensions and animosity between the different ethno-religious groups and the two states (Para-Mallam & Hoomlong, 2013). A security personnel spoke of how the influence of Boko Haram and the incursion of Fulani fleeing conflicts from the Sudano-Sahel region has also changed the nature of relations between herders and farmers in Nigeria.

Theorising Everyday Peace
An emerging body of research criticises liberal peace as a western-neo-liberal approach that ignores indigenous peoples' concepts of peace, conflict management, and conflict resolution. Therefore, calls from Oliver Richmond and Roger Mac Ginty to formulate a post-liberal peace aim to develop alternatives to liberal peace (Ginty, 2013; Richmond, 2011). Situated among the three forms of post-liberal peace is everyday peace.[ii] This form of peace argues that individual and communal perceptions of peace are integral to formulating sustainable peace. Roger Mac Ginty (2013) and Pamina Firchow (2018) criticised liberal peace indicators for embracing a nebulous concept of peace and seeking an illusory nature of peace. But the absence of violence is simply not enough, as seen in Johan Galtung's differentiation between positive and negative peace(Galtung, 1996). Other criticisms against liberal peace indicators speak of them as more of an auditing and compliance tool than focusing on society's peace. Most peace projects are funded by the global north, and these external actors easily redefine, misread, and distort localities in both qualitative and quantitative methodologies (Ginty, 2013, p. 59).

Therefore, for most post-liberal scholars, if everyday peace indicators aimed to overcome the pitfalls of top-bottom peacebuilding, they should be locally based, non-prescriptive, safeguarded against elite capture, reflexive, and open to change. For example, Mac Ginty's framework of everyday peace, described in *Everyday Peace: How So-Called Ordinary People Disrupt Violent Conflict,* talks about how ordinary people's acts of sociality, reciprocity, solidarity, forgiveness, and reconciliation bring about lasting peace in societies caught up in conflicts. Mac Ginty (2014) also mentioned people's enactment of avoidance, ambiguity, ritualised politeness, telling, and blame deferring as other acts of everyday peace. While these acts differ from locality to locality, some classic examples include when Christians and Muslims in the Middle Belt of Nigeria overcome their ethno-religious differences and use the same marketplace. It is also the peace practised between Hindu traders and Muslim weavers in the silk sari industry of north India (Williams, 2013). Everyday peace can also be defined by decisions taken by people to take alternate paths to school and work because of information received by neighbours to avert potential danger in Colombia and Mexico (Berents, 2014; Berents & Ten Have, 2017).

A focus on everyday peace gives insight not just into peacebuilding but also on-resistance (Berents & Mcevoy-levy, 2016; Richmond, 2010). de Certeau argues that everyday life responds to structural attempts to organise life by reclaiming these spaces. This is because technocratic peace often does not pay attention to people who do not fit into this picture. This practise is a "covert reorganisation of power" (de Certeau, 1998). This reorganisation is not an accident but rather a conscious decision to pay attention to daily communal life and

relationships in these spaces. A focus on everyday peacebuilding practices enables examining how the individual 'negotiates around systemic and overt violence, around material problems, or even deploys or co-opts them' (Richmond, 2009). Individuals and groups, especially women, youths and subalterns whose voices are frequently drowned out by and excluded from formal political debates, can find a voice in everyday peace and unite against violence and exclusion (Berents & Mcevoy-levy, 2016; Richmond, 2011). The critical takeaway from the ontology of everyday peace is its subjectivity. That is why it is crucial that when contesting parties can enact everyday peace practices, it should be utilised by peacebuilders as a conflict transformation mechanism.

Within the Nigerian context, scholars attest to many forms of attaining peace. Bello & Olutola (2016) Bello & Olutola (2016) postulate that mixing Western and indigenous strategies is vital for sustainable peace in Africa. For most indigenous conflict resolution models, the goal is not to accuse or punish but to settle disputes, heal wounds, and reach compromises that foster future relationships (Bukari, 2016; Theresa & Oluwafemi, 2014). Moreover, the Gacaca system has utilised this system in Rwanda and the Matoput system of the Acholi in Uganda to achieve after the 1994 Rwandan Genocide and the Ugandan civil war, respectively (Daniel, 2012; Jon Nowotny, 2015).

The idea of truth-telling within this system also encourages people to talk about intimidation, violence, and human rights violations. But the systems can fuel identity-based animosity and instigate vengeance rather than ensure forgiveness. The *Gacaca* system has also been accused of being retributive rather than restorative, targeting mostly opponents or critics of the Kagame government(Bello & Olutola, 2016; Brounéus, 2008; Corey & Joireman, 2004; Kirkby, 2006). Even though the Gacaca and Matoput systems are not perfect, they are recognised and respected African systems that have been used to get justice for those that have been victims of ethnic conflicts and genocide.

Amid the Nigerian states' attempts at mitigating violence, everyday life in Nigeria's urban and rural areas is characterised by common sense, solidarity, tolerance, reciprocity, and an understanding that if space is to be shared, then accommodations must be made (Mac Ginty, 2021, p. 1). Roger Mac Ginty argues that everyday peace supplements liberal peace and hybrid attempts to manage violent conflicts because so-called "ordinary" people can disrupt and forge pro-social relations in conflict-affected societies. So, expectably, "the everyday" everywhere is marked by experiences of innate inter-community harmony and tolerance, rooted in commonalities that consistently go beyond religious and ethnic identities. Barents (2015) also emphasised that youths build mechanisms of everyday peace in response to the dynamics of institutional marginalisation; the building of forms of existence that empower individuals without relying on an uninterested state.

Methodology
This article draws its data on research conducted with people in Plateau, Nasarawa and Benue states in Nigeria's Middle Belt Region (central Nigeria). The research was multimethod. In 2019, the researcher conducted an online survey and got 185 respondents between 18 to 65 years involved to elicit respondents' interpretations and perspectives of everyday peace in their communities. The second component, which took place in 2020 and 2021, involved conducting semi-structured interviews with 55 Key informants from the three study areas. Also, three Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted among localities with recent occurrence of conflict in Riyom (Plateau state) and Makurdi (Benue state) after obtaining informed consent from the participants. Before collecting data, I proceeded to get ethical clearance from the

University of Jos Medical Science Research Ethics Committee in November 2019.

During the fieldwork, security officials, conflict victims, farmers, herders, academics, traditional leaders, security experts, and vigilante group representatives presented more in-depth perspectives of everyday peace. The interview schedule included questions about conflicts and how they have managed insecurity outside government implemented strategies. All participants whose names were mentioned permitted for the transcript extract to be used in this way. Finally, MAXQDA software was used to code the interviews, and a thematic framework was used to discuss the findings. Which was drawn from the combination of online survey results, interviews, FGDs and analysis of secondary literature

Everyday Peace in Nigeria's Middle Belt
How does everyday peace work in the context of intractable conflicts? Specifically, what is the use of everyday peace in a context like Nigeria? Where the national and local perceptions of the root causes of conflicts differ, where the state is prepared to use extreme violence against its citizens. Or how can it take place in a world where ethnocentrism and religious bias limit the full realisation of conflict resolution?

In most cases, the Nigerian state, like other countries mitigated by ethnic divisions, has tried innovative and diverse governance systems to keep the country going. Especially by emphasising power-sharing and instrumentalities such as federal character representation and rotational presidency that promote inclusion, equity, and distributive justice between the different salient groups (Jinadu, 2007; Lijphart, 2007, 2012, 1999; Osaghae & Suberu, 2005). Sadly, people with guns and repressive legal apparatuses have more influence than those who do not. Moreover, this limits the space within which everyday peace occurs, mainly at the margins and well-timed moments.

As it applies to a deeply divided society, the interviews contained many references to the evolution of inter-group relations. For example, a Berom farmer mentioned how, as a child, he was a herds boy for a Fulani man, and he was paid with a calf for his services. However, things have since changed after the 2001 crisis. In Benue state Rev. Fr Solomon Ukeyima mentioned how

> We have been dealing with the Fulani for a very long time. In the past, the Fulani came with their wives and children and used sticks to herd their cattle even when there were forests with wild animals. Now that there are no forests and wild animals, these people arrive, calling themselves herders, without their wives or children, and armed with an AK 47. So, their agenda has changed. Presently, they arrive at villages, attack, and evict the residents without provocation. They take charge, building tents or houses before inviting their family members. The security agents do not send them out because they sometimes have weapons superior to the security agents. That is why we firmly believe there is a plan here. They are no longer coming to graze but to take our land.

The perceptions of Fr. Solomon led to the mobilisation of a group called MAFO (Movement against Fulani Occupation), which pushed for state legislation of the anti-grazing bill in 2017. In general, worsening ethno-religious relations have fuelled campaigns against selling land to Hausa-Fulani settlers [iii], demonstrating how discord pervades all aspects of life.

Amid these ethno-religious divisions, narratives are acts of accommodation, tolerance, and acceptance of the out-group. This has taken place in villages, towns, and cities where

individuals, friends, and neighbours help each other. As we discuss in the next section, interviews primarily elucidate how these acts of everyday peace rest on an individual's sociality, reciprocity, and solidarity (Mac Ginty, 2021) and even more extensive acts such as forgiveness and reconciliation, considering that all conflicts have a legacy. For most people, these acts hopefully reduce conflict and, at the same time, implement new ways of managing or transforming the conflict between them and their opponents.

Avoidance
In Plateau state, acts of avoidance between Christians and Muslims became prominent after the 2001 Jos crisis because the root causes of the conflicts hinged on ethnic and religious differences. Distrust and the quest for safety lead to segmented and segregated settlements and businesses (especially markets). Intergroup contact between people in Jos (North and South), Bassa, Barkin Ladi, and Riyom areas has retreated to ethnic or religious-affiliated areas to maximise their safety if a violent conflict occurs. **A respondent told** me he chose to relocate from his previous location for security reasons and because the place held too many painful memories. In the online survey I conducted, I asked respondents if they felt safe in their current neighbourhoods; 57 per cent responded affirmatively, while 41.82 per cent responded negatively. Respondents who express a sense of security attribute it to the patterns of exclusive ethnic or religious enclaves they found themselves in. On the other hand, those who continue to live in mixed communities cited various reasons, including fear of imminent attacks, suspicion of one another, the absence of security personnel, and unsolved issues.

Consequently, in the Jos metropolis areas like Tudun Wada, Gada Biu, Hwolshe, and Eto Baba are predominantly Christian, while Bauchi Road, Angwan Rogo, and Kwana Shagari are predominantly Muslim enclaves. While these settlement patterns are common in areas populated by lower and middle-class workers, the wealthy, such as Rayfield, has a mixed population. In Nasarawa state, a respondent explained that after the 2014 herder-farmer crisis in Duduguru, Muslims were expelled from the town, and the chief insisted on preventing the resettlement of herders in the locality. A vigilante member in the locality explained that minimising interaction between them and the herders would reduce the destruction of farmers' crops and accusations of cattle rustling. However, mitigating the resettlement of the Fulani does not make Duduguru immune to attacks and displacement.

Avoidance worsened as intermittent conflicts continued within Jos city capital and in villages. For example, after the 2010 crisis, Christians ensured they did little or no business with Muslim traders, particularly meat vendors. Specifically, the action was sparked by accusations that Hausa beef vendors poisoned meat sold to Christian consumers. Restaurateurs and beer parlour owners, who were significant purchasers of meat, were now forced to resort to Christian butchers, who were less amenable to the credit system[iv] utilised by Hausa butchers and their customers before the conflicts. The Hausa butchers tried to win back their former customers by extending credit lines to their Christian clients. However, both parties were fearful of meeting in "unsafe" areas. Inevitably, new techniques for renewing their commercial partnership meant meeting at neutral rendezvous points where goods and money were exchanged without raising suspicion or questions from in-group members.

From an economic perspective, segregated markets based on ethnic or religious affinities are another form of avoidance that has gained prominence since the outbreak of renewed hostilities between ethno-religious groups in the Middle Belt. As Henry Mang points out, informal marketplaces in the region have historically fueled stories about ethnic divides between the Hausa-Fulani emirates and other migrant populations like the Igbo and Yoruba and the "pagan"

Middle Belt communities. During the colonial era, natives saw the northern emirates as brutish, violent groups who had pillaged and displaced their cultures' peace and harmony (Mang, 2019, p. 103). Because of the Hausa-Fulani acumen in trading and the desire to maintain a monopoly on informal markets, Igbos and Yorubas frequently complained about being confined to smaller spaces in Kasuwan Dankali (Potato Market) and Kasuwan Mana (Meat Market) in comparison to their Hausa-Fulani counterparts, who controlled most market activities. As a result, between 1984 and 1990, hostilities between Hausas and other ethnic groups were centred on access and authority.

The segregated market had two implications. As Mary Samuel explained, it has helped the indigenous community break the monopoly of Hausa traders by establishing new informal marketplaces throughout Plateau state. Typical examples are the Nshar Market, established following the Yelwan Shendam clashes of 2002–2004, and the Gyel Market established following the 2010 Jos crisis. Additionally, it raised awareness among indigenous communities about the importance of engaging in economic pursuits other than farming. According to Henry Mang (2019), before the 2010 Jos crisis, the Hausa dominated informal market operations like *suya* (barbecuing), fruit vending, vegetable commerce, slaughterhouse and meat trade, cattle, and selling groceries. There was also a covert protest against Christians eating meat, which resulted in a surge in business for poultry and fish producers. When Hausa commercial supremacy in the informal market was broken, indigenous people saw this as a break from the economic exploitation they have endured since colonial times (Mang, 2019, p. 212).

The separate markets were not initially beneficial to women, who had enjoyed colossal patronage in the Jos terminus and other locations before the crisis. Before the 2001 crisis, Mama Ladi, Mary Samuel, and Christy Atsen traded at the Gangare and Jos Terminus markets. For Mama Ladi, a seventy-year-old vegetable trader, the 2001 crisis forced her to relocate to the Jos Main Market; she still had to leave for another location. She narrates her story:

> I lost a lot financially while running from Gangare. After some normalcy was restored, I tried to set up business first in Tudun Wada, then in Jos main market. But the 2010 crisis still forced me to move. A few women and I that were displaced from terminus decided to start selling our vegetables closer to home. If there is any skirmish, I lock up shop, and I am home within a few minutes. Regardless of the safety, business is not as good as it used to be. I have lost many customers who do not know where I now sell my produce. I also miss my old friends we used to sell with, they are Muslims, and they are afraid to come to this market because it is located in a predominantly Christian locality.

Overall, I noted that even though people felt that exclusive ethnic or religious enclaves enhanced their safety, it only made them more vulnerable since their attackers could easily identify them. Unequivocally, the ethno-religious settlement arrangements demonstrate that enforcing peace without resolving the root causes or implementing transitional justice does not eliminate the possibility of recurrent violence at the slightest provocation (Doak & O'Mahony, 2012). These realities are what has resulted in this mode of everyday cohabitation. Ho-Won Jeong (2010) emphasises that avoidance has mitigated the full-fledged reconciliation of conflicting parties. And it has also generated new forms of intragroup and intergroup relationships and new spaces of agency.

Sociality

My recent visit to Furaka, Bukuru, and Jos main markets in 2021 revealed some adjustments in the markets. Acts of tolerance and sociality that cut across age, class, gender, and geographical boundaries have become essential in easing ethno-religious tensions. For example, in the Furaka market, Muslim suppliers now venture into the market initially created exclusively for Christians to sell their products (primarily vegetables, tomatoes, onions, and peppers) to women. Mama Ladi, a trader at Furaka market, stated, "we are extremely cautious about visiting the main vegetable market on Fridays to avoid becoming trapped in a Muslim-dominated area if a crisis occurs". Additionally, Muslim women in Gangare buy as retailers from the market to resell in their communities. In New market, traders have devised arrangements similar to those between butchers, beer parlour owners and the restaurateurs in Bukuru market. Malam Bala, a Muslim shopkeeper, explained that the new mode of contact had become a necessity because

> My shop makes most of its money from Christian clients. They were scared to return to this section of town after the crisis, and I am afraid of venturing into exclusive Christian areas. So, we often choose a mutual place to meet to carry out our transactions.

At the Jos Main market, traders and consumers continue to do business despite being easy targets for hoodlums, Boko Haram bombs, and vandalism whenever conflict occurs. As figure 1 shows, the market was gutted by fire in February 2002, but this has not dissuaded buyers and sellers from using the vicinity around the market to continue their economic activities.

Fig. 1 Weeks after the Jos terminus fire incident in 2002, traders returned to the market. However, they now sell side by side to other ethnic and religious groups along the roadside. Map is taken from (Waka-about, n.d.)

Many respondents explained that the central position of the market generates more revenues than the segregated informal markets located on the township's periphery. A conversation with

a Muslim watchmaker and a Christian cosmetics vendor who share a stand revealed this classic case of sociality. They both explained how they had defended one another despite their ethnic and religious differences whenever there was a clash within the market. The gentleman explained:

> We have lost too much over the years in a fight that only politicians benefit from. So, we have learnt to protect where I get my daily food from. I sell my wares alongside many people on this lane, and we have all come to realise that we need each other despite our ethnic or religious differences. Our relationship can be likened to the relationship between the tongue and teeth. One cannot survive without the other.

Another respondent expressed similar views; he decried how politicians used ethno-religious divisiveness to divide and rule the masses: "If we continue looking at our ethnic and religious differences, we will never unite and fight against the incessant corruption that is mitigating the development of Nigeria".

Indeed, as conflicts change the course of inter-group relations, small acts of out-groups and in-groups looking out for each other helps patch broken relations. A female respondent explained that sociality could be a small act like monitoring her neighbourhood for strangers or unusual behaviour. She added that in the past if we witnessed an inflow of foreigners in a community, it was invariably followed by an attack a few days or weeks later. These women's narratives point out how people read context, behaviour, and gestures to foster everyday peace.

Solidarity

My interviews and research also revealed great acts of solidarity during violent attacks. A respondent recounted how, in 2001, he was saved by his Hausa neighbour: "I was trapped in my house in a Hausa-dominated area with nowhere to run to. On the third day, I ran to my neighbour as assailants were ransacking the houses of Christians. This man challenged my assailants and told them he would not hand me over to be killed by them. I remained in his house for two more days before I was rescued by military men sent to evacuate us from the area.

A Muslim interviewee also recalled how the youths in her locality protected her from being lynched because she had always been a good neighbour. In 2018, eighty-three-year-old Imam Abdullahi Abubakar saved about 300 people, mostly Christians, from the jaws of death by shielding them in his mosque in Nghar village in the Gashish District of Plateau State. In his interview with the News Agency of Nigeria, Abubakar explained, "It has always been my cardinal principle to save a life, no matter who is involved, Christian or Muslim... life to me is too precious to be wasted."(Hanafi, 2019).

Solidarity suggests and involves active support for a cause. For example, Saleh Hassan's story tells of how he resolved to be a conflict manager and peacebuilder despite being a victim in the 2008 Jos crisis.

> During the 2001 crisis, I lived in an area where more Christians than Muslims lived. So, what happened in 2001 was that if you were in an area where you had more of your own people, you were safe, but if you were caught up on the other side of the divide, you became a target. Luckily, in 2001, our neighbours saved us. There was no significant damage to our home. However, for fear of being attacked later in the night, we were relocated to my neighbour's house, where we stayed overnight. The following

morning, I had to leave the area to go where my extended family lives. After about a week, the neighbours called a meeting and asked us to come back because they could guarantee our safety, and they would have some sort of neighbourhood watch to ensure that everybody was safe (Humanitarian Dialogue, n.d.).

He described them as good neighbours who had always lived together as though they were family. When a new crisis emerged in 2008, he was once again protected by his neighbours, but hoodlums destroyed his home and business. Hassan underlined that forgiving the hoodlums who ruined his property looked like the best option since they spared him and his family's lives. As part of a truth and reconciliation plan, he went to community forums hosted by the government, religious, and traditional authorities, where victims recounted their experiences. As Christian and Muslim victims empathised with one another and attempted to find local solutions to their disputes, several victims became involved in Humanitarian Dialogue programmes. The fact that Humanitarian Dialogue process was community-driven and bottom-up was one of its distinguishing features. In Nigeria, the government usually forms a committee to investigate a crisis and offer recommendations. This time, though, it was the other way around. Communities were expected to talk about their problems and provide recommendations.

Many interviewees reiterated the importance of tolerance and reconciliation to foster sustainable peace. The idea of inter-religious marriage is now a red line for many. Dayil (2015) calls the inter-faith challenges women face "in-betweenness" when women face daily challenges and frustrations of seclusion, rejection, distrust, and fears of impending attacks from once friendly neighbours, friends, and relatives.

Conclusion

The manifestations of everyday peace have been illustrated through the narratives of our interviewees. Nevertheless, we need to consider the efforts belligerents put into whatever strategy of everyday peace to avoid open conflicts. Implicitly citizens' initiatives for conflict management are options the state needs to give more attention to. Everyday peace has also exposed the ingenuity of people in finding solutions that suit specific contexts rather than blanket solutions proffered by the state. The changing attitudes, some degree of respect for each other, and listening to each other's grievances may not wholly eliminate homophobia, but it contributes to positive societal transformation. Last but not least, it is vital to recall that everyday peace initiatives almost always focus on the specifics of a given conflict, not on the structural causes of conflict.

As a general rule, everyday peacemakers are likely to focus on the immediate manifestations of conflict when resolving conflict situations. However, restorative justice and (or) building "right relationships" amongst formerly disputing factions should also be pursued as a goal of this effort. As Louis Kriesberg states, conflict de-escalation involves a lengthy task of reframing and redefining the past. It requires new ways of thinking, where relationships are built out of mutual interchange, growing interdependence, or confidence-building measures between belligerents. Since everyday peace can reframe and redefine relations, peacebuilders should harness it to promote sustainable peace.

Endnotes

---

[i] This is a hausanised term for Jos

[ii] The other forms of post-liberal peace include "hybrid peace" and a "peaceful political economy."

[iii] When Governor Jonah Jang of Plateau state was in office, he enacted policies that frustrated Hausa-Fulani from owning land in Plateau state. Also see Ostien, P. (2009). Jonah Jang and the Jasawa: Ethno-Religious Conflict in Jos, Nigeria. Muslim-Christian Relations in Africa, 1–42. http://opus.ub.uni-bayreuth.de/schriftenreihen.php?la=de

[iv] Prior to the conflicts, most Christian businesses purchased meat on credit from Hausa Butchers at reasonable prices, with the agreement to pay later.

References

Adurokiya, E. (2019, May 19). Fulanisation, Islamisation agenda going on in Nigeria — Obasanjo. *Nigerian Tribune*. https://tribuneonlineng.com/fulanisation-islamisation-agenda-going-on-in-nigeria-obasanjo/

Afolabi, B., & Avasiloae, S. (2015). Post-election assessment of conflict prevention and resolution mechanisms in Nigeria. *Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue. UK Aid and Australian Aid.*, *November*, 1–81. https://www.hdcentre.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Post-election_assessment_of_conflict_prevention_and_resolution_mechanisms_in_Nigeria.pdf

Alubo, S. O. (2006). *Ethnic Conflicts and Citizenship Crises in the Central Region*. Programme on Ethnic and Federal Studies (PEFS),.

Ames, C. G. (1972). *Gazetteers of the Northern Province of Nigeria*. Frank Cass and Company Limited.

Bello, P. O., & Olutola, A. A. (2016). Indigenous Conflict Resolution Mechanisms in Africa: Lessons Drawn for Nigeria. In *Bangladesh e-Journal of Sociology* (Vol. 13, Issue 2). http://bangladeshsociology.org/IndigenousConflict13.2.pdf

Berents, H. (2014). "It's about finding a way": Children, sites of opportunity, and building everyday peace in Colombia. *International Journal of Children's Rights*, *22*(2), 361–384. https://doi.org/10.1163/15718182-02202006

Berents, H., & Mcevoy-levy, S. (2016). *Theorising youth and everyday peace (building). 7259*(March). https://doi.org/10.1080/21647259.2015.1052627

Berents, H., & Ten Have, C. (2017). Navigating violence: Fear and everyday life in Colombia and Mexico. *International Journal for Crime, Justice and Social Democracy*, *6*(1), 103–117. https://doi.org/10.5204/ijcjsd.v6i1.373

Brounéus, K. (2008). Truth-Telling as talking cure? Insecurity and retraumatization in the Rwandan Gacaca courts. *Security Dialogue*, *39*(1), 55–76. https://doi.org/10.1177/0967010607086823

Corey, A., & Joireman, S. F. (2004). Retributive justice: The Gacaca courts in Rwanda. *African Affairs*, *103*(410), 73–89. https://doi.org/10.1093/AFRAF/ADH007

Danfulani, U. H. D., & Fwatshak, S. U. (2002, April 1). Briefing: The September 2001 events in Jos, Nigeria. In *African Affairs*. Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/afraf/101.403.243

Daniel, A. (2012). Forgiveness as a Solution to the Northern Uganda Civil War: Opportunities and Challenges. *SSRN Electronic Journal*. https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1641668

de Certeau, M. (1998). *The Practice of Everyday Life*. University of California Press London,

England.

Doak, J., & O'Mahony, D. (2012). Transitional Justice and Restorative Justice. *International Criminal Law Review*, *12*(3), 305–312. https://doi.org/10.1163/157181212x650010

Duru, P. (2018a). Benue killing: We are scared military exercise could provide cover for herdsmen to take over our land – Tribal leaders. *Vanguard News Nigeria*. https://www.vanguardngr.com/2018/03/benue-killings-scared-military-exercise-provide-cover-herdsmen-take-land-tribal-leaders/

Duru, P. (2018b). *Military 'Exercise Ayem A' Kpatuma' a monumental failure – Benue tribal leaders*. https://www.vanguardngr.com/2018/03/military-exercise-ayem-kpatuma-monumental-failure-benue-tribal-leaders/

Firchow, P. (2018). *Reclaiming Everyday Peace: Local Voices in Measurement and Evaluation After War*. Cambridge University Press.

Galtung, J. (1996). Peace by Peaceful Means: Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilization. In *International Peace Research Institute, Oslo*. SAGE Publications.

Ginty, R. Mac. (2013). Indicators +: A proposal for everyday peace indicators. *Evaluation and Program Planning*. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.evalprogplan.2012.07.001

Higazi, A. (2011). *The Jos Crisis: A Recurrent Nigerian Tragedy*.

Ho-Won Jeong. (2010). *Conflict Management and Resolution: An introduction*. Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.

Human Rights Watch. (2001). *Jos: A City Torn Apart*. http://www.hrw.org

Human Rights Watch. (2002). *Nigeria Military Revenge in Benue: A Population Under Attack* (Vol. 14, Issue 2 (A)).

Human Rights Watch. (2013). *"Leave Everything to God": Accountability for Inter-Communal Violence in Plateau and Kaduna States, Nigeria*. https://www.hrw.org/reports/2013/12/12/leave-everything-god-0

Human Rights Watch. (2020). *Arbitrary Killings by Security Forces*. https://www.hrw.org/report/2009/07/20/arbitrary-killings-security-forces/submission-investigative-bodies-november-28-29

Humanitarian Dialogue. (n.d.). *Ibrahim Saleh Hassan on forgiveness and community dialogue in Nigeria*. Retrieved December 31, 2021, from https://www.hdcentre.org/podcasts/ibrahim-saleh-hassan-on-forgiveness-and-community-dialogue-in-nigeria/

Jon Nowotny, J. (2015). *Local Perceptions of Justice and Identity Following Mass Participation in Rwanda's Gacaca Courts* [University of Illinois]. https://doi.org/10.1145/3132847.3132886

Kirkby, C. (2006). RWANDA'S GACACA COURTS: A PRELIMINARY CRITIQUE. *Journal of African Law*, *50*, 94–117. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021855306000106

Lar, J. T. (2015). *Vigilantism, State, and Society in Plateau State, Nigeria: A History of Plural Policing (1950 to the present)*. *November*, 1–314. https://epub.uni-bayreuth.de/2798/1/Jimam Lar Thesis Final Copy (2016-04-11).pdf

Lar, J. T. (2018). *Policing Actors, Plural Processes and Hybridisation : Histories of Everyday Policing Practice in Central Nigeria*. *7*(1), 1–15. https://doi.org/10.5334/sta.605

Mang, H. G. (2019). *Markets and Violent Conflicts in Plateau State, 1945-2010*. Nigerian Defence Academy, Kaduna.

Mangvwat, M. Y. (2013). *History of Class Formation in the Plateau Province of Nigeria, 1902-1960: The Genesis of the Ruling Class*. Carolina Academic Press.

Ndujihe, C., & Eyoboka, S. (2019). *Insecurity : Danjuma, Lekwot, others take Nigeria's case to UK*. Vanguard News Nigeria. https://www.vanguardngr.com/2019/06/insecurity-danjuma-lekwot-others-take-nigerias-case-to-uk/

Ochonu, M. E. (2008). Colonialism within Colonialism: The Hausa-Caliphate imaginary and the British colonial administration of the Nigerian middle belt. *African Studies Quarterly*, *10*(2–3), 95–127. http://www.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v10/v10i2-3a5.pdf

Ochonu, M. E. (2014). *Colonialism by Proxy : Hausa Imperial Agents and Middle Belt Consciousness in Nigeria*. Indiana University Press.

Para-Mallam, O. J., & Hoomlong, K. (2013). *A Critical Investigation into the Role of Security Sector Agencies in the Jos Conflict: Issues and Strategies for Institutional/Security Sector Reform*.

Richmond, O. P. (2009). Becoming Liberal, Unbecoming Liberalism: Liberal-Local Hybridity via the Everyday as a Response to the Paradoxes of Liberal Peacebuilding. *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, *3*(3), 324–344. https://doi.org/10.1080/17502970903086719

Richmond, O. P. (2010). Resistance and the post-liberal peace. *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, *38*(3), 665–692. https://doi.org/10.1177/0305829810365017

Richmond, O. P. (2011). A Post-Liberal Peace. In *Routledge Studies in Peace and Conflict Resolution CN - JZ5538 .R527 2011*. Routledge.

Sayne, A. (2012). Rethinking nigeria's indigene-settler conflicts. *United States Institute of Peace Special Report*, 1–15. https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/SR311.pdf

Waka-about. (n.d.). *Jos: A tourist city in decline and disrepair*. Retrieved January 24, 2022, from https://wakaabout.wordpress.com/2014/01/14/jos-a-tourist-city-in-decline-and-disrepair/

Williams, P. (2013). Reproducing Everyday Peace in North India : Process , Politics , and Power. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, *103*(1), 230–250. https://doi.org/10.1080/00045608.2011.652878