

CONTEMPORARY ISSUES AND PERSPECTIVES ON THE STUDY OF POLITICS



Editors:

F.A. Aremu, Ph.D.

L. Saka, Ph.D.

A.A. Muhammad, Ph.D.

A publication of the Department of Political Science,
Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ilorin.
(A special Issue in the Series of Political Science Review)

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Foreword

The field of Political Science has been impacted upon by several developments that have been witnessed across the World especially reflective in the activities of what people have called professional politicians during campaigns and the actual governance. The repeated failure of politicians to play to the dictates of democratic practice has, no doubt, led people to ask; is the field of Political Science still necessary? This question is germane and touches on the essential stuff of Political Science. The level of frustration which citizen have on the concept of democracy and its practice across the globe have been the propelling force behind the question. For instance, in the available elementary books on government, certain desirable roles have been given to political parties and Nigerians have expected them to play these roles especially when the crusade for democracy peaked in the 1990s in Africa. Some decades after the return to democratic rule, the parties have remained the dark spots contributing less significantly to democratic consolidation. In most cases, they are averse to the rule-based environment that democracy preaches. Even within their own internal organizations, only scant attention is paid to the democratic tenets as dictatorial tendencies manifesting in the imposition of candidates, disobedience to rule of law, violent activities and perpetuation of all forms of electoral malpractice, among others, have been taking place with the active support of parties' leaderships. Also, when one talks about governance, there is also a disturbing trend manifesting in not following rule of law, rendering of inefficient services and the promotion of sectional and/or sectarian interests, all of which have combined to retard the march towards good governance. Based on these and other happenings, people have repeatedly asked; where are the Political Scientists? No doubt, Political Scientists are system people who are more concerned about how a political order performs to the expectations of the people derived from certain principles and laws that guide political actions/activities. For instance, Political Scientists are naturally interested in how a Federal System runs its affairs according to the basic tenets of federalism. Also, they are concerned about the process of election and how the conduct of stakeholders conforms to the laws and principles that have been outlined to guide the conduct of people in the processes. While one would want to argue that a clear demarcation line should exist between Political Scientists and the active political actors

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SECTION A PERSPECTIVES ON THE STUDY OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

DESIGNING A PEACE INTERVENTION PROCESS FOR COMMUNITIES IN CONFLICTS IN NIGERIA

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Introduction

Communal conflict has become one of Nigeria's most deadly and destabilizing security challenges because its causes are so varied, complex and localized...no part of Nigeria is immune from these disputes and outbreaks of violence ... sixty-five separate incidents of communal violence occurred in Nigeria in 2016 alone (Campbell and Page, 2018: 135).

We've gotten so used to people being killed that people think murder is normal, that killing a fellow Nigerian is normal ... (Unah, 2017).

"Many communities are thinking of ways to protect themselves" (SBM Intelligence, 2017).

Peace is a question of will. All conflicts can be settled, and there are no excuses for allowing them to be eternal (Powell, 2014: 243).

Against the backdrop of the excerpts above, it is plain that the myriad of violent conflicts in both rural and urban settings across the country's six geo-political zones rank high amongst the factors undermining the consolidation of democracy, peaceful co-existence and national security in Nigeria. What

is more, the effects of apparent weak state capacity, lack of political will, tenuous inter-agency relations within the security sector make it very challenging to prevent violence, protect non-combatants during many of the clashes and provide security for the citizens. This is in spite of the fact that it is easier to count states in the federation where internal security operations are not taking place than those where such operations are on-going. This reality has reinforced the third excerpt because many communities have become innovative and extreme in seeking ways to protect themselves.

While efforts being made to respond to conflicts through deployments and even humanitarian assistance from government and development partners must be recognized, the violence and narratives accompanying these conflicts over the years call for a nuanced attention towards distilling the emergent changes and continuities taking place amidst the plethora of contradicting and competing explanations, interpretations and analysis of the communal conflicts (William, 2017: 35). This chimes with the position of Campbell and Page that communal violence is "Nigeria's most serious and widespread security challenge and perhaps (also) the least well understood" (Campbell and Page, 2018: 122).

Just as there are contestations on the causes of the conflicts, tensions and disagreements equally exist on what constitutes peace because of the differences and sometimes clashing perspectives of peace at all levels of analysis (MacGinty and Richmond, 2013). In order to be able to determine the interpretation of these conflicts, we are guided by the suggestion of Paul Williams that "analysts and policymakers alike should start from the assumption that our knowledge of this topic is incomplete and contested" (William, 2017: 35). This realization reinforces the need for deeper exploration of the "local" or "community" constituted by:

the range of locally based agencies present within a conflict and post-conflict environment, some of which are aimed at identifying and creating the necessary processes for peace, perhaps with or without international help and framed in a way in which legitimacy in local and international terms converges (MacGinty and Richmond, 2013: 769).

Physically, the “local” in a conflict-affected community is commonly taken to mean a city, municipality, town or large village (Hills, 2009). However, in this article, the “local” is taken to be the “hyper-local or the micro-local” where people's everyday life takes place and people are in peace and feel safe in their immediate vicinity, the specific routes they take to farm, river, school, church, mosque and places of relaxation and recreation (MacGinty, 2019).

The justification cannot be over-emphasized in the face of the fact that military means of facilitating reconciliation and peaceful co-existence and returning the air of freedom and safety that often-preceded pre-armed clashes phase of communal conflicts cannot be seen to have facilitated sustainable peace in many communities in conflict. For instance, after years of armed cruel and debilitating hostilities between the Ile-Ife and Modakeke communities, it took the initiation of peace through informal talks by the President and Commander-in-Chief of Nigeria's Armed Forces Olusegun Obasanjo (1999-2007), to kick-start the peace process that berthed the peace and development that have replaced acrimony and intolerance between the two communities (Obasanjo, 2014: 307-311). This was amidst unverified allegations that the Mobile Police unit (MOPOL Unit) set up as an internal-order keeping force to prevent clashes between the two communities was profiteering by selling arms to both sides of the conflict and committing other atrocities akin to pouring fuel on the fire (Mutiti, 2012).

Given the continuous need for military and police deployments to sites of violent communal conflicts and insurgency, especially since 2019, the assertion in some quarters that the police and Nigeria's armed forces are “out-gunned and under-resourced” might seem like stating the obvious (Campbell and Page, 2018: 140). Undeniably, the unquantifiable human and material costs of conflicts make it compelling for all stakeholders to the “local” for sustaining peace demands attention. As an alternative approach for achieving sustaining peace between and among warring communities. The totality of the preceding paragraphs and what they portend for peace and national security underscore the need for urgency, tact, flexibility, innovation, pragmatism and inclusiveness in exploring workable initiatives for promoting and sustaining peace. The spread and frequency of protracted and violent communal conflicts across Nigeria provides a valid basis for engaging in informed articulation of the stages and the means of putting in

place an efficacious peace process. We start this process in the next section by examining the various perspectives on communal conflicts and peace processes.

Communal Conflicts and the Imperative of Peace Processes of Nigeria

Post-1999 Nigeria is not in short supply of violent conflicts that pose clear and imminent threats to unity, stability, peaceful co-existence and security across the country. While attention has been focused on insurgencies and militancy, communal conflicts have received relatively lesser attention, perhaps because they do not immediately threaten the corporate existence of the state as much as they threaten everyday life, productivity and peaceful co-existence especially in rural and peri-urban areas. However, a stark reality is that the protraction of communal conflicts militarizes and radicalizes communities, more than the so-called foreign ideologies. This is because their narratives are informed by a communally shared sense of loss, denial of land rights and resource control; political and economic exclusion, environmental injustice accentuated by weak and, in some cases, compromised governance and policing failures all of which lead to a spiralling culture of reprisals and negative reciprocities.

The extent of communal violence, especially intra and inter-ethnic violence, which occurred in the first five years (1999-2003) of Obasanjo's eight-year rule was unprecedented in Nigeria's post-colonial history (Adebanwi, 2004). Besides the Niger-Delta and Sharia crisis of that period, it was an era of ethnic militias like the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) that has metamorphosed into the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), and is eventually labeled as a terrorist organization by the Federal government in September 2017. Others in the period were the Egbesu Boys, the Bakassi Boys and the Odua People's Congress (OPC) whose activities an irked President Obasanjo described as “complete madness” for which he threatened to declare emergency rule and a shoot on sight order in Lagos State, Nigeria's economic capital (Olarinmoye, 2010: 139).

The succeeding administration of Presidents Umar Yaradua and Goodluck Jonathan came up with amnesty as a response to militancy in the Niger Delta but faced the Boko Haram insurgency in its fiercest form (2009-2015) so

much that it has been argued that the Goodluck Jonathan lost his re-election bid to the Boko Haram (Ewi, 2015). While the Boko Haram continues kicking despite being fractured, the inception of the Buhari presidency has coincided with the ferocity of "Nigeria's third conflict" involving pastoralists, also known as Fulani herdsmen, who are accused of ethnic cleansing and destruction of farm produce (Animasawun, 2017; Mungai, 2016). As a typical communal conflict, despite its incremental escalation since 2011, it remained largely under-reported partly because it occurs more in the rural and peri-urban settings, until it caught global attention in 2016 when the United Nations Human Rights Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) warned that if immediate action and dialogue were not initiated the surge in violence could spring out of control (Mungai, 2016).

Examples of these conflicts pervades the six geopolitical zones of the country. The manifestations of the resultant clashes typify "countless small wars with no front lines, no battle-fields, no clear conflict zones, *and* no distinctions between combatants and civilians..." Communal conflicts are often episodic and cyclical, i.e. Ife-Modakeke, Southern Kaduna among other (Hendrix and Brinkman, 2013). They are common in places where land, water and other natural resources are scarce or inaccessible, such as arid and semi-arid regions of the Sahel and in countries like Kenya, Nigeria and Sudan. They fit into the definition of conflicts "between two or more distinct communities that neither targets nor directly involves the state". Communal conflicts are often episodic and cyclical, i.e. Ife-Modakeke, Southern Kaduna, etc. They are common in places where land, water and other natural resources are scarce or inaccessible, such as arid and semi-arid regions of the Sahel and in countries like Kenya, Nigeria and Sudan (Hendrix and Brinkman, 2013: 6-7).

Krause (2019) provides a delineation of communal conflicts according to the following indices; scale, type, geography, armed actors and the national context, clarifying that when any of such recorded deaths over a thousand; it is no longer a communal conflict but a communal war. Perhaps as a way of playing down their threats and impacts, the state and media in many parts of the world often describe them as "tribal, ethnic or religious" wars or conflicts. So, in many instances, the military gets deployed, which achieves in restoring only a temporal and superficial order or peace, because a conscious, effective and even dispassionate process of reconciliation,

healing and restoration of peace hardly takes place.

Intellectual and academic efforts aimed at comprehending communal conflicts have included using both quantitative and qualitative approaches as well as mixed methods. Quantitatively, most studies have examined communal conflicts from the angle of socio-economic inequality, climate-change induced communal conflicts and the impact or absence of state interventions. Qualitatively, studies have examined mainly its linkages to election violence, land rights and emergence of warlords (ICPR, 2017).

Communal conflicts, also, differ in types from place to place but they can be broadly categorized as one-sided, that is, when a major or stronger community embarks on a cleansing or pogrom against a weaker community. They have been further described as dyadic when two equally strong communities are pitched against each other. Geography and identity (ethnic, religious, and occupation) of actors too influence the contextualization of communal conflicts; for instance, in Nigeria, a clash between the Fulani and other ethnic groups across the country is often described as "Fulani-herdsmen versus farmers clash." A wide range of armed actors also get involved actively in the communal conflicts. They include trained and radicalized militias with structures and legitimacy. Other armed actors in communal conflicts could be bandits and petty thieves.

Therefore, ending violent communal conflicts requires a peace process that is sensitive to the issues in contention, scale, geography, armed actors, victims, narratives, local and external conflict entrepreneurs. It is also important for the peace process to be mindful of how communities mobilize, militarize, protect themselves and strike alliances across regions and international borders. It is also important to separate the disarmament of civilians from that of rebel groups. Indeed, this action transcends reliance on military means alone. Above all, the managers of the peace process must be patient, optimistic and strong-willed because many armed groups or militias would rather have the airplane circling eternally instead of it to land. This is because many militias often enjoy initial legitimacy as defenders of their communities based on valid grievances, but once the grievances are resolved, many of the emergent warlords would rather have the conflict protracted because of the capital it has bestowed on them which they might not enjoy in peace time. Nonetheless, embarking on a peace process to end a communal conflict must be encouraged.

Peace process is “an attempt to bring political and and/or military elites involved in a conflict to some sort of mutual agreement as to how to end the conflict” and a peace agreement as “documents produced after discussion with some or all of conflict protagonists with a view to ending violent conflicts”. It is also defined as “an attempt to lower the costs of conflict through negotiation. . . It is often a hard-headed process of trying to achieve your goals but through negotiation and a lessening of violence” (MacGinty, 2019). Indeed, these definitions speak to the realities that have characterised peace processes and not the ideal because in reality, many peace processes often proceed without critical stakeholders such religious or traditional leaders, community influencers as well as the rank and file. Also, civil society actors are not always involved. The second definition reinforces the much-criticised flaw of many peace processes as often aimed at stabilization and not transformation of the conflict or sustaining peace (Mahmoud and Makoond, 2017). This is because, often, the participants in the peace processes are usually the political and military elites and most of whom are men. It is noteworthy to state that the judicial commissions of inquiry cannot be compared or likened to a peace process and should therefore not be seen as one because its constitution, composition, conduct and ultimate goal are often at variance with that of the peace process.

Therefore, an inclusive peace process holds the ace to successful peace process because it forecloses anyone from being seen as a traitor for maintaining relationships with the “other side.” Not making the process inclusive loses recognition of the fact that peace processes are “embodied and enacted through everyday civility, sharing space and people simply getting on with things. . . it is at the non-elite levels that peace takes shape.” As a process that is not entirely new, learning from failures and successes in local and international contexts becomes instructive in all the phases, from the exploratory to the final stage (Driscoll, 2017).

Phases in a Peace Process

The initial exploratory phase, also known as the pre-negotiation or exploration phase, in which the people involved (explorers) measure the conviction of the parties, i.e. if they truly wish to commence a process of negotiation in which they will have to cede something. The primary and ultimate desire of the exploratory phase is to get the parties in conflict to the point of a sincere readiness to put an end to the armed confrontation and to

reach sufficient common positions in order to sign, in the final stage, a peace accord or agreement, on the premise that everyone will come out as a winner and no one will lose everything: in-short, the classic “win-win” scenario.

During the exploratory phase, it is often advisable to spend time clarifying the “meta-conflict”; in other words, each party's concept and understanding of the origins, triggers and trajectory of the conflict. Reaching a minimum number of points of agreement (which is probably the most that can be expected at this stage) will help in sharing a minimum “meta-peace”, i.e. what each party understands as “peace”. In this regard, it should be recalled from the above that, in some negotiations, there are some governments that are interested in nothing more than to disarm the armed group(s), possibly accompanied by a disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programme, with scant interest in addressing the underlying structural causes of the conflict. It should, however, be noted that most armed groups currently in existence across the country and other parts of the developing countries do not have a political programme that includes socioeconomic reforms and are content to participate in political, military and economic power sharing (sharing of the “booty”). This ideological vacuity is why, therefore, all government delegations and external facilitators need to know precisely what the armed groups in question want out of the process. Getting this aspect wrong means immediate failure in the attempt to negotiate the conflict.

It is extremely important for the exploratory phase to be confidential and protected from internal and external pressure from people who may want to know “what's going on”. This aspect must be addressed at the start of the exploratory phase. If confidentiality is agreed, then the issue of avoiding any infiltration by one of the parties must be taken seriously because such possibilities create a great deal of “noise” and misinterpretation. Many armed groups would prefer more transparency in this early phase, but this also creates difficulties in terms of ensuring the flexibility of initial positions which, if made public, could be criticized by the parties' support bases. One must not “play to the gallery” or send messages only of strength, sound tough and immovable or unbending to one's supporters, because a stance or attitude runs counter to the very nature of the negotiation process, which above all, involves making mutual concessions or trade-offs.

An agreement also needs to be reached on whether or not a party can place preconditions on commencing the exploratory phase. Ideally, there should be no preconditions at the start, although, as this phase proceeds, both parties may agree to initial undertakings in order to build confidence and enter the next stage – that of the formal negotiations – with a greater degree of trust, flexibility and less pressure.

Many peace processes fail in their initial phase because one of the parties, normally the government, is intent on imposing a unilateral ceasefire or cessation of hostilities on the armed group as a precondition. Ideally, a ceasefire should be mutual, whether from the start or in the middle of the process or in the final phase. This aspect needs to be clearly specified and emphasized in the exploratory phase. It should also be noted that a ceasefire is often flouted, which also serves as an excuse for breaking off negotiations, sometimes permanently, and/or the intensification of hostilities, hence the importance of shielding the negotiations from the course of the war from the start. In that regard, it is desirable that the parties agree not to leave the table for whatever reason they may harbour.

The level of political authority or brief required of the negotiators needs to be clarified to ensure that they are able to take initial decisions, although both parties will need to consult either the head of state or government (in the case of the government delegation) or the highest political or military leader of the armed groups on a number of occasions, or traditional ruler. If there is no valid representative, representative or representation as the case may be, the process will fail. Very often, in the first and highly tentative stages of the exploratory phase, people of lower level representation or authority who are unable to take decisions but can only pass them on to their superiors participate. Later, however, high-ranking individuals need to be involved. It is important to stress that an imbalance in the decision-making capacity of the two delegations can temporarily paralyse the exploratory phase. In this regard, it is essential that both parties recognize each other as legitimate representatives in the process and dialogue from the start, however distant they may be politically and however terrifying their past may be.

Very early in this phase of the process, the parties must come to an agreement on whether they want or need external mediation or, in contrast, if they prefer direct negotiations, without intermediaries, as in India's historical position

with regard to the dispute over Kashmir with Pakistan, in which India has never accepted outside mediation. In the first case, when third-party facilitation is accepted, the parties need to carefully evaluate the pros and cons of choosing a particular country, regional or international organisation or particular person that would play such a key role.

“Forced facilitation” by a superpower, an organisation, or a country with great political, economic or military influence, must be avoided at all costs. Often, many offers to act as facilitator are received, some generous and well meaning, while others are self-serving. It is highly inadvisable, given the experience of many different peace processes, to have “multiple facilitators” or adopt an approach that involves the use of many accompaniers, as this could create confusion with regard to the role each of them is to play. If it is agreed that a country or organization will be used as an official facilitator, then the capacity of the people allocated to the process by the said countries or organisations, also needs to be considered, because it will be these people and teams that have ultimate responsibility for professionally steering the negotiations in the right direction. In any case, it is important that the two parties strongly agree that the person or persons or organisation chosen is the most appropriate at that time.

If serious difficulties emerge with the person conducting the facilitation in the exploratory phase, the problem needs to be addressed immediately and with the utmost honesty, in order to decide whether to change the person or the whole team. There have been situations in which one of the parties has ended up declaring the facilitator not acceptable and “persona non grata” (Adeniyi, 2011). There are also facilitators who lack patience and who give up on their task very early, exactly at a time when patience is of the utmost importance. Being involved in an exploratory phase or a formal negotiation is not the same as attending a hospital emergency department – it is more like attending a therapy session. It is always best to change facilitators rather than to continue with a poor facilitator or with a person who does not enjoy the trust and respect of both parties. It is also not advisable and indeed not all constructive to keep changing facilitators, as this could suggest that the problem lies not with the facilitation process but with the positions of the parties, which are often irreconcilable and intransigent.

It has, on a number of occasions, been necessary to release people from

prison so that they can form part of a negotiating team, whether on parole, under house arrest or by some other means. There are also just a few (albeit interesting) examples, such as the case of the ELN in Colombia, of a government allowing a "peace office" to be established inside a prison, so that the imprisoned leader or leaders of an armed group can participate in the exploratory phase or formal negotiations. Many initial contacts with an armed group begin in prison or in the country or countries in which one or more of their leaders are exiled.

The country and/or place where the initial meetings are to take place will need to be mutually agreed upon during the exploratory phase. Subsequently, by mutual agreement, the country and place of the formal negotiations will need to be agreed, which may be different from that where the exploratory phase took place. They may take place in the country of origin of the facilitators, of the guarantors or observers.

During the exploratory phase, the broad components of the negotiation agenda are broadly established, without going into detail. If one of the parties does not agree with the agenda, then the negotiations cannot commence. In countries/communities with more than one armed group, from the start, consideration must be given to whether the talks initiated with one group might interfere with what has already been agreed with another (Fulani Herdsmen and Tiv-Jukun Militias fighting ethnic/tribal wars). It would seem advisable to consider what has already been agreed with one group to see if it would be fully or partly accepted by the other side. In some countries, admittedly very few, various armed groups have wanted to negotiate at the same time and within the same framework (as was the case in Burma) rather than separately. Such a situation necessarily requires cross-referencing and unifying the agendas of the armed groups and creating an "umbrella" organisation to protect and represent all the groups, with a view to ensuring a more viable negotiation process or environment as the case may be.

The opposite scenario has also arisen, whereby armed groups have flatly refused to participate in joint negotiations with other groups, requiring a dispersion of teams, agendas and methodologies that are difficult to manage. In 2014, for example, the AU mediator in the peace process in the Sudanese regions of South Kordofan and Blue Nile, Thabo Mbeki, stated that "one process, with two paths" was taking place in Sudan, referring to the fact that

parallel negotiations were being held in the Sudanese region of Darfur and that the two negotiations needed to be "synchronised".

During the exploratory phase also, agreement needs to be reached on whether or not the principle of "nothing is agreed until everything is agreed" is to be followed or, in contrast, whether each point agreed will be valid on its own, and may even be implemented during the course of the negotiations. An intermediary position may be agreed upon whereby the former principle is adopted, but excluding humanitarian issues, such as a ceasefire, gradual disarmament, demobilization, reintegration or release of held hostages amongst other steps and concessions that might signal confidence mutually.

Spoilers in the Peace Processes

Spoilers in peace processes are actors whose actions and inactions are geared towards scuttling, derailing and/or to ensure the obstruction and even total failure of the completion of the process. "Spoilers are leaders, parties and rank and file actors who believe that peace emerging from the ongoing negotiations threaten their power, influence, world view and interests and often use various disruptive strategies, including violence to undermine attempts to achieve it" (Alden, Thakur and Arnold, 2011: 21).

The appearance of spoilers is also not time-specific. While some argue that they appear only when there is a peace process to undermine, instances abound especially in international negotiations of the shifting interests of major players some of whom are extraneous to the setting of the conflict. Some also stay within the process half-heartedly and are not seriously interested in making compromises or committing to a peaceful endgame. Such actors use the process as a means of enhancing or seeking recognition and legitimacy, time or material benefits, or simply to avoid (inter)national sanctions. These are collectively known as 'devious objectives'. Spoilers differ by the goals they set and their rigidity to those goals and by their rigid adherence to those goals. Other categories of spoilers are parties that join a peace process but then withdraw and obstruct, or threaten to obstruct the process.

Spoilers could also be geographically external to the conflict setting from where they undermine the peace process sometimes in connivance with local spoilers. They could be ethnic or national Diasporas, states, political allies,

business interests or any others who profited from violent conflicts. Spoilers can be found within or outside the peace process. As insiders, they participate and express commitment to actions but deliberately fail to implement such agreements; although mostly found in international contexts.

The *outside* spoilers are those excluded from the peace negotiations, and who in turn sponsor or unleash violence on the peace process. Outside spoilers operate openly from outside using assassinations and frightening massacres to create fear. In contrast, the inside spoilers operate much more stealthily. Irrespective of nomenclature, spoilers can be divided into three broad categories of 'total', 'limited' and the 'greedy.' The *total* spoilers are rigid on their demands while *limited* ones have amenable demands. In contrast, the *greedy* constantly evaluate realities and keep changing their demands based on cost-benefit analysis. The common options used in managing spoilers are inducement which entails conceding partly or fully to the demands, socialization, that is, trying to convert such actors from being spoilers to supporters of the peace process and coercing or punishing such actors, if need be.

Spoilers in Peace Processes: Another View of the Coin

It is important to point out, at this juncture, that spoilers or those undermining, frustrating or delaying the peace process, are in most cases not against peace per se, but peace based on terms that are often exclusionary of the other parties in conflict. Their rejections of the peace settlement, which is hardly clearly communicated to the other parties, are central to the disposition of most parties to peace processes. This is especially so when one side perceives a particular position as inimical to its interests. The nature and matters in dispute such as land, access to, or control over natural resources, illegal commercial activities and territorial claims, often influence the nature of 'spoiling'. Therefore, rather than foreclosing it, spoiling should be seen as part of the peace process and efforts should be made to respond to them as they emerge. Also, the degree or level of spoiling a peace process can endure should be kept in focus.

Not all peace processes are accepted as "fair". So conscious efforts must be made to avoid a value judgment that imposes a "universal" value or notion of peace at variance with the worldview or interest of either of the parties which

can make them opt out of the peace process or end up being undermined. There are also those that participate in peace processes just to enhance their chances or status and not necessarily to compromise or reconcile with their adversaries. Thus, as much as possible, the peace process should not be zero sum, rather, it should be consensual, locally-owned and supported by both (inter)national and regional organizations. Also, extremely important is that the peace process should not be imposed upon an unwilling or disengaged public or stakeholders. However, a conscious effort must be made to distinguish the strategies of parties such as making more demands that do not call the integrity of the process into question from mischievous acts that are aimed at frustrating it through violence, boycotts, etc.

As conflict behaviour, spoiling can help raise new questions, divert attention, provide marginalized actors with a voice, delay or postpone progress in a process or future rounds of talks, prevent implementation of agreements, or illustrate the need to include other actors in discussions. While it might not always terminate a peace process, spoiling resets the agenda by generating new interests; the recognition of proto-political actors, and sometimes further concessions and the commitment of more local, regional (inter)national resources (Newman and Richmond, 2006). In the light of the foregoing analysis and discussion, designing a peace process in response to some of Nigeria's least understood but most debilitating communal conflicts, the procedure must be carefully thought-out during the exploratory, negotiation, agreement and implementation stages, as presented in the next section, and informed by an aggregation of reasoned analyses and experiences (Ucros, 2017; Rupesinghe, 2005).

1. **Conflict analysis:** This should take into account the scale of the conflict, armed actors involved, geography, local, national, transnational and global contexts. It is also crucial to ascertain the state of the conflict in designing the intervention, whether it is latent, frozen, terminated or at a hurting stalemate. A detailed conflict analysis helps to determine whether it is ripe to initiate a peace process or not.
2. **Stock-taking:** A careful and detailed review of all past peace processes to identify their peculiarities and similarities (common features) to map out or pencil down potential partners and learn from past mistakes. These can be done in three broad ways (MacGinty and

Ozerrdem, 2019). Stock-taking can also be done by comparing peace processes that took place in different places. For instance comparing the processes and outcomes of Benue with that of Plateau (Dawop, Grady, Inks and Wolfe, 2019). How each of the cases handled thorny issues like exclusion of the minority or the surplus small arms usually left after the conflict and those detained in the course of the conflict. Also, how procedural issues like confidence-building, negotiation and the symbolic signing of agreements are carried out.

3. **Ownership of Peace Process:** It is imperative to take ownership of the peace process that entails empowering the local actors so that they become the primary role makers in the process and eventually develop a sense of ownership.
4. **Identifying and bridging the actors:** These may include the conspicuous or/and the less visible, articulate and less articulate elites within a given society or community. It is also important to identify other stakeholders who may be ordinary people or actors with a stake in the conflict of peace process. In a violent conflict situation, the military and non-military actors should be fully and actively involved in the phase of process. This can be appreciated against the backdrop of Paul Coehlo's words that:

When I read about clashes around the world—political clashes, economic clashes, cultural clashes—I am reminded that it is within our power to build a bridge to be crossed. Even if my neighbor doesn't understand my religion or my politics, he can understand my story. If he can understand my story, then he's never too far from me. It is always within my power to build a bridge. There is always a chance for reconciliation, a chance that one day he and I will sit around a table together and put an end to our history of clashes. And on this day, he will tell me his story and I will tell him mine (Ashcroft and Bevir, 2019: v).

5. **Identifying the facilitators:** It is of utmost importance to identify

precisely who is appropriate for or who is fit to be involved in the design of a particular peace process i.e. who has the required skills, local and global experience as well as the requisite background knowledge to make positive contribution to design and success of the process. If the work is assigned to a person that lacks the appropriate disposition, knowledge and experience, peace can never be sustained in such a society.

6. **Setting a realistic time table:** At every stage in the design of the peace process; from the identification of the causes and significant actors involved, through to the elaboration of mechanisms for political and social accommodation, setting out a clear and distinct time frame is very important.
7. **Sustaining the effort:** A comprehensive approach to the design of an effective process requires adequate deployment of financial resources, patience and a sustained commitment from the sponsors and guarantors of the peace process. These could be individuals, state actors and international organisations.
8. **Evaluating success and failure:** This is instructive for the practitioner in order to learn from past failures and successes in order to avoid pitfalls.
9. **Identifying and Mobilising/Sensitizing Strategic constituencies:** Also referred to as the peace constituency in some literature, they bring their immense economic, social, intellectual and political capital towards the success of the peace process. The Multi-Track-Diplomacy framework provides a useful outline of their capacity and what each can mobilize to contribute to the ultimate success of the process. In many communal conflicts, the diaspora plays major role and often has the capacity to reverse or support the progress of the process.
10. **Managing Victims:** Victims of violence especially when organized, have a high propensity for becoming radicalized, which in turn makes them vulnerable to recruitment into militia groups that conduct violent operations on behalf of their respective communities, sometimes to the detriment of any peace process that may be initiated by interested parties.

Conclusion

In the midst of fighting a protracted and violent insurgency war, the availability of armed personnel for immediate deployment to sites of communal conflicts in Nigeria takes a second place. Perhaps due to political mismanagement, socio-environmental factors leading to a reduction in natural resources, loss of livelihoods and other demographic shifts, there has been an upsurge in communal tensions and conflicts across the country. These adverse developments underscore the need for a paradigm shift from extant peace processes, especially those initiated by the governments at all levels, which give the impression that government knows-it-all, to a process that emphasises a more inclusive and participatory approach in initiating and supporting communal peace processes across the country. This would require deeper understanding of the causes, identification of local and national actors, promotion of local ownership and active community participation in peace processes for their success and sustainability.

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