Peace and Conflict Risk Assessment as a Mechanism for Effective Peace Governance in Katsina-Ala Local Government Area, Benue State, Nigeria

Dr. Obi, Ndifon Neji[a], Dr. Tangban, Egbe Ebagu[b]

a. Department of Political Science, University of Calabar, Nigeria
b. Department of Social Work, University of Calabar, Nigeria

Abstract

Peace and Conflict Risk Assessment (PCRA) has gained prominence in development planning. Today, one would hardly contest the fact that the negative interaction of conflict elements may predispose the environment to conflict. Using the Multi-causal theoretical role model and the Country Indicators for Foreign Policy (CIFP) risk model, the paper examines how knowledge of the interaction of negative conflict energies can aid government and development partners in the design and implementation of relevant peace governance architecture in Katsina-Ala local government area of Benue State, Nigeria, which has been threatened by history of conflicts. Although, existing studies have focused on peacebuilding as important mechanism for peace governance in fragile contexts, the relevance of peace and conflict risk assessment to effective peace governance has received little attention. The thesis sponsored by this paper revolves around the evidence that without a good understanding of the interaction of conflict elements within a context, it would be difficult to design and implement context-specific peace governance architecture. Through, a triangulated method of data collection (focus group discussion, key informant interview and semi-structured questionnaire), ten variables were content analyzed to determine their risk severity ratings on the context. These included *history of inter-communal conflicts, history of intra-communal conflicts, circulation of arms, environmental stress, ethnic/tribal consciousness, social amenities, siting of projects, women and youth's involvement in governance, People with Disabilities (PWDs) and Local Government.* The study revealed that the interaction of these variables have predisposed Katsina-Ala to intermittent conflicts. The paper suggests that evidence-based peace governance architecture is central to the mitigation of the negative interaction of conflict energies in Katsina-Ala local government area.

Keywords: Conflict, Multi-causal, Peace, Peace Governance, Katsina-Ala, Risk Assessment, Risk Model.

Introduction

The growing understanding that peace, like several other human needs should be protected from negative energies reinforces the centrality of peace and conflict risk assessment to effective peace governance. Generally, communities have very often been predisposed to conflict of various shades with evidential flashpoints in the Niger Delta, Northeast, and North Central states of Nigeria. Benue State and particularly, Katsina-Ala local government provides a useful case study for the examination of the interaction of negative energies.

Created in 1976, Katsina-Ala is one of the oldest local government areas in Benue state with a population of 225,471 as at the 2006 census and projected to hit 304, 400 within an area of 2,402 km²

by 2016 (**NPC & NBS Web:2007**). The local government which is mainly occupied by Tiv (**Thurstan, Paul, Bassey & Alex, 1993**) has over 75% of the population engage in agriculture. Blessed with fertile soil and rainfall, the agriculturally conducive climatic condition for produce including sorghum, yams, cassava, maize, soya beans, rice, groundnuts, and melon serve as the pull factor attracting people of diverse culture to Katsina-Ala. The interplay of the various activities that enable the production and distribution of agricultural produce including markets and development interventions have often predisposed the area to factors that threaten peace.

Peace according to **Francis** (**2006:16**) is the prime value in the World; it is the most valuable 'public good,' yet the most elusive. **Ibaba** (**2008:264**) observes that a common objective of all societies is the enthronement of peace given its centrality to human existence and development. The centrality of peace to human existence therefore throws up a logical question- what is peace? Peace has been defined to mean different things to differing people depending on the era and context. Peace according to **Albert and Otite** (**2001:1-5**) has been described as a relative condition of tranquilized conflicts. As justice and development, respect and tolerance between people, harmony with the ecosystem and tranquillity (**Miall, 2000:14**). While some scholars see peace as the absence of war others conceive peace differently; **Miall** (**2000:14**); **Francis** (**2006:17**); **Ibeanu** (**2006:3**). According to **Ibeanu** (**2006:3**), conceptualizing peace as the absence of war and war as the absence of peace though attractive, is inadequate for understanding the nature of peace. However, **Galtung** (**1990**) argues that the conception of peace as the absence of war is inapplicable in situations of structural violence. War according to him, is only one form of violence which is physical, open, and direct. Other forms of social conditions such as poverty, exclusion, intimidation, oppression, unemployment, destitution, want, fear, and lack of access to health and educational services does not fit into the peace-war converse definition. To this, **Lama** (**2009**) persuasively declared that:

> …peace, in the sense of the absence of war is of little value to someone who is dying of hunger or cold, it will not remove the pains of torture inflicted on a prisoner of conscience. It does not comfort those who have lost their loved ones... Peace can only last where human rights are respected, where the people are fed and where individuals and Nations are free (**p.1**).

Despite its widespread invocation and application, there is limited consensus on what constitute peace. Such conceptual uncertainty cannot be discounted as purely semantic or academic. Education remains a central element in the construction and reconstruction of the concept of peace (**Obi, 2016:378**). How peace is defined has implications on how interventions are designed, implemented, monitored, and evaluated. For this study, peace is construed not as a condition or state of affair but a process involving activities that are directly or indirectly linked to reducing the likelihood of conflict and strengthening prospects for development. Although, research of the nexus between peace and development has generated huge literature, the significance of peace and conflict risk assessment to effective peace governance has been under-researched. Within this context, the paper therefore, examines how conflict elements interact to predispose Katsina-Ala local government area of Benue State to conflict and how the evidence from such risk assessment can help government and development interveners plan and deliver context-specific peace governance programmes. The significance of this paper, therefore, revolves around the need to contribute to the development of more robust peace governance architecture. While the paper only briefly reviews literature on peace and conflict risk assessment, its

main interest is to highlight what in the estimation of the author, constitute the interaction of negative energies that may predispose the study area to conflict thereby threatening socio-politico and development interventions.

Methodology

As part of the process of data collection to examine the interaction of conflict elements in Katsina-Ala local government as a strategy of establishing the likelihood estimate and overall severity of risk in the study area, a triangulated method of data collection was deployed. This included semi-structured questionnaire, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and review of relevant literature. A total of five organisational questionnaires were administered to five purposively selected Community-based Organisations (CBOs) to collect data on specific peace and conflict indicators in Katsina-Ala local government area. These CBOs included Association of Grassroots Counselors on Health and Development (AGCOD); Kejie Health Foundation (KHF); Otabo Caregivers and Support for Orphans; Pearls Care Initiative (PCI); First Step Action for Children Initiative (FIRST). It will be noted that the CBOs are predominantly those in the health sector because there were no presence of peacebuilding CBOs in the study area. Five FGDs were held with five groups, one for each of the selected CBOs. The FGDs had an average of eight participants drawn from traditional rulers/community leaders, women groups, religious leaders, CBOs, and youths. Additional data were generated through key informants who are observant and reflective members of the community of interest who know much about the phenomenon under consideration and were both able and willing to share their knowledge (**Bernard, 2002; Seidler 1974; Tremblay 1957; Campbell 1955**). Three key stakeholders were purposively selected as key informants. The essence of data triangulation was to identify recurrent peace and conflict risk elements in the selected LGAs and strengthen credibility of conclusions. The reason for triangulation is that one can be more confident about a result if different methods lead to the same result. If only one method is used, results may be accepted without question; if two methods are used, the results may clash; by using three methods one increases the possibility that consistent and verifiable results may be obtained.

Theoretical Anchorage

Borrowed from the medical field, the study considers the multi-causal model an appropriate analytic tool for examining the interaction of conflict elements in any given context. This is because it allows for a more comprehensive integration of the "syndrome of factors" (**Mason and Rychard, 2005**) that may predispose a particular context to violence. Analysis using the multi-causal model begins with an examination of the conflict elements within the context of study including remote, immediate, triggers and precipitants of conflict. The multiplicity of these conflict elements presupposes that an understanding of how these elements interact to strengthen or undermine conditions conducive to peace and its sustenance must be identified for any meaningful respond design and mobilization.

In the context of this study therefore, the multi-causal theory suggest that conflict is a product of a multiplicity of factors and as a result, the causation element of this model points to the need of identifying the likely causes of conflict from various perspectives. This goes further to corroborate the evidence that like in several other contexts, Katsina-Ala has inherent conflict elements that may be structural, political, cultural, religious, ecological/geographical, and sociological. The causal

dimension of this model is further made glaring when consideration is given to the inevitable interaction of these factors. When for instance, a divisive political context interacts with a religiously sensitive environment, violence becomes a likely outcome. The Multi-causal theory is therefore considered appropriate in identifying likely conflict elements and explaining how the identified elements can interact to enhance or undermine peace in Katsina-Ala Local Government of Benue State, Nigeria.

Understanding peace and conflict risk assessment

The lack of evidence-based conflict sensitive programming is among the most obvious obstacles to effective peacebuilding interventions (**Obi, 2015:3**) and peace governance in general. The emerging reality that development and its processes are conflict exacerbating and the need to stem the tide of development interventions induced conflicts underscores the relevance of risk assessment. While development interventions generally, whether in form of building of public utilities like schools, hospitals and roads can induce conflict in the community, the context in which such interventions take place also have inherent conflict elements by virtue of its history, policies, actors, economy, and politics. Although, conflict may be externally generated or triggered, its tendency to escalate or deescalate is primarily dependent on the actors' management of their internal negative impulses (**Obi, 2021:1953**). The interaction of these 'inherent' community conflict elements with development interventions may trigger conflict if a risk assessment is not done. Lack of an effective risk assessment can therefore strengthen conflict drivers and enhance the risk of outbreak of violence thereby threatening development interventions. Risk assessment can strengthen the effectiveness and efficiency of development interventions by identifying conflict risk factors, designing a risk response to mitigate escalation, and strengthening the processes of long-term development. It provides a mechanism for identifying which risks represent opportunities and which represent potential pitfalls.

Within this context, risk assessment is therefore, a systematic process for identifying and evaluating events (i.e., possible risks and opportunities) that could affect the achievement of objectives (**Committee of sponsoring organizations, 2004**). Risk is usually defined as the product of the likelihood (or probability) of the occurrence of a hazard and the magnitude of its consequence. As the level of risk increases (likelihood and consequences), so too does the priority to respond. The type of action taken to respond will depend on several factors, including the extent of control one has over the activity giving rise to risk, available alternatives and costs and knowledge of the context (**Obi, 2015:7**). Risk assessment is, therefore, a critical element of effective peace governance architecture. It is a process that provides evidence on how to manage the cultural, socio-politico economic and environmental factors that may negatively interact to predispose the context to conflict. The key component to the risk assessment is the foreseeability of risk, which is why it is important to devote time to identifying and understanding the interaction of conflict elements in a context in order to inform and strengthen the effectiveness and efficiency of peacebuilding interventions because, if the risk in an area of intervention can reasonably be foreseen, then steps can be taken to address it through conflict sensitive program planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Reframing the notion of peace governance

There is a budding consensus about the notion of governance that seems to revolve around the capacity to effectively coordinate activities, interventions and processes and deliver results within a particular

context. This capacity is often a product of a multiplicity of factors which may include political will, funds, human resources and particularly knowledge of the operational environment. The understanding that any act of governance must necessarily take place within a defined context makes the knowledge of the context even more central to any result-oriented governance infrastructure. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) defines governance as the exercise of political, economic, and administrative authority in the management of a country's affairs at all levels. Governance thus focuses on the mechanisms, processes, relations, and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their rights and obligations, and mediate their differences (**UNDP, 2012**). This suggests that the notion of governance can be deployed to explain the management of activities, interactions, and processes in any context. Following this line of reasoning, we can therefore, have political governance, religious governance, university governance and family governance. What qualifies the act of governance in the various contexts listed above is the prefix. While University governance for instance, suggests the management of the processes within the context of the University, peace governance connotes management of the processes and elements that may enhance or predispose a particular context to conflict.

The notion of peace governance is an emerging idea that is informed by a desire to effectively assess the interaction of the various elements within a context with the intent of conditioning and structuring relevant and evidence-based peacebuilding interventions. Contexts are therefore, generally made up of elements that interact to define them. Two outcomes are produced by any context. First, when elements like drugs and unemployment interact with other elements like cultism and the illicit circulation of small arms and light weapons, such a context is already vulnerable to violence. Second, when elements like drugs and unemployment interact with other elements like sustainable psychosocial support regime, rehabilitation, skills development, and employment, such a context is comparatively more likely to experience less violence. The idea of peace governance, therefore, is the understanding that knowledge of the interaction of conflict elements within a particular context can significantly strengthen capacity for effective interventions. This study thus, assesses conflict elements in Katsina-Ala local government area of Benue state.

Methodological notes on assessing structural indicators of conflict potentials.

Conflict does not just occur, for it to manifest; it must have laid latent waiting for certain environmental elements to act on it. In conducting a peace and conflict risk assessment (PCRA), it is necessary to identify such elements that can create necessary incentive for latent conflict to be activated. These elements in broad terms are categorised as structural factors, accelerators, and triggers. Structural factors often referred to as 'root causes' are those factors that form the pre-conditions for crises situation (**Ampleford & Wakaba, 2002**). Such factors in the context of this study include variables like history of communal clashes, policies of exclusion at the community, local government, and state levels, overbearing ethnic consciousness, environmental stress, and unresolved boundary issues. Accelerators or precipitators are factors that work upon root causes to increase their level of significance; and triggers are sudden events that act as catalysts igniting a conflict such as killing cattle belonging to a herdsman. In identifying risk elements that may predispose the study area to conflict, it is instructive to also identify relevant indicators for determining the risk likelihood estimate and severity of risk posed by the interaction of such elements. The indicators of conflict potentials in the

context of this assessment are identified to include history of intra and inter-communal clashes, circulation of arms, environmental stress, ethnic/tribal consciousness, social amenities, siting of government and donor projects, women and youth's involvement in governance, People with Disabilities (PWDs) and local government. The choice of these indicators is informed by the understanding that no single factor can fully explain the cause of a conflict because conflict elements may in most contexts reinforce other factors. Analysis of risk elements, therefore, requires a relative assessment of how these indicators interact to strengthen or mitigate the severity of risk. Katsina-Ala exist in a context that is threatened by herders and elements of boko haram insurgents (**Obi, 2015a:53**).

Methodological notes on assessing structural indicators of peace potentials.

Although, there has been a significant volume of research around the factors that may lead to conflict, there are however, limited studies which focus on the factors that underlie peace. Since peace does not exist in its right, the relative peace of a community is therefore underpinned by the material, cultural, environmental, economic, and political condition of that community-whether it is its history, relationship with neighbours, the efficiency of the formal institutions of government and community structures, policies that promote or weaken exclusion or the structure and processes that anticipate and respond to conflict signals. In identifying the factors that may create necessary conditions for peace as a means of establishing infrastructure for effective peace governance, it is instructive to also review the risk indicators in the context of how they can be transformed to create conditions necessary for peace. Peace indicators here are construed to reflect a system that pre-empts and response to conflict signals, deliberate policies of inclusion, job creation and skills acquisition programmes, disarmament, capacity building, provision of basic amenities and general sensitisation.

These indicators can be seen as highly interconnected and interacting in varied and complex ways to form either virtuous or vicious cycles, with causality running both ways. The animated relationships between these indicators are purely indicative and are not literal interpretations of their interactions. The strength of the various interactions will, therefore, depend on the historical, political, economic, and cultural circumstances of Katsina-Ala local government. A key advantage of this approach is that because causality can only occur from the past to the present, understanding the history and conflict management mechanisms of the study area can help provide greater levels of confidence regarding the direction of causality of conflict or peace. For example, if peace causes increased productivity, but increased productivity does not result in greater levels of peace, one will then need to know why. Again, while this is not suggested to provide conclusive evidence of the indicators of peace, it does provide us with greater levels of confidence regarding our overall conclusion that the peace indicators as described here are essential for creating societies in which human potential can flourish.

Data analysis

This segment is designed to analyze data collected through the various instruments as highlighted above. A tool that is considered appropriate for this analysis is the Country Indicators for Foreign Policy (CIFP) risk model. The objective is to determine the likelihood estimate and risk severity posed by the interaction of the variables under consideration. Before the analysis, it will be apt to first operationalize the CIFP model.

Operationalization of risk index

The peace and conflict risk assessment in Katsina-Ala local government adopts the Country Indicators for Foreign Policy (CIFP) risk model in determining the likelihood estimate and severity of risk posed by the interaction of conflict elements within the context. The **CIFP** (**2002**) risk index is an aggregation of several socio-economic and structural indicators. The aggregation function in the context of this assessment is the weighted mean of ten composite indicators corresponding to ten thematic areas that provides guardian to this assessment. Each thematic indicator is an average of the rank scores on a 9-point scale. Based on this model, scores on thematic indicators are ranked and converted to a 9-point score. To determine the risk likelihood, estimate and severity, the 9-point scale is divided into 3 parts to measure the likelihood: *1-3-low, 4-6-medium, 6-9-high.* This ranking is intended to identify critical risk elements and direct attention to mitigating their escalation. This is especially so because the higher the risk elements identified, the higher the threats to peace and the higher the need for risk response mechanisms. An aggregate score range of 6-9 suggest that conflict risk factors are active in the context and the context is seriously predisposed to violent conflict. This also means that there is no defined early warning system in place and a little issue can feed on these active risk factors to trigger conflict that may have a *severe* effect on the development processes in the LGA. A medium aggregate score range of 4-6 indicates that conflict risk elements are partially active in it and the local government is also partially predisposed to violent conflict. This is partially so because there are skeletal systems for conflict management in place. Conflict triggers can act on conflict risk elements in such context with a mild effect on development processes. A context with an aggregate score range of 1-3 suggest that conflict risk elements exist but are inactive. Conflict triggers can act on these risk elements, but there are no structural conflict potentials to escalate such conflict situation. Should conflict erupt in such contexts, it will only have a limited impact on development processes.

The table below presents the scores generated through the questionnaire using the thematic indicators.

Table 1: Risk indices and likelihood estimate

THEMATIC AREA (RISK INDICATORS)	KATSINA-ALA
Inter-communal clashes.	8.0
Intra-communal clashes.	8.0
Circulation of arms.	9.0
Environmental stress.	7.0
Ethnic/tribal consciousness.	8.0
Social amenities.	8.0
Siting of projects.	8.0
Women and youth's involvement in governance.	9.0
People with Disabilities (PWDs).	9.0
Local Government.	9.0
Aggregate Risk Likelihood Estimate	8.3

Source: Field Survey

Table Notes: Risk scores are color-coded according to 'traffic stop light' scheme where Green (1-3) indicates low risk, Yellow (4-6) represents medium risk and Red (7-9) indicates high risk.

Peace and Conflict Risk Assessment as a Mechanism for Effective Peace Governance in Katsina-Ala Local Government Area, Benue State, Nigeria

Table 2: Key issues underlying conflict potentials (Data from FGDs and KIIs)

THEMATIC AREAS (RISK INDICATORS)	INTER-COMMUNAL CONFLICTS	INTRA-COMMUNAL CONFLICTS	CIRCULATION OF ARMS	ENVIRONMENTAL STRESS	ETHNIC/TRIBAL CONSCIOUSNESS	SOCIAL AMENITIES	SITING OF PROJECTS	WOMEN AND YOUTHS INVOLVEMENT IN GOVERNANCE	PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES (PWDS)	LOCAL GOVERNMENT
	History of inter-State conflicts (Katsina-Ala in Benue and Takun in Taraba States) History of inter-communal conflicts. History of Internally Displaced People (IDPs) Death and destruction of property recorded. Main conflict issue is land	History of intra-communal clashes Intra-communal conflicts between *Buruku, IkuravTiev, Shitile* and Katsina-Ala Conflict generated by chieftaincy tussles. The seat of *Ter*Katsina-Ala was contested in court and the litigation process only ended up creating tension. Main issue in conflict is land and exclusion.	Small arms in circulation Acquisition of arms by people for self-defence since there are indication that government has failed in ensuring its primary responsibility of ensuring security of lives and property. The spills from the cult related activities by the *Ombatse*culti nNassarawa state Government amnesty efforts are yet to completely mop illicit circulation of arms.	Pressure on environment especially for grazing purposes Record of Fulani herdsmen related violent conflict. Record of death Bulging population affecting access to land. No record of a system to manage herdsmen related conflicts	High ethnic/tribal consciousness Records of conflicts along ethnic and tribal lines Multicultural nature of Katina-Ala as a result of its rich agricultural resources attracts people of different culture, tribe and orientation.	Record of social amenities generating conflicts. Records of protests calling for the provision of basic amenities. Records of provision without a proper needs' assessment. Records of destruction of social amenities	Record of project siting related conflicts Instances of siting amenities without a proper needs' assessment Some amenities are sited without adequate community participation and ownership.	Exclusion of women and youths from governance and peace processes. Vulnerability of women and children especially during inter/intra communal clashes.	Exclusion of PWDs from community, program, and governance processes. Records of abuse, neglect and dejection of people with disabilities No defined programs to cater for the special needs of people with disabilities	Lack of capacity to manage conflict. Lack of Early Warning System No community specific system to deal with rapist. No community specific system to deal with the illicit consumption of drugs. Chieftaincy tussles. Market conflict.

Source: Field Survey

Risk assessment summary for Katsina-Ala local government

KATSINA-ALA - Very High-Risk Elements

Katsina-Ala is bounded to the North by *IkuravTiev* district and on the east by *Kpav* district. Katsina-Ala town constitutes one of the districts of Katsina-Ala local Government Area and the Katsina-Ala town is found on the South-Western part of Katsina-Ala Local Government Area and Katsina-Ala Local Government Area which is named after the town is situated in the Eastern part of Benue. The town shares the river Katsina-Ala as its Southern and Western boundary with Buruku Local Government Area. The local government has a population of about 225,471 (**NPC & NBS Web: 2007**).

History of Inter-Communal Conflicts

Katsina-Ala has a high-risk severity estimate. It has a history of inter-communal conflicts that has generated and sustained various degrees of vulnerabilities. Notable among which is the conflict between Takun in Taraba state and Katsina-Ala in Benue state. The conflict which recorded about twenty deaths in 2015 alone resulted in internal displacement of people. The efforts of the joint committee of Taraba and Benue state and boundary patrol has only succeeded in freezing the conflict. A little heat would therefore, de-freeze this conflict. It is necessary to monitor the interaction of conflict elements in this area. The main issue in conflict is land.

History of Intra-Communal Conflicts

The risk severity score for this indicator is high. Katsina-Ala has witnessed quite several intra-communal clashes that have ordinarily created necessary incentives for episodic conflicts. There are records of intra-communal conflicts between *Buruku*, *IkuravTiev, Shitile* and Katsina-Ala. The main conflict issue here is land. In addition to communal clashes is conflict generated by chieftaincy tussles. The seat of *Ter*Katsina-Ala was contested in court and the litigation process only ended up creating tension. This, in addition to other conflicts generated from District Headship left fresh wounds in the minds of people.

Circulation of Arms

Katsina-Ala has a high-risk severity score on this indicator. The intermittent communal clashes perhaps accounts for this severity. The government amnesty programme aimed at mopping the illicit circulation of arms from communities in the state is yet to achieve any significant result. This finding agrees with the position of **Simbine and Obi (2018:66)** where it was noted that violence have become an industry and a veritable source of livelihood for many people, resulting in the proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

Environmental Stress

The risk score on this indicator is high suggesting that this is also an area to be monitored. Grazing adds pressure on the environment and has often resulted in violent conflict in the area. It is common for instance, to hear words like "you kill my cow, I kill your people" in the area. This holds a very strong signal and clearly highlights the importance the herdsman attaches to his cattle.

Ethnic/Tribal Consciousness

The ethnic/tribal consciousness is high in Katsina-Ala. Though this has not been critically linked to any conflict, opinions from the field suggest that people are loyal to their immediate clan on all issues and threats to this 'clan loyalty' have often been resisted. This explains the high-risk score on this indicator.

Social Amenities

The risk severity score on this indicator is high. This is so because lack of basic amenities can affect community wellbeing and generate conflict. Though there is no record of lack of amenities induced

conflicts, findings suggest that a protest which may emanate because of lack of amenities would ordinarily feed on existing conflict elements to threaten the peace of the area.

Siting of Projects

Siting of projects (whether donor or government) have often resulted in violent conflicts. Conflict for example that resulted in severe injuries erupted when MTN - telecommunication service provider was to mount its mast at *Mbanyan*. Again, the relocation of the *Gbor* yam market resulted in violent protest that claimed lives. The risk score for this indicator is high because some projects are sited without conflict sensitive analysis and stakeholders' involvement. The lack of appropriate Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanisms (**Obi, 2018a**) for the management of conflicts occasioned by the politics of project conception, location and implementation often predisposes the region to avoidable conflicts.

Women and Youths Involvement in Governance

The risk severity score for this indicator is very high despite lack of actual threat pose by the non-inclusion of women and youths in governance. Findings suggest that a protest from this group would ordinarily escalate because of the existing conflict factors in the area. The exclusion of women and youth from governance is despite the clamor for women political rights and equal participation in electoral politics (**Simbine and Obi, 2020:5**)

People with Disabilities (PWDs)

The risk severity score on this indicator is equally very high despite no real challenge pose to the area by way of protest by this group. **Obi** (**2018:60**) made the point when it was declared that a conflict sensitive election and disability programming would have to meet the inclusion and accessibility requirements of PWDs. This means that all electoral laws are designed to enhance inclusion and accessibility for PWDs, and a Disability Desk is established to attend to the peculiar needs of PWDs.

Local Government

The inability of the local government to effectively pre-empt and respond to conflict situations has place the risk severity score on this indicator very high. It is important for stakeholders to support the local government build a conflict warning and response system.

Table 3: AREAS OF CONCERN

The assessment identifies the following as areas of critical concern:

RISK INDICATORS	KATSINA-ALA LGA	RISK SEVERITY RATING
Inter-communal clashes.	8.0	High Risk
Intra-communal clashes.	8.0	High Risk
Circulation of arms.	9.0	Very High Risk
Environmental stress.	7.0	High Risk
Ethnic/tribal consciousness.	8.0	High Risk
Social amenities.	8.0	High Risk

Siting of projects.	8.0	High Risk
Women and youth's involvement in governance.	9.0	Very High Risk
People with Disabilities (PWDs).	9.0	Very High Risk
Local Government.	9.0	Very High Risk

Source: Field Survey

Definition of indicators

Technically, indicators are scales used in measuring performance and should be able to reflect what is to be measured to show a change from one position to another. Indicators are generated in line with the SMART principle of Specificity, Measurability, Achievability, Relevance and Time bound. Indicators are however, used here to highlight such factors that can predispose the environment to conflict if not properly managed.

Indicator 1: History of Conflicts

A community with a history of conflicts has inherent risk elements that make the likelihood of conflict even higher. Collecting data on this indicator was necessary to establish the conflict risk background of the LGA assessed.

Indicator 2: Circulation of Arms

An environment that is inundated with illicit circulation of arms makes violent conflicts almost inevitable. Illicit arms strengthen risk elements and predispose the environment to fear and vulnerability. Collecting data on this indicator therefore, provided an opportunity to evaluate the interaction of fear generated by the illicit circulation of arms and other risk elements.

Indicator 3: Environmental Stress

This indicator basically probed for conflicts generated because of pressure on the environment. It considered factors like the impact of grazing on the environment and general contestation over land and how the interaction between the activities of farmers and herdsmen impact on conflict potentials.

Indicator 4: Ethnic/Tribal Consciousness

Identity conflicts in certain instances can lead to protracted violent conflicts. This indicator probed for the risk posed by ethnic/tribal consciousness. It examined how this 'tribal consciousness' feeds on other elements to predispose the environment to conflict.

Indicator 5: Social Amenities

This indicator was presented in the context of conflict generated because of lack of social amenities. Lack of amenities in certain climes has often resulted in protest and conflict. It was necessary to probe for the risk associated with such conflicts.

Indicator 6: Siting of Projects

Siting of projects especially without community involvement has often predisposed the environment to conflict. This indicator, therefore, probed for conflicts generated from the process of choice of project site and how this can interact with other risk elements in the environment.

Indicator 7: Women and Youths involvement in Governance

The exclusion of women and youths from governance processes has often generated protests especially at the national level. This indicator probed for protest because of the exclusion of women and youths from community governance processes and how this may interact with other risk factors in the environment.

Indicator 8: People with Disabilities (PWDs)

People with Disabilities (PWDs) are often neglected in communities. As a reason of disabilities, PWDs have not been able to organise themselves to the point of becoming a risk factor. This indicator, therefore, probed for the likelihood of conflict because of the neglect of PWDs.

Indicator 9: Local Government

The local government is the third tier of government and by virtue of its position, the closest to the people. It is expected that it should be an important actor in managing conflicts at the local government level. This indicator probed for the role of the local government in conflict management and how this role can strengthen or weaken conflict potentials in the locality.

Stakeholders and process analysis

The assessment highlights the interaction of multiplicity of stakeholders-both obvious and shrouded. The stakeholders are those who are directly or indirectly involved in strengthening or mitigating risk elements in the context under consideration. The stakeholders are identified in this assessment to include primary, secondary, and shadow parties. Primary stakeholders are seen to be those whose goals are or are perceived by them to be incompatible and who interact directly in pursuit of their respective goals. The actions of primary stakeholders therefore, feed on existing conflict elements to enhance the vulnerability of the environment to conflict. These primary actors are identified in the context of the assessment to include the herdsmen and farmers. This is because about 95.0% of conflict risk elements are tied to tussles over land either for grazing or other agricultural purposes. Those who are directly affected by such conflicts are the herdsmen and farmers. Strategies to mitigate herdsmen-farmers conflicts should necessarily be designed in consultation with these actors. Secondary stakeholders are those that are affected directly by the outcome of the conflict but who do not feel themselves to be directly involved. As the conflict progresses, they may become primary, and primary may become secondary.

This group first include the community in conflict. Other secondary actors who are affected by the outcome of the various communal conflicts have always been donor partners and government. Lives are lost, properties are destroyed, people are displaced, and education and economic activities are often fully or partially disrupted during conflicts. Donor interventions are also affected during this period. In the post-conflict period, donor partners and government are seen trying to reconstruct the damage done to the environment. This critically interlinked process clearly highlights the need for all

stakeholders to work together to identify and mitigate conflict risk elements from escalation. Shadow parties who are referred to as '*conflict-preneurs*' in this context are often difficult to identify but they stand to benefit from the conflict. Strategies to identify and mitigate conflict risk elements run contrary to their interest and they may play the 'spoiler' in the process of looking for solutions. These actors are identified in the context to include arm dealers. It is useful for stakeholders with moral and altruistic tendencies like religious leaders, civil society organisations (CSOs) including women groups to midwife a process that would create necessary incentives for peace.   For any meaningful intervention in this area, it would be necessary to thoroughly investigate and identify these stakeholders to be able to map their respective interests.

Findings from the study indicate that there is no defined process of managing conflict at the community and local government levels. What looks like a conflict management system at the community level is the traditional means of communicating developments in the community to a higher traditional authority. This, however, cannot pass for a proactive conflict management system because it lacks the element of pre-empting conflicts and activating risk response mechanism. What obtains at the local government level is the traditional method of deploying security agents to conflict areas. This again, cannot be considered a robust conflict management system. A system that is built on reactive measures can hardly pass for a relevant conflict management mechanism in the context of the assessment. A meaningful intervention in this context would have to provide and build capacity on how to manage a proactive conflict management system.

Pillars of peace in Katsina-Ala local government

The Pillars of Peace is a conceptual framework for understanding and describing the factors that create peaceful societies. The indicators used for this assessment are some of the factors that may create incentives for peace if positively harnessed. Peace here can be construed as the attitudes, institutions, and structures that, when strengthened, lead to a more peaceful society. Overall, The Pillars of Peace is an eight-part taxonomy which considers factors that are supportive of a peaceful environment. These factors are considered to include a well-functioning government; a sound business environment; an equitable distribution of resources; an acceptance of the rights of others; good relations with neighbors; free flow of information; a high level of human capital; and low levels of corruption (**Pillars of peace, 2014**). Though this is a framework that is often used to describe factors that are supportive of peace at the national level, it is adapted and deployed to aid the analysis of the interconnectedness of the indicators for this assessment. It is obvious deducing from the identified pillars of Peace that Katsina-Ala local government area lacks basic elements that make an environment peaceful. Drawing from the findings, it is therefore, not difficult to conclude that an environment that can hardly guarantee the security of the lives of its citizens would be peaceful. This is further threatened by pockets of conflicts that have often resulted in death, displacements, and increased criminality.

The indicators as used in this assessment are also associated with peaceful environments and are both inter-dependent and mutually reinforcing, such that improvements in one factor would tend to strengthen others and vice versa. Therefore, the relative strength of any one Pillar has the potential to influence the others positively or negatively, thereby influencing peace. To demonstrate how these indicators have an impact on others, consider the example of an environment without communal

conflicts. This will undoubtedly influence the business environment, increased farming activities, increased income, sustained development interventions and enrolment of more pupils in schools and generally decreased vulnerability. Due to the interdependent nature of these indicators, the weakening or strengthening of any of these indicators will also weaken or strengthen the others. A peaceful environment is therefore dependent on the strength of all indicators. The pillars of Peace are weak in Katsina-Ala local government area owing to the presence and negative interaction of conflict elements within the context.

Baseline community conflict management system in Katsina-Ala

Findings from the study indicate that a traditional system of conflict management exists in Katsina-Ala, but it is not robust in dealing with the complexities of emerging conflicts. The traditional institution that is naturally saddled with the responsibility of managing community conflicts has no defined system in place that pre-empts conflicts and activate a response mechanism. The traditional 'village square' or 'chief palace' approach to conflict management is unable to withstand the complexities of modern conflicts. Lack of a community-centred system of managing conflict has strengthened the free interaction of risk elements in the environment. It is necessary considering this, to provide a system that would more effectively support the community manage conflicts.

Connectors and dividers

Risk factors are either strengthened by dividers or weakened by connectors, or they may be strengthened by connectors and weakened by dividers. Findings from the study indicate that Katsina-Ala is characterised by elements that can divide people into subgroups-*dividers* or elements that can connect people across subgroups-*connectors.* Dividers like ethnic/tribal consciousness have added more pressure and strengthen risk elements in the environment. Connectors like markets, schools, health centres, water points that are naturally supposed to serve as bridges linking people across divides have often become risk elements. Overall, when these divisions are fuelled or these connectors are undermined, societies can fragment, sometimes even to the point of warfare. When, on the other hand, connectors are reinforced and dividers are overcome, people find ways to live side-by-side, working together to address common problems. Identifying and understanding the dividers and connectors in Katsina-Ala local government area should be a central part of the peace governance architecture. This is because government and development partners' interventions would always interact with existing dividers and connectors in the communities in which they are executed. As an unintended consequence, peacebuilding interventions will either support dividers, or connectors, with either positive or negative impacts.

How Peace and Conflict Risk Assessment (PCRA) can enhance effective peace governance architecture in katsina-Ala

Peace governance architecture is a framework that is necessitated by the desire to put measures in place to manage the interaction of negative energies within a particular context so that, such negative energies would not escalate to threaten the peace within that context. This framework is often a skeleton, and what constitute its flesh and blood is the evidence and knowledge of the conflict elements

within the context. The process that generates relevant knowledge within this context is peace and conflict risk assessment.

This study has uncovered the conflict elements within Katsina-Ala local government area to include history of inter/intra communal conflicts; illicit circulation of small arms and light weapons, pressure on the environment for farming, grazing and related purposes; ethnic/tribal consciousness and loyalty; inadequate social amenities/utilities; sitting of intervention projects without proper community participation and ownership; inadequate involvement of youths and women in governance and peacebuilding processes; exclusion of people with disabilities from governance and peacebuilding processes and inadequate capacity and lack of a community early warning system moderated and supported by the local government. Land and exclusion constitute about 95% of the core conflict issues in Katsina-Ala local government area of Benue state.

While these findings are by no means exhaustive, it is appropriate to declare, drawing from the foregoing, that the effectiveness of peacebuilding interventions in the context under consideration would depend on projects and programmes that are designed and implemented to address these specific conflict elements. A PCRA in this context, therefore, provides the necessary evidence for a bespoke peacebuilding intervention. Proper governance of the peace space requires an in-depth understanding of the conflict elements within a particular context. The idea of designing and delivering peacebuilding interventions without knowledge of the interaction of conflict elements within the context have in certain instances, further entrenched the very conflict the intervention was designed to address.

Concluding remarks: Filling the gaps in policy and implementation

Today, the need for sustainable peace in the society can hardly be challenged. To attain the objective of a peaceful society, government at all levels have often designed and delivered projects and programmes that further predispose society to conflict. Politics has always been the prime culprit in the wrong design and delivery of peacebuilding interventions. The political class often decides what constitute peacebuilding projects and programmes. When people are killed and communities sacked because of insurgency, government is quick in setting up camps for those internally displaced and conducting mass burial for victims as a first line of action. In some instances, panels of enquiries are constituted, and reports of such panels are either not generated or implemented. The core issues in conflict that resulted in the killings and displacements are hardly investigated. In such contexts, a relapse and return to conflict is often inevitable.

This paper has made a case for peace governance to be approached deliberately with the intent of identifying and setting up structures to mitigate the interaction of conflict energies within a particular context. It is, therefore, safe to conclude that peace and conflict risk assessment is central to effective and robust peace governance architecture.

References
[1]. Albert, I.O & Otite, Onigu (2001). *Community Conflict in Nigeria: Management, Resolution and Transformation.* Ibadan, Spectrum Books Ltd.
[2]. Ampleford, Suzan & Wakaba, Charity (2002). Conflict Risk Report: West Africa, Mano River and Senegambia

[3]. Bernard, H.R. (2002.Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and quantitative methods. Walnut Creek, California. 3rd edition. AltaMira Press,

[4]. Campbell, D.T. (1955). The informant in quantitative research. *The American Journal of Sociology.*

[5]. Country Indicators for Foreign Policy (CIFP) (2002)

[6[. Committee of Sponsoring Organizations (2004). *Enterprise Risk Management—Integrated Framework.*

[7]. Francis, David, J. (2006). "Peace and Conflict Studies: An African overview of basic concepts" In Shedrack Gaya Best (Ed) *Introduction to peace and conflict studies in West Africa*. Ibadan. Spectrum Books Limited; 15-34.

[8]. Galtung, Johan (1990). "Cultural Violence", *Journal of Peace Research.* Vol.27.no.3

[9]. Ibaba, S. Ibaba (2008). "Promoting Peace in the Niger Delta: Some Critical Issues" In *International Conference on the Nigerian State, Oil Industry and the Niger Delta.* Conference proceedings organized by the Department of *Political* Science, Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island. Bayelsa State. Harey Publications Company.

[10]. Ibeanu, Oke (2006). Civil Society and Conflict Management in the Niger Delta: Scoping Gaps for Policy and Advocacy. Lagos: Monograph Series No: 2. CLEEN Foundation.

[11]. Lama, Dalai, (2009). The concept of Peace. Accessed 29 July 2009 at: www.wisdomquotes.com/cat_peace.htlm.

[12]. Mason, S. and Rychard, S. (2005). Conflict analysis tools. *Sdc, Copret,* 1-11.

[13]. Miall, H. (2000). "What do Peace Studies contribute distinctively to the study of Peace?" *Paper presented at BISA Conference,* Bradford. The Richard Sun Institute, Lancaster University.

[14]. National Population Commission of Nigeria (NPC) and National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) (2007). Benue State in Nigeria. Accessed at https://www.citypopulation.de/php/nigeria-admin.php?adm1id=NGA007

[15]. Obi, Ndifon Neji (2021). Managing Workplace Conflicts Through Self-Mediation. In Mehdi Khosrow-Pour (ed) *Encyclopaedia of Organizational Knowledge, Administration and Technology*, 1953-1969. IGI Global. Managing Workplace Conflicts Through Self-Mediation: Business & Management Book Chapter | IGI Global (igi-global.com)

[16]. Obi, Ndifon Neji (2018). "Mainstreaming Conflict Sensitivity in Election Programming in Nigeria" *Journal of Nation-building & Policy Studies* (JoNPS) 2(1), 49-71

[17]. Obi, N. N. (2018a). Resolving Political Party Disputes through Alternative Dispute Resolution. Journal of Political Science and Leadership Research, 4(4), 28-41

[18]. Obi, Ndifon Neji (2016). "Mainstreaming Conflict Sensitivity in Education Programming". In Kshama Pandey (ed*) Promoting Global Peace and Civic Engagement through Education. India, University of Allahabad. 366-389. http://www.igi-global.com/chapter/mainstreaming-conflict-sensitivity-in-education-programming/151926*

[19]. Obi, N. Neji (2015). Peace and conflict risk assessment. Unpublished Technical Report of Study submitted to USAID-SMILE project conducted in Ado, Katsina-ala, Kwande; Logo and Otukpo local government areas of Benue State and Doma and Obi local government areas of Nasarawa State.

[20]. Obi, N. N. (2015a). Domestic Terrorism: Rethinking the role of Islam in the emerging Boko Haram phenomenon in Nigeria. Scholarly Journal of Scientific Research and Essay, 4(3), 47-57.

[21]. Pillars of Peace (2014). Understanding the key attitudes and institutions that underpin peaceful societies. Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP).

[22]. Seidler, J. (1974). On using informants: a technique for collecting quantitative data and controlling measurement error in organization analysis. *American Sociological Review* 39:816-831.

[23]. Simbine, A. T. and Obi, N. N. (2020). Women in political Parties in Africa. In: O. Yacob-Haliso O., and Falola T. (eds) *The Palgrave Handbook of African Women's Studies.* Palgrave Macmillan, *Cham:* https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-77030-7_72-1, 1-20

[24]. Simbine, A. T., & Obi, N. N. (2018). The Niger Delta Crisis: Perspectives of Its Domino Effect on the Gulf of Guinea (GoG). *Journal of Political Science and Leadership Research,* 4(2), 57-75.

[25]. Thurstan Shaw, Paul Sinclair, Bassey Andah & Alex Okpoko (1993). The Archaeology of Africa: food, metals, and towns. London and New York: Routledge, p. 275. ISBN 0-415-11585-X.

[26]. Tremblay, M.A. (1957). The key informant technique: a non-ethnographic application. *American Anthropologist* 59:699-701,

[27]. UNDP (2012). Governance for peace: Securing the social contract. New York; United Nations publications, USA