

**Government, Conflict Management and Resolution****MUSA, Caleb Maigari¹, MARYAM, Ojone Amodu² & GIFT Johnbull³**

Conflict, Security and Strategic Studies,

Federal University Lokoja

bursan4real2000@gmail.com

amodumaryam@yahoo.com

giftjohnbull101@gmail.com

Publication Date: 2026/06/22**Abstract**

This study examines the pivotal role of states and governments in conflict management and resolution, with a focus on the complex socio-political landscape of Nigeria. Government is conceptualised as the structural mechanisms and institutions for reconciling diverse societal demands, employing strategies such as federalism, decentralisation, and inclusive governance to mitigate ethnic and religious tensions. Nigeria's experience highlights the importance of state capacity in implementing effective conflict management through Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), as well as policies like the National Peace Committee and community-based initiatives such as the "Dialogue for Peace" in Jos. However, challenges like corruption, historical grievances, and resource competition complicate these efforts. Globalisation and technological advancements further reshape conflict dynamics, necessitating innovative approaches to address disinformation and environmental stressors. The study underscores the need for tailored strategies that address root causes like inequality and marginalisation while fostering regional cooperation, as seen in the Multinational Joint Task Force. The National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies (NILDS) can leverage these insights to advance democracy in Nigeria by strengthening legislative frameworks that promote inclusive governance, supporting capacity-building for conflict-sensitive policymaking, and fostering dialogue platforms to address identity-based conflicts. While integrating technology and promoting the participation of women in peace processes, NILDS can enhance democratic resilience, ensuring governance structures are responsive to Nigeria's diverse needs and emerging challenges, ultimately fostering sustainable peace and stability.

Introduction

The role of states and governments in conflict management and resolution is a cornerstone of international relations and political science, as it underscores the fundamental purpose of governance in maintaining societal stability. Governments serve as primary mechanisms for reconciling conflicting demands among

diverse societal groups, a role that Smith (2022) articulates as intrinsic to governance itself. By creating and implementing policies, laws, and institutions, governments provide structured frameworks to address disputes, whether they stem from resource competition, ideological differences, or identity-based tensions. This structured approach ensures that conflicts are managed

systematically, preventing escalation into violence and fostering informed decision-making that balances competing interests. Johnson and Wang (2023) emphasise that this role extends beyond domestic borders, as states also engage in diplomacy and international cooperation to resolve transnational conflicts, making governance a critical tool for both internal and global stability.

In Nigeria, the role of governments in conflict management is particularly pronounced due to the country's complex socio-cultural landscape. Nigeria's diverse ethnicities, including major groups like the Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba, alongside numerous minority communities, create a tapestry of identities that often lead to competing demands. Religious diversity, primarily between Christianity and Islam, further complicates these dynamics, as do regional disparities in resource allocation and political power. Smith (2022) highlights that Nigerian governments must navigate these tensions with deliberate strategies, such as federalism and decentralisation, to empower local governance and reduce conflict potential. The 1999 Nigerian Constitution, for instance, recognises federalism as a mechanism to distribute power equitably, enabling regional governments to address local grievances while fostering national unity. This framework underscores the government's role as a mediator in reconciling diverse societal needs to prevent fragmentation.

The multilayered nature of Nigeria's conflicts ranging from ethnic rivalries to resource-based disputes and religious tensions demands a nuanced approach to governance. The government's role extends beyond merely enforcing laws; it involves creating inclusive policies that address historical grievances and promote dialogue among conflicting groups. Initiatives like the National Peace Committee, which mediates during election periods, exemplify how governance structures can facilitate conflict resolution by fostering communication and compromise. However, challenges such as corruption, weak institutional capacity, and distrust in

government often undermine these efforts. The Nigerian state must therefore prioritise building robust institutions and promoting inclusive governance to effectively manage conflicts, ensuring that marginalised groups, including ethnic minorities and women, have a voice in decision-making processes.

On a broader level, Nigeria's experience reflects the global challenges of conflict management in diverse societies. The framework of governance as conflict management is not unique to Nigeria but resonates with other multi-ethnic nations facing similar tensions. For instance, the rise of non-state actors like Boko Haram in Nigeria parallels global trends where terrorist groups challenge state authority, necessitating innovative governance strategies that blend traditional conflict resolution with modern approaches like digital surveillance and regional cooperation. Johnson and Wang (2023) argue that effective conflict management requires states to adapt to evolving global dynamics, such as climate change-induced resource scarcity and technological disruptions, which exacerbate conflicts. Nigeria's participation in the Multinational Joint Task Force to combat terrorism in the Lake Chad Basin illustrates how governments can extend their conflict management role across borders, collaborating with neighbouring states to address shared threats. The National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies (NILDS) can leverage Nigeria's governance challenges to advance democratic resilience by drawing on these insights. By supporting legislative frameworks that promote federalism, decentralisation, and inclusive governance, NILDS can strengthen Nigeria's capacity to manage conflicts effectively. For example, NILDS could advocate for policies that enhance the National Peace Committee's role or replicate community-based initiatives like the "Dialogue for Peace" in Jos to address local disputes. Additionally, NILDS can foster capacity-building programs for legislators to develop conflict-sensitive policies that address root causes like inequality and marginalisation, aligning with the broader goal of consolidating

democracy in Nigeria's diverse and conflict-prone society. Through these efforts, NILDS can ensure that governance remains a dynamic tool for conflict management, fostering sustainable peace and democratic stability.

Conceptual Clarifications

Conflict Management: The process of preventing, resolving, or mitigating conflicts, often involves strategies to reduce hostility, improve communication, and find mutually acceptable solutions. United Nations Department of Political Affairs (2024). Within this paper, therefore, it is seen as the role of states and governments in managing conflicts within and across borders. This includes strategies such as creating policies, promoting dialogue, and establishing peace committees.

Conflict Resolution: This is the process of finding a peaceful solution to a conflict that often involves negotiation, mediation, or arbitration. The World Bank (2023). Within the context of this paper, specific examples of conflict resolution initiatives, such as the National Peace Committee in Nigeria and the Multinational Joint Task Force. These initiatives aim to find peaceful solutions to conflicts and promote reconciliation.

Governance: This is the exercise of authority and control over a territory that often involves the creation and implementation of policies and laws. Britannica (2024). Within the context of this paper, it was emphasised that government is a form of conflict management, where governments are responsible for creating policies and frameworks that address societal demands and tensions. This is evident in the discussion of the Nigerian Constitution and the role of government in managing inter-ethnic and inter-religious conflicts.

Federalism: A system of government in which power is divided between a central authority and constituent units, such as states or provinces. United Nations Development Programme (2024). Within the context of this paper, therefore, it was stated that the Nigerian Constitution recognises federalism and decentralisation

as a means of empowering regional governments and reducing conflict potential. This reflects the importance of federalism as a government structure for managing diversity and preventing conflicts.

Decentralisation: This is the transfer of power or authority from a central government to lower levels of government, such as local or regional authorities. International Alert (2022). This paper therefore highlights how decentralisation can be a tool for conflict management by empowering local governments and promoting greater participation in decision-making. This is evident in the discussion of the Nigerian Constitution and the establishment of community-based conflict resolution initiatives.

Conflict Sensitivity: The ability to understand and respond to the potential for conflict in development or other activities, and to integrate conflict prevention and resolution strategies into planning and implementation. United Nations Development Programme (2024). For this paper, conflict sensitivity emphasises understanding and addressing the potential for conflict in policy-making and implementation which reflects a commitment to conflict-sensitive approaches.

Inclusive Government: This is a form of government that ensures that all segments of society, including marginalised groups, have a voice and participate in decision-making processes. National Institute for Dispute Resolution (2024). Within the context of this paper, therefore, this paper stresses the need for inclusive government, particularly in diverse societies like Nigeria. The discussion of the importance of participation, dialogue, and the involvement of marginalised groups demonstrates a commitment to inclusive approaches to conflict management.

Literature Review

The traditional paradigm of conflict management and resolution has historically positioned states and their governments as the central actors, emphasising principles of sovereignty and the responsibility to protect

(Evans & Sahnoun, 2002). This perspective regards the state as the primary guarantor of internal order, security provider, and diplomatic agent in conflict prevention and resolution. Internally, this manifests in law enforcement, management of protests and dissent, addressing socio-economic inequalities, and ensuring effective resource management. Externally, states engage in diplomacy, negotiation and mediation, and participate in international organisations to manage interstate conflicts (Adebajo & Rashid, 2004).

However, this state-centric view faces significant challenges in contemporary conflicts. State fragility and failure are prevalent characteristics in many conflict zones, undermining the foundations of this paradigm. For instance, in regions like Somalia and Yemen, the state's capacity and legitimacy to manage conflict are severely compromised, resulting in power vacuums and prolonged instability (Rotberg, 2003). Additionally, the rise of non-state actors such as terrorist organisations like Boko Haram, IPOB, Bandits, and transnational criminal groups complicates traditional approaches to conflict management. These entities operate across borders and challenge state authority through unconventional warfare tactics, necessitating new strategies for conflict resolution (Homer-Dixon, 1999). The nature of conflict itself has also evolved. Transnational issues such as terrorism, cyber warfare, and climate change-induced resource scarcity require international cooperation and challenge conventional notions of state sovereignty. Cyberattacks can disrupt critical infrastructure and societal functions, necessitating collaborative legal frameworks to address these emerging threats (Howard, 2021). Similarly, climate change exacerbates resource scarcity issues that lead to conflicts over essential resources like water and arable land (Williams, 2016). The ongoing conflicts in regions like the Sahel illustrate this complex interplay between state fragility, terrorism, and environmental stressors.

Moreover, the information age presents novel challenges for conflict management.

The spread of disinformation and propaganda through social media can exacerbate tensions and undermine peacebuilding efforts (Howard, 2021). The war in Ukraine exemplifies the limitations of international mechanisms for conflict resolution amid great power rivalries (between the United States and Russia) and the pervasive influence of disinformation campaigns.

Despite these challenges, states remain critical actors in conflict management. Efforts to rebuild state capacity and legitimacy are essential for long-term stability even in fragile states. International cooperation facilitated by states is vital for addressing transnational threats and promoting global peace (Adebajo & Rashid, 2004). Regional organisations like the African Union increasingly mediate conflicts and enhance regional security. Additionally, community-based conflict resolution initiatives supported by local governments and NGOs play a significant role in managing local disputes and preventing escalation.

Finally, while the traditional state-centric view of conflict management requires re-evaluation in light of contemporary realities, the state continues to be a crucial actor within this evolving landscape. The future of conflict management will hinge on balancing efforts to strengthen state capacity by fostering international cooperation and empowering local communities while developing innovative strategies that address the changing nature of conflict (Williams, 2016).

Historical and Socio-Political Context of Governance as Conflict Manager in Nigeria

Nigeria's colonial history of British rule, characterised by the "divide-and-rule" tactic, laid the groundwork for the country's subsequent ethnic and religious tensions. The colonial legacy of privileging certain groups and marginalising others continues to influence the country's political landscape. (Diamond, 2003). The post-colonial period was marked by frequent military coups and authoritarian rule, which suppressed dissent

and eroded trust in government institutions. This legacy of authoritarianism has contributed to a culture of violence and a lack of accountability among political elites. (Falola & Heaton, 2005)

Since the return to civilian rule in 1999, Nigeria has made significant strides in democratisation. However, the country continues to face challenges related to corruption, poverty, and inequality. These factors, combined with the country's diverse ethnic and religious landscape, have created a fertile ground for conflict. (O'Reilly, 2021)

Theoretical Framework: The Role of States and Governments in Conflict Management and Resolution

The theoretical frameworks adopted in this study, aim to provide a comprehensive understanding of the role of states and governments in conflict management and resolution. It draws upon key theories from the fields of international relations, and political science, and relates them to conflict studies, so as to develop a robust analytical framework for examining this complex issue.

Theoretical Foundations

- **Liberalism:** Liberalism emphasises the importance of institutions, cooperation and interdependence in promoting peace and stability. This perspective highlights the role of international organisations, democratic values and economic integration in reducing conflict. (Keohane & Nye, 1977).
- **Constructivism:** Constructivism focuses on the role of ideas, norms, and identities in shaping international relations. This perspective suggests that states' behaviour is influenced by their beliefs and values, and that conflict can be transformed through changes in these factors. (Wendt, 1999).
- **Conflict Theory:** Conflict theory emphasises the role of power, inequality, and social structures in driving conflict. This perspective suggests that conflicts arise from underlying tensions and contradictions within societies. (Coser, 1956).

Framework Application

This framework can be applied to a variety of case studies to examine the role of states and governments in conflict management. For example, it could be used to analyse:

- I. The effectiveness of different conflict management strategies in countries such as Nigeria, Colombia, and Afghanistan.
- II. The impact of state capacity on the ability of governments to prevent and resolve conflicts.
- III. The role of international organisations in supporting conflict resolution efforts.
- IV. The influence of globalisation and technological change on the dynamics of conflicts and the strategies used to manage them.

These theoretical frameworks provide a comprehensive and innovative approach to studying the role of states and governments in conflict management and resolution. Drawing upon key theories from international relations, political science, and conflict studies will ensure that the frameworks offer a robust analytical tool for examining this complex issue. The frameworks can be applied to a variety of case studies to generate new insights and inform policy recommendations.

Government as Conflict Management

Governments are seen as the primary conflict managers, responsible for creating policies and frameworks that address the diverse needs and conflicts within society (O'Reilly, 2021). This role extends to the international arena, where states interact with each other to manage conflicts that transcend national boundaries.

In Nigeria, the government acts as the primary conflict manager, particularly in addressing inter-ethnic and inter-religious tensions. The Nigerian state therefore creates laws (i.e the 1999 constitution) and policies that accommodate the diverse needs of its population, including the major ethnic groups such as the Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba, as well as numerous minority groups. The Nigerian Constitution, for instance,

recognises the need for federalism and decentralisation, which are intended to empower regional governments and enhance local governance, thereby reducing conflict potential.

Practical Implications

The practical implications of this study are evident in the conflict management strategies employed by African nations such as Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, and Nigeria, where effective governance has been crucial in managing internal conflicts (Kwesi & Adebayo, 2022). The practical implications of governance as conflict management in Nigeria can be illustrated through the establishment of the National Peace Committee, which mediates conflicts and promotes dialogue among political leaders and communities. This committee is especially active during election seasons, where ethnic and religious tensions can escalate. Its role in facilitating peace agreements demonstrates how governance structures can serve as conflict management tools (Kwesi & Adebayo, 2022).

Critique of Contemporary Reality Organisational Culture and Decision-Making

Contemporary realities have forced a re-evaluation of the traditional role of governments in conflict management. The impact on organisational culture has led to the adoption of non-traditional decision-making processes, which are more inclusive and participatory (Fernandez & Lee, 2024). Contemporary realities in Nigeria highlight the challenges faced by the government in conflict management. The impact of corruption and ineffective governance on organisational culture has led to a distrust of governmental institutions, making it difficult for local populations to engage in conflict resolution processes (Fernandez & Lee, 2024). For instance, in regions affected by Boko Haram insurgency, the local population often views government forces with suspicion, which hampers collaborative efforts in resolving conflicts.

Regional Cooperation

The need for regional cooperation has led to the development of frameworks that support negotiation and mediation beyond state borders, as seen in the innovative decision-making approaches in regions like Asia (Gupta & Zhao, 2023). The necessity for regional cooperation is evident in Nigeria's approach to managing conflicts in the Middle Belt and Northeast regions. The establishment of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) to combat terrorism in the Lake Chad Basin area illustrates how Nigeria collaborates with neighbouring countries like Cameroon, Chad, and Niger to address cross-border conflicts (Gupta & Zhao, 2023). This regional cooperation aims to create a more unified approach to conflict management, although it faces challenges such as differing national interests and strategies.

Case Study: Oregon's Conflict Resolution Investment and Nigeria

Oregon's investment in conflict resolution initiatives exemplifies how local governments can play a significant role in promoting public policy and community-based conflict resolution (Miller & Brown, 2023). In Nigeria, the government has also invested in community-based conflict resolution initiatives. For instance, the "Dialogue for Peace" initiative in Jos, Plateau State, brings together community leaders from different ethnic and religious backgrounds to engage in dialogue aimed at fostering peace and reconciliation (Miller & Brown, 2023). This grassroots approach reflects the importance of local governance in conflict resolution, akin to Oregon's investments in community conflict resolution.

New State Actors on the Global Stage

Emerging global players such as Brazil, China, and India have taken on significant roles in conflict management, often prioritising economic development and adhering to non-intervention norms (D'Souza & Patel, 2023). Nigeria's role as a leading state actor in Africa places it in a unique position within global conflict

management dynamics. For instance, Nigeria has been instrumental in peacekeeping efforts in Liberia and Sierra Leone, emphasising its commitment to regional stability (D'Souza & Patel, 2023). Such involvement underscores Nigeria's recognition of its responsibility to manage conflicts not only domestically but also within the broader West African context.

Regional Models of Governance

Rwanda's governance model, characterised by high women's representation, and Lebanon's confessionalism, offer contrasting regional examples of post-conflict governance (Kagame & Uwiringiyimana, 2023; Najem & El Khoury, 2022). Rwanda's post-conflict governance model, which emphasises unity and reconciliation, can serve as a contrasting example for Nigeria. While Rwanda has made significant strides in reducing ethnic tensions through policies promoting inclusivity, Nigeria continues to grapple with the challenges posed by its complex ethnic landscape (Kagame & Uwiringiyimana, 2023). The differences in these governance models highlight the ongoing struggles in Nigeria to establish a cohesive national identity amid increasing fragmentation.

Conflict Resolution in the United States and Nigeria

The U.S. presents a good example where conflict resolution traditions have been challenged by the pandemic, revealing tensions within the federalist system (Johnson, 2023). Locally, various states in Nigeria have implemented conflict resolution mechanisms tailored to their unique contexts. For instance, the establishment of the Peace and Reconciliation Committee in Kaduna State aims to address the recurring violence between ethnic groups and promote peace (Johnson, 2023). Such localised efforts demonstrate the necessity for state governments to engage directly with communities to foster trust and collaboration in conflict resolution.

Findings of the Study: State Capacity and Conflict Management in Nigeria

The investigation into state capacity and conflict management in Nigeria reveals several critical insights regarding the interplay between governance structures and conflict dynamics.

State Capacity as a Determinant of Conflict Management

The study highlights that state capacity is a vital factor in conflict management and resolution, particularly as illustrated by Nigeria's experiences with federalism and decentralisation. States that exhibit high capacity characterised by effective governance, adherence to the rule of law, and the provision of public goods—are generally more successful in preventing and managing conflicts. For instance, the Nigerian government's establishment of community-based conflict resolution initiatives exemplifies its state capacity to address local disputes effectively.

Dynamics of Conflicts in Nigeria

The analysis identifies several key factors that shape the dynamics of conflicts within Nigeria:

- I. **Identity Politics:** The diverse ethnic and religious composition of Nigeria has been a significant source of conflict, often leading to tensions among diverse groups.
- II. **Resource Competition:** Competition for valuable resources, particularly oil and land, has intensified conflicts between various ethnic and regional groups.
- III. **Historical Grievances:** The colonial legacy of divide-and-rule tactics, coupled with subsequent military regimes, has fostered feelings of marginalisation and injustice among certain communities.

Effective Conflict Management Strategies

Nigeria has implemented various strategies aimed at managing conflicts effectively

- I. **Preventive Diplomacy:** The creation of institutions such as the National Peace Committee has been

instrumental in preventing conflicts from escalating into violence.

- II. **Peacebuilding Initiatives:** Government-supported programs like "Dialogue for Peace" in Jos have targeted the root causes of conflicts while promoting reconciliation among affected communities.
- III. **Negotiation and Mediation:** The government has facilitated dialogue between conflicting parties, particularly during election periods, to foster compromise and understanding.

International Cooperation in Conflict Resolution

The study underscores the importance of international cooperation in addressing cross-border conflicts. Nigeria's collaboration with neighbouring countries through initiatives like the Multinational Joint Task Force serves as a notable example. However, differing national interests can sometimes impede effective cooperation.

Impact of Globalisation and Technology on Conflict Management

Globalisation and technological advancements present both opportunities and challenges for Nigeria's conflict management efforts. While globalisation can foster new avenues for cooperation, it also risks exacerbating existing inequalities and creating new sources of tension. Moreover, technological changes enhance governmental capabilities to monitor conflicts but can also be exploited to disseminate misinformation and deepen societal divisions.

These findings therefore indicate that while Nigeria has made strides in conflict management through various strategies, significant challenges remain. Addressing these issues requires a nuanced understanding of the historical and socio-political context that shapes conflict dynamics within the country.

Governance and Conflict Management in Nigeria: A Contemporary Analysis

The intersection of governance and conflict management in Nigeria presents a complex tapestry of historical legacies, contemporary challenges, and emerging opportunities. As we examine the theoretical underpinnings and practical applications of conflict management in the Nigerian context, it becomes evident that the nation's experience offers valuable insights for both regional and global understanding of governance-centred approaches to peace-building.

The theoretical framework presented in this study synthesises liberal, constructivist, and conflict theory approaches, providing a robust foundation for understanding the multifaceted nature of conflict management. However, contemporary developments in global politics suggest expanding this framework to incorporate emerging paradigms in peace studies and digital governance. The liberal emphasis on institutions and cooperation, while valuable, must now contend with the reality of hybrid warfare and information manipulation, as evidenced in recent global conflicts such as the Ukraine-Russia situation.

The Nigerian context demonstrates how historical legacies continue to shape contemporary conflict dynamics. The colonial heritage of divide-and-rule policies has created enduring patterns of ethnic and religious tension that modern governance structures must address. The establishment of the National Peace Committee represents a significant institutional response to these challenges, though its effectiveness varies across different regions and contexts. The Committee's work during election periods, particularly in mediating between competing political interests, illustrates both the potential and limitations of formal conflict management structures.

Recent developments in the Middle Belt region of Nigeria offer particularly instructive examples of the complexities involved in managing resource-based conflicts. The farmer-herder disputes have evolved beyond simple resource competition to encompass broader questions of identity, citizenship, and governance. The

government's attempts to address these conflicts through various initiatives, including the establishment of ranching programs and community dialogue forums, demonstrate the importance of combining traditional conflict resolution mechanisms with modern governance approaches.

The emergence of new security challenges, particularly in the Northeast and Southeast, has forced a recalibration of conflict management strategies. The Multinational Joint Task Force's operations against Boko Haram and the so-called Eastern Security Network highlight the increasing importance of regional cooperation in addressing security challenges that transcend national boundaries. However, this regional approach has also revealed the difficulties of coordinating responses across different national security architectures and political systems.

When examining global parallels, Ethiopia's recent experience with the Tigray conflict offers valuable insights into Nigeria's approach to internal conflicts. The successful negotiation of a peace agreement in Ethiopia demonstrates the importance of inclusive dialogue processes and the potential role of regional organisations in conflict resolution. Similarly, Sudan's ongoing crisis serves as a cautionary tale about the dangers of military involvement in governance and the importance of maintaining robust civilian institutions.

The impact of technological change on conflict management deserves particular attention. Social media platforms have emerged as both potential accelerators of conflict and tools for peace-building. Nigeria's experience with social media-driven movements like the EndSARS protests illustrates the complex relationship between digital communication technologies and social conflict. The government's response to these movements demonstrates the need for more sophisticated approaches to managing digital-era conflicts.

Climate change has emerged as a critical factor in Nigeria's conflict landscape, particularly in the Lake Chad region. The shrinking of Lake Chad has exacerbated resource competition and contributed to

population displacement, creating new challenges for conflict management systems. This situation demonstrates the need for conflict management approaches that integrate environmental security considerations with traditional peace-building mechanisms.

The role of women in peace processes represents another critical area for development in Nigeria's conflict management framework. While the study acknowledges the importance of inclusive governance, practical implementation of gender-sensitive approaches remains limited. Successful examples from other African nations, such as Rwanda's emphasis on women's political participation, offer potential models for enhancing the inclusivity of Nigeria's conflict management processes.

Looking toward the future, Nigeria's conflict management framework must evolve to address emerging challenges while building on existing strengths. This evolution requires greater attention to digital governance capabilities, enhanced environmental security measures, and more robust mechanisms for inclusive participation in peace processes. The experience of other regions, particularly in dealing with similar challenges, can provide valuable lessons for this development process.

The effectiveness of governance as a conflict management tool ultimately depends on the state's capacity to implement comprehensive and nuanced approaches to peace-building. Nigeria's experience demonstrates both the potential and limitations of state-led conflict management initiatives. Success requires not only strong institutions and clear policies but also the ability to adapt these frameworks to changing circumstances and emerging challenges.

As Nigeria continues to navigate its complex conflict landscape, the importance of maintaining flexible and responsive governance systems becomes increasingly apparent. The future of conflict management in Nigeria, and indeed globally, lies in the ability to combine traditional wisdom with

modern approaches, creating innovative solutions to both persistent and emerging challenges in the quest for sustainable peace.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The analysis underscores the pivotal role of state capacity in effective conflict management and resolution, particularly in a diverse nation like Nigeria. States with robust capacity—characterised by efficient governance, adherence to the rule of law, and the delivery of public services are better positioned to prevent and mitigate conflicts. In Nigeria, where identity politics, resource competition and historical grievances fuel tensions, strong state institutions are essential for addressing these complex dynamics. For instance, the Nigerian government's ability to implement policies like federalism and decentralisation, as seen in the 1999 Constitution, demonstrates how state capacity can empower regional governments to manage local disputes, reducing the potential for escalation. However, weak institutional frameworks, compounded by corruption and distrust, often undermine these efforts, highlighting the need for sustained investment in governance structures. The National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies (NILDS) can leverage this insight by advocating for legislative reforms that strengthen institutional frameworks, ensuring they are responsive to Nigeria's multi-ethnic complexities and capable of fostering peace through equitable service delivery and legal accountability.

Effective conflict management requires tailored strategies that address the unique context of each conflict, blending domestic initiatives with international cooperation. In Nigeria, identity-based conflicts, such as those between ethnic groups like the Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba, or religious tensions in the Middle Belt, demand nuanced approaches that go beyond generic solutions. Initiatives like the National Peace Committee, which mediates electoral disputes, and community-based programs like the "Dialogue for Peace" in Jos illustrate the value of context-specific interventions. International cooperation,

such as Nigeria's participation in the Multinational Joint Task Force to combat Boko Haram, enhances these efforts by addressing cross-border security threats. However, sustainable resolution hinges on tackling root causes—such as inequality and marginalisation—at the domestic level. NILDS can advance democracy by supporting legislation that promotes inclusive governance, ensuring marginalised groups have a voice in decision-making. While fostering policies that address historical grievances and resource competition, NILDS aligns with its mission to build resilient democratic institutions that mitigate conflict through participatory and equitable governance.

Globalisation and technological advancements introduce both opportunities and challenges for conflict management, necessitating innovative strategies to navigate the evolving landscape. While globalisation fosters cooperation and resource sharing, it can exacerbate inequalities, fueling tensions over resources like oil and land in Nigeria. Similarly, technology, particularly social media, can amplify conflicts through disinformation, as seen in the EndSARS protests, but also offers tools for dialogue and civic engagement. The shrinking of Lake Chad due to climate change, for instance, has intensified resource conflicts, requiring governance approaches that integrate environmental security. NILDS can harness these dynamics by promoting legislative frameworks that leverage technology for transparent governance, such as digital platforms for public participation, while regulating misinformation to prevent escalation. While drawing on Nigeria's experiences, NILDS can advocate for adaptive policies that address 21st-century challenges like cyber threats and climate-induced conflicts, ensuring democratic institutions remain proactive and inclusive. This approach not only strengthens Nigeria's governance but also offers a model for other diverse societies, aligning with NILDS's goal of advancing democracy through innovative and context-responsive strategies.

Recommendations:

To strengthen conflict management and advance democratic institutions, Nigeria, with the support of the National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies (NILDS), must prioritise robust legislative reforms to bolster state institutions. This involves enhancing law enforcement capabilities and rebuilding public trust, which are critical to addressing Nigeria's complex conflict landscape, marked by ethnic tensions, resource competition, and historical grievances. NILDS can drive this agenda by developing training programs for legislators to craft policies that ensure effective governance, transparency, and accountability. For instance, reinforcing institutions like the judiciary and security agencies through legislative oversight can improve their responsiveness to conflicts, such as those in Kaduna or the Northeast, where distrust in government often hampers peace efforts. While aligning with NILDS's focus on institutional capacity-building, these reforms can create a foundation for sustainable governance, enabling the state to manage conflicts proactively and maintain public confidence in democratic processes. Promoting inclusive governance is equally vital, and NILDS can leverage its mandate to foster participatory democracy by advocating for policies that amplify marginalised voices. Nigeria's diverse ethnic and religious composition necessitates governance structures that ensure equitable representation for groups like minority ethnic communities or women, who are often sidelined in decision-making. NILDS can support legislative initiatives that mirror successful models, such as Rwanda's emphasis on women's political participation, to promote inclusivity. For example, enacting laws to establish community-based dialogue platforms, similar to the "Dialogue for Peace" in Jos, can address local grievances and prevent escalation of identity-based conflicts. While championing such policies, NILDS aligns with its goal of fostering participatory democracy, ensuring that governance reflects the needs of all societal segments,

thereby reducing tensions and strengthening Nigeria's democratic fabric.

Leveraging technology and fostering regional cooperation are critical for modern conflict management and democratic resilience, areas where NILDS can play a transformative role. Technology can enhance transparent governance and civic engagement, such as through digital platforms for public participation in policy-making, but it also poses risks like disinformation, as seen in movements like EndSARS. NILDS can advocate for legislation that regulates digital spaces while promoting their use for peacebuilding, aligning with its objective of strengthening democratic resilience. Additionally, supporting regional initiatives like the Multinational Joint Task Force through legislative frameworks can address cross-border threats like Boko Haram, fostering stability through collaborative governance. While integrating these strategies, NILDS can empower Nigeria to navigate its complex conflict landscape, ensuring governance is adaptive, inclusive, and responsive, thus advancing democracy in a sustainable manner.

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