

Gender Dimensions on (Non)-Violence in Communal Conflict: The Case of Jos, Nigeria

Jana Krause, University of Amsterdam

Appendix I: Research Ethics and Methodology

Overview

The primary data on which this article is based was collected in Jos, Nigeria, during four research stays between the years 2010 and 2015. I conducted interviews in Jos in November and December 2010, June 2011, November and December 2012, and July 2015. Conducting field research in such intervals allowed for the transcription and analysis of interview material after each research period, which informed my interviewing during subsequent trips. Many respondents allowed me to record our conversation. The transcription, analysis, and prolonged reflection of the often very detailed interviews proved extremely helpful for my analysis. This strategy of several shorter stays made it possible to toggle back and forth between theory and data. It allowed for clarification and triangulation of information during subsequent research trips and facilitated the probing of memories and the analysis of changing conflict perceptions over time. My repeated visits further provided me with the opportunity to study the evolution and impact of peace and violence prevention programs that emerged after the 2010 clashes. In 2010 and 2011, I collected detailed information about the numerous local peacebuilding programs and the experiences of staff members in addressing the most violence-prone communities (see also Krause 2011). In 2012, I noted how local peacebuilders' understanding of conflict dynamics and prevention activities changed and adapted and how program coordination improved. In 2012 and especially in 2015, I focused mainly on the impact of these peacebuilding programs. I collected explanations for why no new clashes had broken out from respondents ranging from former fighters, gang and youth leaders, community leaders, NGO staff, residents and journalists.

The purpose of my field research was analyzing the organization of communal violence, non-violence, and prevention. During my first trip to Jos, I identified and verified that one ethnically, religiously, and socio-economically mixed and vulnerable community had indeed prevented killings: the community of Dadin Kowa. I conducted interviews in this community and collected accounts from community leaders and residents from other areas of the city for potential alternative explanations of non-violence. I further focused on how people responded to conflict dynamics and protected themselves in Dadin Kowa. I learned how communal violence was organized by listening to community leaders from Dadin Kowa about how they prevented killings. With this knowledge, I was then able to repeatedly interview residents, leaders, and perpetrators from other violence-prone neighbourhoods and verify mobilization, conflict escalation and the organization of violence (see also Krause, 2018).

In total, I carried out 125 semi-structured and narrative interviews with 98 community members and leaders, religious and ethnic group leaders, journalists, NGO workers, politicians, and gang leaders and members. In the following, I provide information about the manner in which the interviews were conducted, including my fieldwork logistics and interview strategies.

Research Context

My first research trip took place at a time when the violence in Jos had received much media attention but limited scholarly analysis. When I arrived in November 2010, one of the most violent years for the city and surrounding rural areas was about to come to an end with the 2010 Christmas Eve bombings, which were among the very first bombings perpetrated by Boko Haram. My meeting requests in Jos were generally met with much openness. Journalists, NGO workers, community leaders, and spokespersons for ethnic and religious organizations were mostly eager to discuss the evolution of the conflict. They wanted their perspective to be heard and recorded and often sought to make sense of the compounding tragedy and contribute to its analysis. During this first research trip, I noted how most respondents feared renewed clashes in the near future and had little trust in the capacity of security forces to prevent fighting. Both in the most violence-prone neighbourhoods and

in the non-violent neighbourhood of Dadin Kowa, community leaders feared violence particularly around the 2011 presidential and state government elections. Some worried that 2011 would be “bloody hell”.

Subsequently, I published a report on the Jos conflict that analysed the root causes of the conflict; the spread of violence in 2001, 2008 and 2010; and mapped violence-prone neighbourhoods and religious segregation (Krause 2011). The report was one of several studies of the conflict that were published in 2011. My return to Jos in June 2011 allowed me to discuss existing tensions and the effectiveness of violence prevention work in the context of then recent presidential elections (April 2011), which led to clashes and killings in Kaduna (a city with a similar conflict constellation) but not in Jos. My return visit and the distribution of my report among respondents in Jos in 2011 built rapport and facilitated further interviews and observations of peacebuilding programs.

During my third visit in November and December 2012, I was able to collect more information on then current peace mediation efforts, the political position of ethnic and religious groups, and the activities of community peace activists and programs. Furthermore, I received access to gang members and former fighters who had been gathered in a city-wide network coordinated by a government official. During this research stay, I was also exposed to the continued high tensions in Jos and grievances among the most violence-prone neighbourhoods. For example, in December 2012, there were fears of major demonstration in Jos to protest the local government’s failure to pay government officials their salaries for several months. Given the legacies of previous clashes and the fact that then governor Jonah Jang was widely seen as a Berom hardliner, people in Jos worried that demonstrations against the government in the city centre could turn into renewed clashes. My driver no longer felt comfortable entering the city centre and the commercial district. I was advised to return to Abuja, and did so, even though I had just gained access to a network of former fighters for interviews. When I returned in July 2015, the situation in Jos was much calmer and stable, despite recent bombings by Boko Haram. I was able to continue interviews with perpetrators. At that time, these interviews proved more fruitful because the men I spoke to no longer feared security agents arresting them or renewed clashes in the immediate future. I was also able to talk to participants of the

former community peace programs and collect information about why they thought that these programs have been effective.

Interview Process

My first interviews were conducted with NGO workers, journalists, and academics in the Nigerian capital Abuja. This helped me develop a preliminary understanding of the context of the Jos conflict. Subsequently, I interviewed local journalists and NGO workers in Jos before contacting ethnic and religious leaders for meetings. After this first round of interviews and time for reflection, I focused on interviews with residents from the worst-affected neighbourhoods in Jos, and from the non-violent community of Dadin Kowa (see also Krause 2018).

I conducted snowball sampling through my initial respondents and relied partly on the personal networks of journalists and community leaders, and on contacts from local NGO staff members involved with peace programs. Interviews with NGO workers and one government official provided me with access to some of the men who had taken part in the fighting, or had been identified as gang leaders. As of late 2012, when Jos had remained calm for about one year, and during my subsequent visit in 2015, when an informal truce among gang leaders and assurances of impunity from security forces had consolidated, I was able to interview men who identified themselves as having taken part in the fighting. When interviewing perpetrators from the most violence-prone neighbourhoods, I arranged to meet them outside their own areas in my car with darkened windows and my driver waiting nearby, to reduce the level of exposure. A foreign researcher meeting and ‘hanging out’ with former perpetrators in their own homes, noted and watched by neighbours, may convey legitimizing or paying respect to those who have fought and killed.

At the beginning of each interview, I introduced myself and my research project to obtain informed consent. All conversations took place under the condition of anonymity, and mostly out of the view of other people. I let respondents choose where to meet. During the informed consent procedure, I explained that I was talking to residents, activists, and political spokespersons from all conflict sides. I also informed respondents that no benefits other than academic writing and publications based on the

collected materials should be expected from my research. Unless personally introduced by a former respondent, I contacted people (such as NGO staff members, journalists, and ethnic or religious spokespersons) through phone calls first to ask for an interview and then confirmed the time and place via text message before meeting in person, which gave respondents an additional opportunity to decline my requests. At the end of an interview, I would ask respondents if they would like to raise any other issues and whether they had any questions for me.

Although my interviews were structured around several key questions about the organization of violence and explanations for non-violence, I let my respondents guide the conversation to learn how they made sense of the conflict situation and how they responded to the changing conflict dynamics. Narratives reveal how people construct reality, navigate situations, make decisions, and anticipate consequences (Monroe, 2012). Because respondents' accounts may be influenced by the significant trauma of having participated in or witnessed killings, multiple interviews allowed me to ask probing questions and identify (in)consistencies in explanations of violence and non-violence, which supported triangulation (Fujii, 2010; Wood, 2003). I did not pressure respondents on issues they did not seem willing to discuss. Silences and body language often signalled that my interview partner did not consent to the conversational route I suggested, and I let them change direction accordingly (Fujii, 2010).

Practical Arrangements

Given the very polarized environment in Jos, which may also affect academic institutions and NGOs, it was important for me to remain unaffiliated during my field research. Hence, I worked independently and relied on my local contacts rather than official bodies, NGOs, or universities for logistics. I stayed on my own in a hotel in the central part of town, from where I had easy access to all Jos neighbourhoods, and where respondents could also meet me for further conversations. I was always able to work with drivers who had experience and contacts (often family members) both in Christian and Muslim communities and were able to advise me on safety issues and escort me to interview settings. I conducted all interviews within confidential settings, mostly within people's

houses or offices, and sometimes in hotel lobbies or in my car with my driver waiting nearby. During my four research stays, I was able to interview many respondents multiple times.

In contrast to US and UK academia, universities in continental Europe do not necessarily have an Institutional Review Board for Protection of Human Subjects in Research (IRB) but may have less formalized ethical review procedures. My university at that time did not have such an institution to approve my research plans. These were discussed with my supervisors and colleagues who had conducted similar work. Before travelling to Jos, I had extensive and invaluable discussions with both Nigerian and foreign researchers who had previously worked in the city to learn how to keep myself and my respondents safe.

During my research stays in Jos, I did not formally recruit a research assistant. Given the context of high polarization, being able to conduct interviews with respondents without a third person listening facilitated the confidential interview settings. Almost all respondents, even ‘ordinary residents’ from poor neighbourhoods, spoke English well enough for at least a simple conversation about daily life in the neighbourhood, fears of violence, and self-protection strategies. In practice, my drivers at times turned into research assistants who identified religious and community leaders in different neighbourhoods for me to contact and start snowball sampling. Journalists, academic researchers and NGO workers more often than not provided me very generously with suggestions about whom to talk to and the relevant contact details. This willingness to support and facilitate my research was indispensable and opened many doors to a diversity of respondents. Only in the neighbourhood of Dadin Kowa did I partly rely on a research assistant who was a staff member at a small local NGO, lived in Dadin Kowa, and facilitated some of my interviews in the neighbourhood. His knowledge of the neighbourhood and his own connections to those who were active in violence prevention work helped me speak to youth leaders and ‘ordinary residents’ and develop a deeper understanding of developments in the neighbourhood. His NGO also supported local women groups that organized prevention work and he was able to facilitate conversations with them, at times also acting as a trusted translator for women who preferred to express themselves more comprehensively in Hausa, which I did not learn.

Ethnographic Sensibility and Ethical Dilemmas

Ethnographic sensibility and limited immersion and observations greatly informed my data collection and the interview process. Moments of “accidental ethnography” arise even during shorter research stays when the researcher is not engaged in an interview but in “mundane tasks not specified in the research design, such as standing in line, drinking coffee, buying food, or talking to hotel staff” (Fujii 2015). These moments played an important role in developing ethnographic sensibility, i.e. “being sensitive to how informants make sense of their worlds and incorporating meaning into our analysis” (Simmons & Smith, 2017; see also Schatz, 2009). The researcher pays attention not only to specific questions she seeks to answer but also “immerses herself in the broader meaning-laden context in which her interlocutors live” (Schwedler, Simmons and Rush Smith 2017). This allows her to develop ethnographic sensibility beyond face-to-face encounters and interview settings, which necessitates emotional engagement to glean meanings that people attribute to their social and political reality and to understand people’s narratives in the context of their everyday lives (Yanow 2006; Schatz 2009). Immersion and observations enable the researcher to study dynamics, perceptions, and meaning-making that do not lend themselves easily to verbalization in interviews because the respondents may find them too trivial and self-evident, too embarrassing, or too traumatizing to mention.

During my first days in Jos, before conducting interviews, I asked my driver to drive me through various areas of the city so that I would be acquainted with the layout of different neighbourhoods, important junctions, and areas where fighting had taken place. My driver and I would discuss how people navigated a city of numerous “no-go areas”, where people from the ‘wrong’ religious group who ventured in unaware might be killed, even during ‘peacetime’. At the beginning of my stay in Jos, I had similar conversations with journalists and with NGO workers. These were not formal interviews but more informal conversations and observations. This informal engagement helped me assess my personal safety and ‘safe spaces’ to meet respondents for more formal and structured interviews. Spending time buying my groceries from different market places also allowed me to enter

places of community interaction and observe and listen to daily conversations without any informal interviewing.

I further developed ethnographic sensibility and contextualized information by asking my driver to drive me through town, using common 'Christian' or 'Muslim' routes, and by asking respondents from the non-violent community of Dadin Kowa to show me the footpath that an attacking armed group would use to enter the area. I spent time around mixed markets to watch people's interaction, particularly in Dadin Kowa, to develop a more practical understanding of everyday life in the neighbourhood. I also walked through some of the worst slum areas in violence-prone neighbourhoods, such as the gang strongholds Anwan Rogo (Muslim) and Angwan Rukuba (Christian), always guided by a youth leader from the area and my driver nearby, to better understand the daily conditions, the geography of the neighbourhoods, and the social problems these communities faced.

Furthermore, I observed community peace meetings and group discussions organized by NGOs. In 2011 and in 2012, I spent time listening to ordinary residents from Angwan Rogo (Muslim), Anglo Jos (mixed), and Kabong (Christian) neighbourhoods discussing their everyday problems in such meetings, such as youth unemployment, drug and alcohol abuse, vigilante violence and extortions, and religious leaders who did not take their leadership role and prevention work seriously. I took note how women and men discussed these problems, what security issues they identified, and how they thought they should best organize to keep their community safe from renewed clashes. However, as a foreigner, I always attracted attention. I was at times mistaken for an NGO worker or a counsellor and repeatedly had people approach me to share traumatic experiences of family members' killings. Given that I did not have any appropriate training to handle such situations with care, I decided that my continued presence in such meetings may not be appropriate, and I did not further pursue deeper ethnographic observations of community peace work due to ethical concerns.

In sum, my decisions with regard to affiliation and access, length of stay, immersion and participation, boundaries and limitations, were shaped by my assessment of my own positionality as a

foreign researcher conducting research within a highly polarized, traumatized, and volatile environment.

Appendix II: The Jos Conflict – Extended Historical Background

Jos was officially founded in 1915, during colonial rule, with the commencement of tin mining.

British colonial rule initially relied on the political structures of the neighbouring Bauchi Emirate to administer Jos. The Bauchi Emirate was part of the Sokoto Caliphate, which was established in 1804 in contemporary northern Nigeria. It emerged during the Islamic reform movement of Usman dan Fodio (1754–1817) (Last 1967). The Caliphate was one of the largest political entities in pre-colonial Africa and comprised around 30 emirates. Fourteen of the 36 federal states had direct experience with the emirate system (Paden, 2005: 70). In contemporary Plateau State, the legacy of the dan Fodio movement remained palpable, and Christians remember that the jihad expansion was stopped at the mountains of the Jos Plateau (Plotnicov, 1972). Most of the local ethnic groups remained animist, and later turned to Christianity.

The Hausa settled in self-governing communities in Jos and the surrounding rural area. From 1914 to 1952 they elected one of their members to the position of ‘Sarkin Jos’ (Chief of Jos) to represent their community. The title originally referred to the ‘native town’. Under British rule, the city of Jos was divided into the Government Reserved Areas (GRA) for Europeans and other foreigners, the township for educated southern Nigerian clerks and Europeans, and the native town mainly for Hausa migrant workers. Over the years, ten Sarkin Jos came to manage the everyday affairs of the town.

Administrative control remained beyond the reach of the indigenous population until the early 1950s. To many people in the town, it seemed that what the Hausa had not achieved with the dan Fodio jihad, they were allowed to finish through the British colonialists: “From the indigenous peoples’ point of view, their land had been overrun by their former enemies — the Hausa — by means of the superior might of the Europeans, who were now taking more and more of the fertile alluvial plains as mining concessionary leases” (Plotnicov 1972, p. 8).

In 1947, the institution of the traditional paramount ruler of Jos, the Gbong Gwom Jos, was installed. Following the establishment of the Berom Tribal Council and Berom Native Authority, political power was gradually transferred to the Berom. The appointment of a Berom to the Gbong Gwom led to tensions with the local Anaguta and Afizere tribes, but also with the Hausa over the position of the Sarkin Jos. The Hausa claimed the privilege of traditional and political representation for their own community. This rendered the Jos town council ineffective during the 1950s. Elected members were selected proportional to tribal representation within each ward, and they fought over preserving their groups' privileges. The colonial administration noted in 1954 that the city "with its polyglot population must always be considered a potential trouble spot" (Plotnicov 1967, p. 42–48.)

During the colonial and early post-colonial period, migrants dominated Jos while the indigenes made up less than 2 per cent of the city's population (Plotnicov 1972). The Igbo, Yoruba and Hausa were traditionally strong in trade and other commercial activities. Ethnic and religious institutions and associations became significant in providing networks to an urban population with a large number of migrants (Last 2007, p. 614). Churches and mosques, as well as ethnic associations, served as localities of social exchange and integration.

From the 1960s to the 1990s, the Nigerian federalist structure emerged, resulting in changes and adjustments to the boundaries of Plateau State. The country's three regions were split into 12 states in 1967. The number of federal states has since increased to 36. Plateau State was carved out of the former Benue–Plateau State in 1976. The creation of neighbouring Nassarawa State in 1996 further reduced the size of Plateau State. When the largest ethnic group, the Tiv, remained mostly in Benue and Nassarawa, the Berom saw political control over Jos finally within reach.

The two main competing groups, the Berom Christians and the Jasawa Muslims, both developed extensive networks of ethnic patronage linked to central religious institutions. Berom ethnic organizations have historically played a political role in regional 'Middle Belt' politics, i.e. the political mobilisation of non-Hausa and Fulanis against Muslim and Hausa-Fulani dominance (Tyoden 2000; Egwu 2010). Berom associations, particularly the most vocal Berom Educational and Cultural Organization (BECO), have always had a strong Christian background (Adetula 2005, p.

214). The Jasawa are represented through the Jasawa Development Association (JDA), which won strong support from Hausa and Fulani elders. By the late 1980s, the competition between the BECO and the JDA created such tensions that “civil servants in Plateau State Government were banned from holding offices in ethnic or cultural organizations” (Adetula 2005, p. 216). In addition, since 1999, agitation for the recognition of the ‘Middle Belt’ as a geo-political zone distinct from northern Nigeria has been on the rise (Ibrahim 2000, p. 54).

The contemporary electoral competition over Jos North LGA is rooted in the local politics of the 1990s as well as the regime change in 1999. Under the military administration of Gen. Ibrahim Babangida, the Jasawa actively lobbied for the establishment of a local government area in which they would form the majority. In 1991, their request was granted with the creation of Jos North LGA. The military administration split Jos LGA into Jos North LGA and Jos South LGA, the latter with headquarters in Berom-dominated Bukuru. Thus, Jos North LGA was effectively given to the Jasawa who were the majority group in Jos North while Jos South remained dominated by the Berom. The city of Jos has expanded beyond Jos North LGA and effectively merged with Bukuru into one urban centre, Jos metropolis.

The new boundaries made the Berom, Anaguta, and Afizere minorities within Jos North LGA. The three groups vehemently protested the creation of Jos North LGA, arguing that they had never been consulted nor consented to it. Their elites saw the split of the old Jos LGA into Jos North and South LGAs as a deliberate strategy to give full political control over one LGA to the Hausa population (Best 2007, pp. 51–53.).

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