TRADE AND MARKETS IN CONFLICT DEVELOPMENT AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN NIGERIA

SCOPING STUDY REPORT TO THE UK DEPARTMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

MARCH 2005

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Executive summary

This study of trade related conflict and its resolution in Nigeria's was prompted by the needs of policy makers concerned with improving market access for the poor. There is a lack of published material analysing links between trade/markets and conflict development/conflict resolution. The study is based on a literature review, a small number of interviews in Nigeria and UK and a one-day workshop: it was conceived as a pilot to identify areas for future research.

The informality of Nigeria's agricultural produce trade has the potential to promote both cooperation and conflict. The food marketing chains are complex networks extending across the country, and often involve diverse ethnic, religious and social groups. For the most part these linkages work extremely effectively, drawing on substantial inter-gender, inter-ethnic and inter-religious cooperation, often built up over generations.

Nonetheless, there is potential for a range of trade-related issues to lead to conflict and for extra-trade tensions related to broader structural issues to spill over and erupt in trade contexts. The costs of violent conflict can be enormous, not just in terms of immediate losses within the physical trading arena but also related to a widespread decline in trust and confidence which erodes social capital, with implications for producers and consumers as well as traders and their families.

Tensions emanating from deep-seated structural factors are implicated in many recent trade-related conflicts in Nigeria. Resource-based struggles around access to land and employment, complicated by environmentally and conflict-induced migration (with consequent indigene-settler divisions) and with outcomes reflected in major ethnic income differentials, have formed the seed-bed for much recent conflict. Where youth unemployment is a contributory factor to conflict, an element of political manipulation of religious/ethnic divisions through patron-client relationships is particularly common.

Struggles over market power, market access and market space also occurs along commodity chains and are particularly likely to contribute to sparking or escalating conflict where underlying tensions related to deep-seated structural factors are also present. Identifying potential conflict pressure points along a commodity chain can be a valuable analytical tool assisting conflict avoidance.

Antagonisms between the public and private sectors are a common contributing factor in trade-based conflict. The disorganised, informal nature of the small scale trade sector and the perception that it promotes criminal activity are a root cause of much antipathy in the public sector. From a private sector viewpoint, local government revenue extraction from market-based trade is strongly resented in view of the government failure to invest in physical market infrastructure, trader harassment, massive financial mismanagement and corruption. Weak/corrupt national institutions such as police and justice systems fuel resentment and promote reliance on personal links to local-level patrons and privatisation of

security, both of which may fuel inter-ethnic trade-related conflict since they easily become ethnically defined.

Crowded markets often become conflict flashpoints because they commonly bring large numbers of people from different ethnic groups together in a congested area. They offer a fertile context for conflict entrepreneurs wishing to use conflict for business or political ends to promote their aims. Unemployed youth can be hired at very little cost to help escalate any small conflict which occurs: the potential for looting once a conflict is in full swing provides additional incentive.

Transport-related issues may act as a conflict trigger or a background factor to exacerbate other causes on tension, especially in a context where livelihoods are fragile and formal insurance mostly unavailable. Transport-related conflict appears particularly common in the perishable commodities trade (vegetables, livestock), though fuel cartels and government petrol pricing has been a wider cause of conflict.

Despite the potential for trade to become a locus of conflict, market interactions and trading relationships may also facilitate reconciliation because disputing groups need to work together to secure their individual livelihoods. Moreover, market spaces are important potential mediation spaces precisely because they bring conflict related groups together, especially in boundary regions. Particular individuals – including women traders - may act as crucial "connectors" in this respect, linking diverse ethnic and other interest groups.

Long-established trader associations and other indigenous business networks provide ample evidence of their expertise in conflict avoidance and dispute management through a variety of mechanisms. In periods of violent conflict, traders of diverse ethnic origin often protect one another, especially within the market environs. Work with traders' leaders and their organisations to support and further develop such initiatives seems to offer an important potential route to conflict reconciliation and transformation (whereby institution building is emphasised as a route to dealing with both underlying structural causes of conflict and immediate triggers).

Widespread economic growth, well distributed both spatially and across social and ethnic groups probably offers the strongest protection against conflict and its perpetration by conflict entrepreneurs. Donors' and NGOs' work in assisting people to maintain basis entitlements to food, health etc. will contribute to conflict avoidance. They can also support conflict transformation approaches by combining a livelihoods approach with a conflict resolution approach. This needs to give full emphasis to handling change, so that conflict can be avoided. Diversification of livelihoods and associated development of new skills, knowledge and behaviour is likely to be central to such livelihood-linked conflict initiatives. Work with unemployed and disaffected youth appears likely to be particularly fruitful. .

Movement towards the development of a well-regulated state will also contribute to conflict transformation, since good institutions such as rule of law provide the essential context for tackling structural causes of conflict: this may need to include

support for traditional authorities which can play a strong role in local governance issues. In the absence of formal policing there has been a rise in the use of vigilante groups, often initiated by trader associations. The study also found that there are widespread cases of tensions and conflict between traders and the state, over high levels of levies and lack of investment in market infrastructure. This can be avoided or reduced by encouraging the private ownership and management of markets

The following recommendations are made:

- Identify potential conflict pressure points on specific commodity chains (including transport issues) especially before public sector or donor investment or support.
- Tackle the structural causes of conflict through promoting conflict sensitive economic growth and diversification of livelihoods away from resource constraints (such as land). Particular attention should be given to promoting the opportunities for unemployed and underemployed young men, and linking conflict and economic development programmes.
- Public sector ownership of markets has resulted in tensions and poor investment. Traders interviewed expressed the preference for an increase in private markets or private management. The benefits of private ownership and management need closer examination and possible piloting.
- Raise awareness of the potential role of business and trade related organisations in conflict resolution among local conflict-focussed NGOs in Nigeria (while recognising that they can fuel conflict if they exclude particular groups).
- Design market places to reduce overcrowding and tension so that they are less likely to become flash points for conflicts.
- Explore the possibility of developing innovative ways of working with and regulating vigilante groups, bearing in mind that they are now a substantial source of youth employment in many regions.
- Recognise and support the role of traders as key 'connectors' building social capital and networks between ethnic groups.
- Businesses trading across ethnic boundaries can build cross cultural social capital. Means of encouraging more individuals to take up these boundary spanning activities and to use market places as mediation spaces need to be explored.
- Conflict resolution approaches should recognise the key role traditional authorities play in managing markets and hence affecting conflicts.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background to the study

The role of trade and markets in both conflict development and conflict resolution has received minimal attention in the literature on conflict and on development. However, this emerged as an important issue in the small field study of market institutions and urban food supply conducted by Gina Porter, Fergus Lyon and staff from the University of Jos as part of R8330 in January 2004. It also has widespread relevance to ongoing development projects in Nigeria promoting pro-poor growth and food security, and wider relevance to the role of small and micro-businesses in conflict and its resolution. The authors were asked by DFID Nigeria to address these issues in a preliminary scoping study.

Trade and markets are meeting points for diverse ethnic and social groups. There is strong potential for a range of trade-related issues to lead to conflict. The role of trade in conflict creation is particularly obvious when the market place itself becomes a site of strife. However, issues embedded in trading relationships and practices may permeate and become manifest in many conflict situations.

At the same time, market interactions and trading relationships of groups who might otherwise be in conflict (including different ethnic groups) would also seem to be a factor facilitating reconciliation. Disputing groups may need to work together to secure their individual livelihoods and particular individuals may act as "connectors" in this respect (Anderson, 1999).

Our work in Nigeria indicates there is a need for policy makers to have information on trade-related conflict. This is particularly important with regard to improving market access for the poor, and is an area that has not been given much attention in the thinking behind 'Making markets work for the poor'. In this report we examine the role of markets as flash points and emphasise the structural factors in and surrounding the agricultural produce market chain which may lead to regular resurgence of market-based conflicts.

1.2 Food market chains, enterprises and conflict

A distinction needs to be made at the outset between different types of business and their potential to create and fuel conflict. In Nigeria, the role of larger oil related corporations in creating and fuelling conflict has received considerable attention (Human Rights Watch 2003). However, many of the economic pressures and difficulties leading to conflict relate not only to major international companies but also to small and micro-enterprises (Concepcion 2003; Banfield 2003) such as those operated by the majority of traders in the agricultural produce trade.

Nigeria's food marketing chains are dominated by micro enterprises and the self-employed, whether they are farmers, traders or transporters. A key characteristic of these enterprises in Nigeria (and much of Africa), is the high level of 'informality', such as limited tax paying, avoidance of regulations, and elements of illegality[1]. This

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[1] However, it should be noted that the term 'informal sector' is misleading as almost all micro-businesses in Nigeria have some element of formal recognition or tax paying (while larger conventional businesses may also be operating in an 'informal' manner for some of their operations)

informality is an important background factor in understanding the potential for trade-related conflict in Nigeria. It helps shape the sector's external relations with the state, and also relations within the sector among participating actors and institutions. In both relationships informality provides potential advantages in terms of flexibility, but also brings potential dangers, tensions and struggles.

Nigeria's food marketing chains are complex networks extending across the country, and often involving diverse ethnic, religious and social groups. For the most part these linkages work extremely effectively, drawing on substantial inter-ethnic and inter-religious cooperation, often built up over generations. Cooperative relationships are cemented by participating in ceremonies (marriages, funerals etc.), by home visits, sometimes even by inter-marriage. Ethnic and sub-ethnic political leaders have often supported such relationships by playing brokerage and bring building functions across the ethnic divides (Jinadu 2002). Accommodation, compromise and cooperation have thus helped to build crucial coalitions: essential components of a long-standing, resilient livelihood strategy.

Another feature of agricultural produce chains in Nigeria is their gendered nature. Women traders play a crucial role in many West African markets and women-dominated market institutions help regulate trade, arguably to the benefit of traders and consumers, both male and female (Clarke 1994 etc. and numerous other studies). Although much of women's involvement is at the lower levels, notably in retail trade, where lack of capital (a common problem for West African women) is less of a barrier to entry, there are still many women who play a significant role in wholesaling (though less commonly as brokers). As in the case of ethnicity, it would seem that gender relations in trade are generally uncontroversial. Indeed, gender issues very rarely incite trade conflict. For the most part, women across Nigeria appear to view their role in trade as complementary to – as opposed to competing with - that of their menfolk (Porter 1988).

Despite the livelihood benefits to be achieved by focussing on trade complementarity and cooperation, underlying structural factors may undermine such relationships, ultimately causing outright conflict. As we discuss in section 2 below, many of the factors underpinning trade conflict are related to changes in the local resource base.

1.3 Costs of conflict
The costs of trade and market conflict can be enormous, not only as a direct result of violent conflict, but also related to a broad loss of confidence and feelings of insecurity.

Within the physical trading arena the impact of violent conflict is likely to include:
- the immediate cost of physical damage to stalls, shops, stores and other property etc: this particularly affects the poorest traders. Table traders and others who trade in the open air may suffer most in such conditions because they do not have shutters to close to protect their goods.
- loss of goods (damage by fire etc., looting)
- the necessity of employing vigilantes etc. to avoid further loss
- loss of life
- reduction in produce supply

In the longer term and in the broader arenas of trade other costs may also emerge which affect not only the traders themselves but also their families, the producers from whom they buy, the consumers who buy from them etc:

- temporary or permanent reduction or loss of livelihood among traders and producers
- parts of society have less access to employment, transport and markets
- loss of trust between traders and the benefits of information and credit flows
- erosion of marketing channels
- decline in overall bridging social capital (between people of different socio-economic or ethnic groups)
- dependence on reduced networks often limited to kinship and ethnic groups, thus reducing resilience and enhancing vulnerability
- decline in production of tradable produce
- higher prices in major consumer markets
- diversion of trade to other regions/countries
- arrangements (formal and informal) that enforce and monitor regulations are damaged, adding to transaction costs
- possible overspill into the community at large and escalation then around non-trade issues

The impact of conflict affects men and women differently. While studies have identified how conflicts can open up opportunities for women in former Zaire (Fairhead, 1992) and in Sri Lanka (Hyndman and de Alwis, 2004), in Nigeria (and much of West Africa), women traders are commonly as open to abuse and expropriation from predatory officials as men – perhaps even more so (Dennis 1987).

1.4 Methodology

This report is based principally on a review of the (limited) available published and grey literature relating to trade, markets and conflict, together with a very small number of interviews with conflict-focussed NGOs in UK (Fergus Lyon and Gina Porter) and with NGOs and trader associations in Nigeria (in Kano and Sokoto by Fatima Adamu; in Abuja and southern Nigeria by Lanre Obafemi). A full list of interviewees is provided in the Appendix. A one-day workshop in Abuja in September 2004, facilitated by Fatima Adamu and Lanre Obafemi, provided an opportunity to review some of the material collected by that stage. Additional material on the pastoralist industry was provided in the form of a separate report by Roger Blench. Some additional material has been drawn from a separate (networked research) study in progress on Building a Food Marketing Policy Evidence Base in Nigeria (CNTR 04 5785). Individual authors are acknowledged where we have drawn on this material.

1.5 Key points in section 1

- The informality characteristic of Nigeria's agricultural produce trade has the potential to promote both cooperation and conflict.
- Ethnic and gender diversity among trading partners has mostly been directed towards complementarity, not conflict.
- The costs of conflict extend well beyond immediate physical losses. They include widespread decline in trust and confidence which erodes social capital and has implications for producers and consumers as well as traders and their families.

2. Structural factors related to trade and conflict creation

2.1 Why look at the structural context – greed and grievance theories

Much reported material on conflict describes the immediate impacts and associated immediate causes. In this report we distinguish between flash points or triggers and the deeper structural causes that lead to resentment or the desire to start a conflict. The structural causes are often firmly embedded in socio-economic inequalities related to poverty and unequal access to resources, which may be complexly interlinked with various religious, ethnic and geographic inequalities.

Recent debates among political economists and others has focussed around the issue of whether conflict is driven by structural reasons such as grievance (resource scarcity, inequality, exclusion and poverty, which may explode into open conflict when triggered by external shocks), or greed (i.e. the ability to extract wealth out of violence, pursuing rational economic interests e.g. Collier 2000). Others have brought the two approaches together, emphasising the interactions and synergies between both (Korf 2003a). We favour the latter approach and utilise it accordingly in this study. In the Nigerian context greed and grievance appear to interconnect and interact in complex ways in the resource-based struggles which have formed the seed-bed for much recent conflict.

2.2 Local resource competition

Many trade-based conflicts which appear to be due to underlying ethnic tensions are possibly more correctly interpreted as incited by changing external conditions. In many cases such change is associated with alterations to the resource base, with knock-on impacts on employment, migration patterns and market access available to local people, all of which have important implications for livelihoods. Low economic growth and a high dependence on natural resources, has been one of the most important risk factors in the world's civil wars since 1960 (Economist 17/01/2004:8). The link between conflict and natural resources management is now receiving increasing attention across the sub-region (Turner 2004; www.wanep.org/programs/natural_reource.htm)

2.2.1 Land as a structural challenge

Many trade related conflicts appear to be linked to underlying issues around competition over access to land. Land is a key political, social and cultural asset and consequently a common focus of political manipulation (Toulmin 2002; Turner 2004). Land disputes occur where there are competing demands between people of different ethnic groups or for different purposes (commonly cropping versus livestock). Tensions have exacerbated as pastoralists have been forced southwards with their herds in West Africa and pressure on resources has increased. The movement southwards to the middle belt and southern Nigeria brings pastoralists into contact with communities with whom they often share no common language, thus encouraging the growth of suspicion and misunderstanding (Blench, appendix 2).

Tensions have increased particularly in peri-urban areas where land values have risen, new interests have entered the arena, change is rapid and the poor (migrants, women, seasonal users such as pastoralists) who depend most on continued and assured access to land for livelihood security are especially vulnerable (Toulmin 2002). Maconachie

(2004) argues that Kano's close settled zone has become an arena of conflict and struggle as the competition for increasingly scarce land resources intensifies.

> *Conflicts over peri-urban land in Nigeria*
> In Kano's peri-urban areas traditional rangeland and cattle paths have almost disappeared due to land pressure. Fulani herders have consequently had to diversify their livelihoods, but conflict with settled Hausa cultivators has still increased. Old trading relationships between Hausa and Fulani based on exchange of cattle manure for land access have inevitably declined. Increasing resource pressure thus provides the back-cloth without which one cannot understand the increasing trading tensions with an ethnic component found in this region.

> *Case study: access to land for vegetable growers on the Jos Plateau*
> Land is a major issue in the Jos vegetable trade chain (see Vol 2). In the 1980s and 1990s, Hausa temporary migrants and resident former miners produced vegetables on land rented from indigenous Plateau peoples such as the Berom. Hausa at that time were also the main vegetable traders. By 2001 the Hausa were increasingly being excluded from access to land (except as labourers) as the ability of Berom to produce irrigated vegetable improved (Porter et al. 2003). Berom were also becoming more involved in vegetable trading. The subsequent crisis in part reflected growing religio-ethnic tensions on the Plateau, but recent analyses appear to put the ultimate blame firmly on struggles over access to land resources between indigenes and settlers (Plateau Peace Conference, 2004) though tension was exacerbated by in-migration from other conflict areas in neighbouring states (Human Rights Watch 2001:5).

Similar conflicts between settlers/herders and indigenes are reported across Nigeria. However, competition over land was found to be limited in cases where there are considerable social class differences between the indigenes and settlers. For example in Ekiti and Ondo states there are large proportions of Igbirra farmers who are not seen as a threat as they are constrained to being farm labourers or rent payers.

2.2.2 Access to jobs and livelihoods
Unemployment, underemployment and associated poverty have further exacerbated many trade conflict situations. Inadequate opportunities for making a living inevitably raise the potential for conflict, especially when coupled with deteriorating social conditions. The contraction of jobs in the formal sector has impacted particularly on those without access to new market opportunities, notably unskilled youth with limited financial and social capital. However, this is not a new issue as Heap (1997) reported the phenomenon of unemployed youth of various mixed-ethnic groups forming a deviant youth gang culture (*jaguda*) in Ibadan and other southern towns regularly menacing traders as early as the 1930s depression, a period when jobs were scarce. Where youth unemployment is a contributory factor to conflict, there is often an element of political manipulation through patron-client relationships (Sarch, 2003). In settler areas (like the Jos Plateau) the existence of an informal 'two-tier' system, such that indigenes complain of discrimination and harassment in their search for employment (especially in the civil service and federal institutions), presents a situation particularly prone to manipulation (Human Rights Watch 2001:22).

2.2.3 Market power, market access and market space along commodity chains
While access to land and jobs can be a cause of conflict, access to markets for produce can also contribute, and is of particular relevance for this study. For most

commodities in Nigeria there is domination of parts of the marketing chain by particular ethnic groups. These concentrations may be reinforced by religious affiliations which in turn reinforce ethnic divisions (IPCR, 2003:149; Blench, appendix 2). This can result in income differentials between ethnic groups that further exacerbate tensions (Easterly, 2000). Identifying potential conflict pressure points along a commodity chain can be a valuable analytical tool for conflict avoidance.

Ethno-domination of marketing channels is common in many countries (Speece 1990) and represents a sensitive area for research on markets. Concentrations of traders from specific ethnic groups are often accused by politicians and the media of operating cartels, but anecdotal evidence and our own field experience in Africa (Lyon 1999, 2000, 2001; Porter 1994, 1995, 2001) suggests that, although monopolistic control can be exerted, it usually tends to be confined to specific parts of the marketing chain. In Nigeria, as in other parts of Africa, the informal marketing systems have grown in importance since liberalisation/privatisation, and the potential for conflict has also risen.

Case study: Resentment caused by Hausa dominance of kolanut marketing chain and the 1999 Sagamu conflict
Perceiving that a lot of money was being made in the retail side of the kolanut business, Yoruba growers of kolanut (who always sold to Hausa wholesalers) attempted to enter the retail side of the business. Hausa wholesalers in Ibadan, Sagamu, Ife, Ijebu and other Yoruba towns banded together and resisted the incursion. They did not only continue to control the trade, the ethnic monopoly they enjoyed enabled them to dictate prices to the Yoruba sellers. This ethnic monopoly of the kolanut trade was identified as a contributing factor to the ethnic conflict between the Hausa/Fulani and Yoruba in Sagamu in 1999 during which scores of lives were lost on both sides. (Project interview, 2004)

The lack of conflict in many areas where there is ethno-domination of marketing suggests that this is not commonly a primary cause of conflict. As was found with conflicts related to youth unemployment, conflicts fuelled by arguments of ethnic control of marketing chains like that on the Jos Plateau may be related to manipulation of religious/ethnic divisions for local political ends (Human Rights Watch 2001).

2.3 Role of public sector institutions
Deeply held resentment against the public sector (federal, state and local government) can also contribute to the structural causes of conflict. This may be related to the movement of market places to less favourable areas, increased taxation, lack of spending on market place infrastructure and failure of security and justice systems.

2.3.1 Role of local government
The tensions between local government and market traders in Nigeria have long been exacerbated by the heavy dependence of local government on revenues from market place trade (in the absence of other forms of easily enforceable taxation). This situation has been further exacerbated by massive financial mismanagement and corruption at local government level (Heymans and Pycroft 2003:12).

A number of examples of local government interventions deemed corrupt or exploitative were raised by traders during interviews in August/September 2004. For

example the reallocation of market stalls by every new Chairman of a Local Government was perceived by traders as a way of rent seeking and creating space for the new Chairman's friends and allies. Those that can not come up with the Chairman's asking price, it is alleged, simply lose their stalls. In Abuja similar allegations are made against civil servants in the Federal Capital Development Agency (interviews, February 2005).

There is a long history of conflict caused by resentment from changes to market places and taxation, going back to the 'Aba women's war' of 1929 where Igbo women mobilised against the warrant chiefs and colonial authorities who had fenced in markets (Oriji, 2000). Conflicts can also be triggered by rapid increases in taxation. Recent examples include the livestock market in Kuchi local government, Sokoto where an attempt to triple the trader levy, was associated with the start of a conflict and loss of lives and property.

Resentment against the state can be a response to the antipathy to small-scale trade from government officials and is evidenced by the innumerable cases of harassment reported in the African press and by the derogatory terms often used to describe traders and their trading activities (Clark, 1994). Dennis (1987) refers to numerous incidents during Nigeria's economic crisis in 1984 when soldiers went into markets and beat women traders to force them to sell their goods at lower prices. Local government officers are not usually so violent, but can still be extremely obstructive.

In part the antipathy to small-scale trade in Local Government can be also explained by the disorganised nature of informal trade and the perception that it is promoting criminal activity (money exchanges, underground economy, petty theft etc). It also presents difficulties for regulators in areas such as hoarding, unfair pricing and even city traffic flow: trading spaces are commonly contested spaces. Street traders, in particular, are commonly viewed by planners and other city administrators as obstacles to development, creating congestion, rubbish and insecurity: a barrier to modernisation. Moreover, when contained within designated, enclosed markets spaces they can be relatively easily taxed: on the street revenue collection is far more difficult.

2.3.2 Security services, policing and legal institutions
Resentment against the state is further fuelled by the weak or corrupt national institutions such as police and justice systems. The police force is severely under-funded (partly as a result of army rivalry); staff numbers are grossly inadequate while morale suffers from insufficient equipment and low pay. The general inadequacy, despotism, brutalism and corruption of the Nigerian police force has been well documented in the Nigerian press and elsewhere. (Chukwuma 2004) In interviews for this project, traders stated that police action was associated with the escalation of the Bodija market conflict in Ibadan in 1999.

The judiciary is often equally suspect and most traders operate without the use of any formal contract or commercial law. Harnischfeger (2003:28) states that 'money is a factor in all court proceedings' and criminals can prosper so long as they have the patronage of prominent officials or politicians.

The weakness of national institutions also fuels conflict through the associated rise of ethnically based political organisations. Carment (2003: 414) suggests that the destruction of national identities (which is a likely result of failure of national institutions), and the consequent development of identity-based politics at a lower level, distract from the 'public's ability to appreciate the value of market exchange: the utility of depriving a rival group of benefits may be perceived as greater than the disutility of foregoing gains from trade…. both the trust required for a contract and the legitimacy needed for stable hierarchy will be elusive when ascriptive, exclusive identification holds sway in a society'. In essence, the nation-state provides no protection for the individual trader or commercial agent who thus must rely on personal connections to local-level patrons to ensure his or her survival.

The failure of national institutions, often transplanted into a Nigerian context from Europe, has resulted in an increase in the use by businesses of alternative means of security and justice, such as vigilantism and traditional courts. The Strategic Conflict Assessment (Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution 2003: 43-44) stated: *"Such "privatisation of the state" often leads to "privatisation of security" which provide ethnic/communal, traditional institution and other manifestations of conflict the armaments with which they prosecute violence. Often, it is the failure of the police to arrest first transgressors that is responsible for wide scale conflict as others attempt to avenge themselves.."*

While these forms of parallel institutions to the state can meet immediate needs, there is concern that they do not have systems of accountability to the wider community (see Alemika 2003:23,32-33) and may only represent particular ethnic groups in multi-ethnic areas. Furthermore, particular groups may clearly have a vested interest in sustaining these systems to protect their illegal businesses.

The rise of these groups and the overall lack of a strong rule of law is also associated with the proliferation of small arms (estimated at 3 million in Nigeria in 2003) (Sesay et al. 2003). In Nigeria enhanced firepower has probably increased the incidence of inter-group violence, making it more difficult to distinguish conflict from criminality (a point made by Goldsmith 1998 in a Kenyan context). Blench's detailed review of the spread of small arms in northern and central Nigeria supports this view (Blench 2004). A DFID report (2003:28) urges the need for systematic incorporation of arms issues in conflict assessments. However, a distinction needs to be made between controlling the supply of arms and reducing the demand for arms.

2.4 Key points in section 2: Structural factors related to trade and conflict creation
- Greed and grievance are both implicated in recent trade-related conflicts in Nigeria
- Resource access issues – particularly settler/indigene arguments over land – are crucial structural factors behind much trade-related conflict
- Unemployed and underemployed youth are often implicated in actual flash-points associated with trade conflict situations: lack of employment is a structural factor which encourages their involvement in conflict
- Ethno-domination along sections of market chains, reinforced by religious affiliations, may lead to growth in income differentials between ethnic groups thus exacerbating pre-existing resource-related tensions

- Ethno-religious differences between indigenes and settlers and among different trader groups and youth dissatisfaction may all be manipulated by political interests for their own ends
- Trader resentment against the public sector (taxation, rent-seeking activities, failure of security and justice systems, lack of investment in physical market infrastructure, antipathy to and harassment of traders etc.) helps fuel conflict with the state
- The weakness of national state institutions has encouraged the rise of identity-based politics and ethnically-based political organisations. This fuels conflict of all types
- Since the nation-state provides no protection for individual traders, they are dependent on parallel institutions: vigilantism and personal clientage relations to local patrons. These are important modes of protection which can easily become ethnically-defined and thus fuel inter-ethnic trade-related conflict.

3. Trade and conflict flash points

The structural causes (detailed above) causing conflicts can also be found in many contexts where there is no conflict. It is therefore necessary to examine why trade and markets can be the trigger for conflict in some areas and not others. This section examines the role of market places and transport as flash points for conflicts. However, it is recognised that these triggers also create grievances and longer term structural causes of conflict through reducing access to markets and damaging livelihoods.

3.1 Market place interaction of different types of trade actors and ethnic groups
Conflict related to trade issues may well be triggered in the physical space of market places because it is here that large numbers of traders and intermediaries in the trade and transport sectors commonly meet. These conflicts may be between actors in the chain (eg wholesaler-retailer) and can be also be attributed to the wide range of ethnic and social groups using markets and the ethnic concentrations of traders within markets. In many places, the fact that a "non-indigene" plays a role indigenes are not comfortable with forms the environment for conflict.

Case study: La'ada collection as a trigger at the Ketu/12 Mile conflict in Lagos
One of the underlying factors that built up angst in the hearts of Yoruba practitioners of trade in the Ketu/Mile 12 Market dispute was the *la'ada* (rent or commission) collected by Hausa/Fulani in the market. Some argue that being non-indigenes they had no right to collect *la'ada* in Lagos. They argue further that the practice was alien to Yoruba culture and that it came into being during the military era when some Hausa/Fulani military administrators were posted to Lagos State.

There are also a number of cases where traders of a particular ethnic group that had settled in a location have been involved in conflict with indigene *non-traders*. The market place may be the trigger for this conflict although the underlying structural causes may relate to resentment against that ethnic group for other reasons. Interestingly, in these cases the indigene traders were not involved in the conflict.

Case study: Hausa-Yoruba conflict at Bodija , Ibadan
The Bodija inter-ethnic conflict between the Hausa cattle traders and the Yoruba marketers started from a dispute between a goat trader and some market women. A trailer, which off-loaded cattle at the then Bodija Kraal, also brought 10 goats. As the Hausa owner of the goats was moving them to the section of the market for goat sellers, the goats left some faeces along the route. This caused an argument between the marketers along the route and the Hausa man who, in the process, stabbed one of the marketers with his knife. A fracas then ensued and the Hausa trader was taken to the Police Station at Sango, about three kilometers from the market. The arrest of the Hausa trader and the subsequent rumour about the beating of some Yoruba marketers who went to the police station the following day to inquire about the case, sparked off further trouble in the Bodija market between Hausa cattle traders and Yoruba non-cattle traders. It is worth noting that there was no disturbance/fighting among the Hausa and Yoruba cattle traders. The main reason for this can only be attributed to the mutual understanding and friendship which trading in same commodity has created over the years. Filani (2005)

There is evidence to suggest that those wanting to use conflict for business or political ends consider market places and trade contexts as crucial arenas for fermenting conflict. There is a substantial literature which suggests that economic appropriation is often a major cause or component sustaining violent conflict (for a brief review see MacGinty 2004). Traders' premises and market places full of desirable and valuable goods clearly present a potential target from this perspective, as do important trade routes. Looting, in this context, presents a major potential form of predatory accumulation. Behind these conflicts are frequently individuals or groups, termed conflict entrepreneurs, who are able to mobilise others and use ethnicity as a political construct (Korf, 2003a:20). They are able to promote resentment through having an 'extremely nuanced understanding of community dynamics and how social capital [networks] can be mobilised for perverse outcomes' (Goodhand 2001:26).

Youth groups have also been associated with escalating conflict at market place flash points. Sesay et al. (2003: 20-12) suggest that youth unemployment and a range of related problems in Nigerian urban areas have led to youths spontaneously amplifying the scope of any minor conflict. They are seen to 'exploit the atmosphere of mayhem to loot shops and offices…', but subsequently Sesay at al. indicate that many have acquired respectability by joining vigilante organisations and ethnic militias. The role of unemployed youth in helping to escalate trade and specifically market place conflict was raised by CRESNET (Conflict Resolution Stakeholders Network), Ibadan (interview A. Akinteye, August 2004), and by participants at the Abuja workshop (Obafemi and Adamu, workshop report, 7 September 2004). The issue was also raised occasionally during interviews (e.g. both Igbo and Hausa traders in Kano Kantin Kwari market, October 2004). A recent ICR report on Jacaranda Farm (http://www.conventrycathedral.org.uk/lnnigeria.html) indicates that youths were paid as little as forty pence to start rioting in Kaduna in 2001.

Market places can also be a focal point for protest against the state. For example, regarding the austerity riots associated with structural adjustment, Walton and Seddon specifically note the importance of the market place as a common site of protest (for unemployed youth and others) in the past. However, they suggest that the site of protest has often changed, 'owing to the complexity of modern markets, angry crowds fix responsibility on the retailer rather than the middleman – supermarkets, clothing, and appliance stores rather than grain merchants and speculators' (Walton and Seddon 1994: 51).

3.2 Conflict associated with failures in the transport sector

Issues around transport have the potential to cause considerable conflict particularly when dealing with perishable commodities such as livestock and vegetables. Conflicts may be associated with vehicle breakdown, damage to goods in transit, delays in reaching markets, theft or disappearance of goods in transit, petrol shortages (often an issue when only black market petrol was available) (interview with the Chair of the vegetable sellers association in Sokoto market, August 2004).

Conflicts in the transport sector can be both a trigger and a background factor exacerbating other causes of tension, particularly in a context where livelihoods are commonly fragile and formal insurance is unavailable to most actors. Ethnic violence in Kano in July 1999 was reportedly linked to petrol issues, for instance. Police blamed killings on the *yandaba*, who had reportedly maintained their

dominance in the city by organising the black market in fuel but then found themselves without a role once the fuel crisis was relieved after Obasanjo's election (Mason,17/8/1999: www.wsws.org/articles /1999/aug1999, citing the South African Mail & Guardian).

Fuel supply and price is also a common cause of conflict with government. There have been numerous stand-offs between organisations like the Labour Congress (the country's largest trade union body) and the government when attempts have been made to increase prices by reducing consumer subsidies (see for example Financial Times, 24/02/2004: p.6, special report Nigeria).

3.3 Key points in section 3: trade and conflict flash points

- The physical space of the market place is a key conflict flash-point because it is here that large numbers of diverse trader groups – indigene and non-indigene - interact.
- In busy markets the physical market space is crowded and activity frenetic (since business hours are usually restricted). This provides a particularly fertile ground for conflict entrepreneurs who wish to foment trouble.
- Opportunities for exploiting conflict through looting in market places are substantial: unemployed youth has been identified as a key element encouraging conflict escalation in markets for personal gain.
- Failures in the transport sector are another key flash point, especially where the goods being transported are perishable.

4. Tackling structural causes

There has been a long history of records concerning the relationship between peace building and commerce. Reno (2004:608) refers to "….Lord Palmerston's dictum: 'That commerce may go freely forth, leading civilization with one hand, and peace with the other, to render mankind happier, wiser, better' at no noticeable expense to the taxpayer."

In an analysis of approaches to tackle conflict, Reimann (2001) identifies a difference between approaches that concentrate on the triggers of conflict and conflict containment, those approaches that reduce the risk of conflict escalation. The latter approaches termed conflict transformation), consider both the triggers and structural causes such as social structures and resource competition. In this conceptualisation, conflict transformation processes are also processes of formal and/or informal institution building so that new institutional arrangements may arise which also allow more constructive dispute resolution in the future.

4.1 Individual businesses building networks

Market places can be seen as particularly valuable spaces for exchange, negotiation and mediation, by bringing conflict related groups together, particularly in boundary regions. Furthermore, business people can be considered as connectors who bring groups together (Anderson 1999). Indigenous market associations, landlords (who may provide accommodation, brokerage and language services to visiting traders), and other intermediaries can use their entrepreneurial energy for conflict avoidance, in reducing conflict escalation and in conflict management (just as they can engender conflict) (J. Banfield, Pers Comm.). Within the food trade sector in Nigeria, women can play a crucial role as connectors, particularly where they are involved in trade with other ethnic groups.

Case study of livestock trade and landlord relationships
Co-operation in long distance trading relationships is frequently cemented through landlord relationships whereby the trader of one ethnic group will reside with another ethnic group while his/her goods are being sold (Cohen 1971; Hill 1971; Mortimore 1989:131). For instance, among cattle dealers of Hausa/Fulani, Shuwa Arab and Yoruba extraction, this kind of relationship is common. Most of the cattle dealers are bi-lingual or even multi-lingual. During fieldwork in south-west Nigeria, Lanre Obafemi interviewed a number of Yoruba cattle dealers who said they are the sixth generation of their families dealing with their opposite Hausa/Fulani and Shuwa Arab numbers. When cattle dealers from Northern Nigeria, Niger, Chad and Mali come to the south-west, they stay in the houses of their hosts and when those from the south-west Nigeria pay return visits, the courtesy is reciprocated. It is not uncommon to have delegations from the different ethnic groups converge at the house of any of the cattle dealers, especially during weddings. When a cattle dealer from Maiduguri, for instance, takes his cattle to Lagos, he is housed by a Yoruba host, his cattle are housed by the same person who also arranges for veterinary check up and sells the cattle. Over and above what the owner of the cattle wants to sell, the host adds the "la'ada" (rent) from which he recoups his outlay as above and makes something for himself.

4.2 Creation of new opportunities or markets by government, donors and NGOs

Tackling structural causes of conflict such as competition over land and employment requires attention to the development of new opportunities for livelihoods and employment creation for the unemployed. Of particular importance is the development of non-farm income generation that will not put greater pressure on limited resources (Bryceson 1999). However the creation of new opportunities can be limited. For example Daniel (2003) investigated the pastoralist-farmer conflicts in Kebbi State and found that both Fulani and Hausa women suggested that "women seem to be better equipped for this process [of diversification and innovation] and find it easier, while men tend to demonstrate a sentimental but rigid attachment to the old ways".

External actors such as government, donors and NGOs can encourage people to use trading networks and thereby develop examples of positive experience and interaction. This can be done through developing sustainable livelihoods as a way of transforming conflicts. Interviews with International NGOs have identified a small number of programmes that have attempted to combine a livelihoods approach with a conflict resolution approach:

- International Alert's programme of conflict resolution in Sri Lanka working with representatives of local chambers of commerce.
- Oxfam's programme in Rwanda, where communities are challenged to develop institutions of peace as a way of sharing resources provided by the NGO.
- The USAID-sponsored Nation Building programme in Sierra Leone includes an example of trader education in its general programme, but the extent to which this kind of support is provided is unclear. (www.usaid.gov/gn/sierraleone/sl_reintegration/news/030228_n.../mohamedjalloh.htm)

Amongst international NGOs there has been considerable attention given to the control of the supply of small fire arms. However the extent to which conflict would be reduced by controls on the supply of small arms is not known. Some commentators stress the greater importance of controlling the demand for guns. Controlling the supply may simply increase the price people have to pay for weapons, and thereby divert resources away from household spending on food, health and education in areas of conflict.

A broad potential concern regarding NGO activities is that they tend to promote participation as a harmonious, consensual affair. It would be wiser if NGOs (and those donors and governments which now also support such initiatives) recognised that participation is *per se* about conflict, otherwise they are in danger of ignoring people's real views and missing the point of participation, which is to incorporate these views (DSA meeting Oxford, Feb. 2001).

NGOs, donors and governments can aid conflict avoidance by helping people maintain their basic entitlements to food, health etc. This perspective is behind the recent youth project in Kano State (a government project), the development of Jacaranda Farm in Kaduna state and a related project in the Delta (Coventry ICR), which specifically links business to peace work by providing youth employment and/or skills retraining (Jonathan Evans, pers. comm.).

One recent practical initiative in southern Plateau State with apparently strong potential is that of Coventry Cathedral International Centre for Reconciliation which has started pilot distribution of satellite phones to village heads and other trusted community members. The aim is to provide an early warning system in violence-prone areas. Leaders can contact one another to clarify the situation, avoid misinformation (which reportedly encouraged conflict escalation in the past) and allow them to contact the security services when a crisis is emerging. There is also a secondary benefit in terms of supporting local livelihoods through better communications.

4.3 Reducing conflicts associated with state failure

The weakness of national state institutions has encouraged the rise of identity-based politics and ethnically-based political organisations which fuels conflict of all types, including trade-based conflict. Good institutions, such as rule of law, provide the essential context within which other means for tackling structural causes of conflict need to be set. Conflict transformation is most likely to be achieved when accompanied by a supportive, well regulated state.

Unfortunately, the prognosis for rapid improvement in the efficiency of state institutions in Nigeria is not good. In these circumstances it may be more appropriate to continue to seek the development of alternative regulators. There are specific areas where further state withdrawal may contribute positively to conflict transformation. A good example is the potential for expanding the role of the private sector in managing physical market places. Experiences of private markets demonstrate their potential value in avoiding conflict. Practitioners of trade in the Isheri Cattle Market in Sokoto, for instance, made the point that since moving to the Isheri market, they had fewer anxieties linked with retaining their stalls in government-owned markets. The firmness of the private market owners at Mararaba Foron tomato market on the Jos Plateau in standing out against attacks on Hausa/Moslem traders during the 2001 crisis, similarly supports the suggestion that private ownership and management may offer more effective control within physical market places. Some traders who were not prepared to abide by the owner's rules moved to a market nearby, but most soon returned to Mararaba Foron.

4.4 Key points in section 4: tackling structural causes
* The conflict transformation approach, involving formal and/or informal institution building, offers the potential to tackle both immediate conflict triggers and structural causes of conflict. New institutional arrangements built through this process should allow more constructive dispute resolution for the future
* Market places are important potential mediation spaces, since they bring conflict related groups together, particularly in boundary regions
* Most traders (excluding arms-dealers) depend on market peace for their livelihood. They have a vested interest in using their entrepreneurial energy towards conflict avoidance and conflict management. Women traders can often play a crucial role in conflict as connectors linking with other ethnic and interest groups.

- Easing resource competition, particularly land and employment competition, will require development of new livelihood opportunities. Diversification into non-farm income generating opportunities is likely to be particularly crucial.
- Donors, NGOs, government and other external actors can support conflict transformation by combining a livelihoods approach with a conflict resolution approach.
- Recent donor, NGO and even government emphasis on participatory approaches to development needs to be accompanied by recognition that participation is per se about conflict. Their work in assisting people to maintain basic entitlements to food, health etc. will contribute to conflict avoidance.
- Trader conflict with state institutions may be avoided or reduced by encouraging private ownership and management of markets.

5. Resolving and avoiding specific conflicts

In this section, we explore the range of conflict resolving mechanisms currently working in trade contexts in Nigeria. In all cases, these have evolved spontaneously without government, donor or international NGO support. While they are concentrated on tackling particular conflict flash points, they also play a key role in addressing some structural causes of conflict. To a large extent they are operating at a local scale although they have access to higher-level decision makers in government and traditional authorities.

This section illustrates that the grass-roots, who take the heaviest casualties during conflicts and have the least potential to influence circumstances, are vital to resolving conflict (Lederach 1997). The other two target groups in conflict ridden societies - elites and the middle range (NGOs, academics and others with an advocacy role) – may also have a role to play (Lederach 1997), but elite greed in Nigeria often focuses on conflict principally as a tool for domination (Heymans and Pycroft 2003:29), and this group (with the possible exception of traditional authorities) seems unlikely to offer a major route to conflict resolution.

5.1 Business associations involved in resolving disputes

Trader associations (which may be single-sex or mixed-sex groups, ethnically based or inter-ethnic and even inter-market and inter-regional [see Adubi 1996:40]) play a particularly notable role in conflict avoidance and conflict management/resolution, especially – though not only - in terms of within-group conflict avoidance and dispute resolution (Whetham 1972; Clark 2002).

Many formal and informal trader associations within the produce trade provide a range of services/regulatory frameworks, particularly in urban contexts, which help maintain harmony among members in trade transactions. In a trader interview in Kantin Kware market it was observed that when a [unspecified] conflict occurred the market organisation there even went outside the market to traders homes, 'away from the market tension', to try to resolve the conflict.

> *Case study: Sokoto grain sellers' associations*
> The secretary of the grain sellers' associations at Sokoto observed: *'we do not pass judgment, we dialogue. If one is at fault, whether a resident or a visitor from another part of the country, we try to dialogue...we do not pass judgement immediately. If our efforts failed, we hand over the case to the authority to handle him, before he creates big problem for us in the market. From there the case can go to court and we would be witness to the case'*. He described how when religious troubles occurred elsewhere in the north of Nigeria, and there were rumours of planned attacks on Christian Igbos, the market was closed and the visitors were hidden: 'luckily there was enough signals and the market associations and the market authority quickly intervened to stop the bood spilling….nobody was beaten or maltreated. (interview by Fatima Adamu, August 2004).

In many cases it seems that resolutions within the trader association depend for their execution on the determination, power and charisma of the association leaders in the market. This is exemplified in a case from the New Market, Abuja where the President-General of the Market Women's Association seems to have successfully

resolved a dispute between vegetable wholesalers and retailers (interview, Chief [Mrs] Sanni, Abuja, Lanre Obafemi, February 2005). In Sokoto market, the crucial importance of good leadership in the market in quelling conflict was given great emphasis by the grain sellers association secretary.

When a conflict crops up in south-west Nigerian markets, it is the leadership of the commodity line association which steps in to mediate, conciliate or arbitrate. Where the commodity line association is unable to resolve a conflict, it is transferred to the general market association executives. At this level, if the conflict involves people from more than an ethnic group, representatives of the ethnic group association of those involved are invited and together with the leadership of the market association they attempt to resolve the conflict at hand. If all attempts at resolution fail, the police is called in if criminality is involved.

The roles played by trader associations in West Africa may include the following:
- A regulating leadership/committee which sets out broad rules of business in the relevant trade. [In a market place context, there may also be a broader association which regulates overall business practice in all spheres in the market, and lesser associations whose remit is limited in spatial terms to particular areas of the market]
- Commodity groups incorporate members at different levels of the distribution chain and thus encourage interaction between different (and opposing) interests i.e. as retailers, wholesalers, travelling dealers etc. (Clark 1994: 405)
- Dispute settlement, possibly at a variety of different levels. Often minor disputes will be settled by sub-associations in that section, while major disputes will go to the main commodity group committee. According to Clark (1994:259), in Kumasi market, "traders themselves rank internal dispute settlement first among the duties of market leaders and mention it first when they list those duties". Moreover, dispute settlement may extend to farmers and other non-traders (Clark 1994:263)
- Enforcement of well-known trading conventions (such as not stealing another trader's customer by dragging him/her to the stall) and publicisation of correct procedure in doubtful cases.
- Punishment of misdemeanours with fines and other sanctions (e.g. in one Kano meat market bad behaviour such as trying to steal a customer, first infringement results in a warning, then a 1-2 week ban on trading, then total ban from the market.)
- Specific control over physical allocation of space, and of market stalls and stores
- Formal consultation across the group on important issues and representation in broader consultations (e.g planning commissions)
- Regulation of bargaining procedures
- Regulation of weights and measures utilised by traders. (Fatima Adamu reports the case of the grain traders association in Sokoto calling meetings of traders at harvest time in the market to emphasise the importance of filling sacks to the top.)
- Regulation of supplies into the market to avoid excessive competition between trader groups
- Protection of non-local traders from cheating

- Management of information and credit requirements, including location of defaulters and enforcement of payment (Clark 1994: 260). (For the livestock, grain and vegetable associations in Sokoto market, for instance, this is a common function since arguments over credit are reportedly the often a major source of low-level tension: Fatima Adamu interviews, August 2004).
- Flexible, fluid group membership to allow groups to function effectively and prevent abuse of collective power (Clark 1994:219).
- Information dissemination to reduce risk

The trader associations may be supported by further associations within the private sector which also help regulate the broader trade context, for example:
- Transporter associations
- Porter and off-loaders associations
- Regional office of the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW)
- Vigilante associations

Of course, trader association roles may themselves induce conflict, especially when the associations operate cartels to exclude or ration access by outsiders.

In rural markets trader associations are commonly less well developed (Ariyo et al. 2001; Porter 2001). The most violent conflicts in the Sokoto region may occur in rural markets precisely because of limited development of associations there.

5.2 Traditional authorities and conflict management
There has recently been much renewed interest in the potential for traditional authorities to play a strong role in local governance issues. Their legitimacy in the local community can give them a strong potential for conflict management and resolution. However, this obviously can be easily negated if they are embroiled in local politics.

In northern Nigerian markets the traditional authorities usually have some responsibility for market management in that the chief of the town will choose the *sarkin kasuwa* (market chief). The *sarkin kasuwa* has ultimate authority for conduct in the market. However, in rare cases the town authorities may intervene directly, as in the case of a violent market-based conflict at Tambuwal, cited during recent interviews by Fatima Adamu in Sokoto (Farmers' Association, September 2004).

Traditional authorities have been found to be playing an increasing role in substituting for the perceived failures of the state judiciary system. Harnischfeger (2003) suggests that the 'alien' institutions introduced are perceived to lack the transparency of traditional courts such as the Islamic Kadis in the north of the Nigeria.

5.3 Vigilantism and the privatisation of security
Failure of state security institutions has prompted Nigerians to resort to specific forms of self-help through home-grown institutions. These forms of vigilantism are seen to bring rapid judgement and punishment, use local knowledge, and to avoid a profusion of complex legal regulations and procedures which can shelter miscreants from

justice[2]. A survey by Sesay et al. (2003: 69,102) suggests that Trader Associations are perceived as a major locus of economic support for vigilante/ethnic militia groups in both south-east and south-west Nigeria, with some of the more well-known groups originating from initiatives and payments from traders.

Case study: the Bakassi boys
A colony of criminals had apparently become firmly established round the Ngwa road market in Aba and collected protection money from all the shops and stalls in the market, without police intervention. In 1998 a woman trader carrying a large cash sum of Naira was robbed and brutally murdered. Market traders who knew where the robbers were resident went to their houses and attacked and killed them. They then recruited over 500 youths to maintain order in the Aba area. The youths were paid by contributions from traders, plus additional funds from the state governor. The success of the Bakassi boys in Abia state led to requests from traders in other states for their protection, notably Anambra, where the state government also accepted their role. The impact in the city of Onitsha, according to the author, was remarkable. Here, significantly, the Bakassi boys set up their headquarters next door to the headquarters of the Onitsha Markets Amalgamated Traders Association, and although the market area showed no apparent sign of guards or street patrols, it reportedly became crime-free within weeks, following numerous public executions of identified criminals (possible 3000 executions in total in Anambra state according to the Civil Liberties Organisation).

Although some journalists and police representatives spoke out against the return to lynch law, the majority of people did not appear to object, apparently perceiving the Bakassi boys to be fairer and more efficient than the Nigeria police force: they also see the organisation's more traditional formation, the way it acts like a secret society and its use of occult powers to fight evil, very positively and in line with Onitsha market's traditions of dealing with sorcery. The traders apparently suggested that the police were merely disgruntled because they had lost an important income source! In July 2000, President Obasanjo ordered the army and mobile police units to clear Onitsha of militias but they turned back following a show of strength by the Bakassi boys and the fact that the trader association OMATA – reputedly viewed by many in Anambra state as a shadow government (Harnischfeger 2003:30 citing The Week) - fully supported the militia. The traders reportedly keep careful watch over the Bakassi boys, while a committee (including market associations but also traditional rulers, town unions, police, the state government and legislature and chaired by the security adviser to the governor) supervises their activities in Anambra state.

Although the Bakassi boys were set up as a response to crime in a trade context, an ethnic component has been subsequently established: they are Igbo based, have reportedly massacred members of other ethnic groups, and are thus seen by neighbouring ethnic groups (Ogoni etc.) as a potentially hostile ethnic army 'that may, in a situation of conflict, turn against all non-Igbo'. Harnischfeger argues that trader support for the Bakassi groups remains crucial to their continuation, despite the various entanglements with local politics: without the support of the traders, taxi drivers etc., the Bakassi Boys 'would lose their quasi-official status and sink down to

[2] There is growing evidence for spread of vigilantism across Africa: e.g. see Baker 2004 re vigilantism in Uganda, including it use by trader associations, also Abrahamsen 2004 on South Africa.

one of the many armed gangs. And conversely, if traders tried to dismantle the militia, they would revert to living in a world of crime.' (Harnischfeger 2003).

On the other hand a very positive example was given in Sokoto of close cooperation and regular meetings between a former assistant commissioner of police and the trader associations at a time of crisis elsewhere in the country (interview Fatima Adamu, August 2004):

Case study: Trader relationships with the police in Sokoto
Secretary of the grains association*: 'we are told we are to be representatives of our people to the authority. If anything arises that may generate conflict, we quickly take action before it breaks by informing the authority. If we are not listened to by the smaller ranks, we should come direct to him. He is from Katsina state. He said we should always come to him, whether in his office or at his home. He tells us where his house is located. So, we still make use of the channels of communication he opened to deals with conflict before it erupts. So, if there is any conflict here in the market, immediately I contacted the police, even if I send my representative, the police would come help us resolve the problem or take it outside the jurisdiction of the market.*
F.A.*: What about the roles of others in resolving conflict?*
Secretary of grains association*: They all assist in one way or the other, particularly, the police and the traditional establishments such as the emirs and the districts and ward heads.*

A similar response came from the police with regard to the Sokoto livestock market. If the police have a problem with anyone in the market, they reportedly first contact the livestock traders association and try to solve the problem through them.

5.4 Business opportunities as incentives for ethnic groups to work together
The review of the literature shows that there are many cases where trade has continued despite conflict. Our research in the Jos market conflict context indicated that while markets and trade may often cause or fuel conflict, the need to obtain a livelihood through trade and market interactions can also bring protagonists together again surprisingly rapidly, even after a violent dispute. It is likely that this is particularly the case for the agricultural produce trade (as opposed to point-sourced commodities such as minerals), since the spatially diffuse nature of the core business activity requires widespread peace to survive (Murshed 2005:1).

Case study: Traders avoiding conflict in Jos
The survey in Jos created an opportunity to examine the impact of conflict on market chains by making a comparison with work carried out by the project team in 2001. The most important conclusion which emerged from our research in January 2004 was that, despite the scale of the 2001 ethno-religious disturbances, the market network in perishable vegetables had been rapidly reconstructed because it was so crucial to both rural and urban livelihoods. There was evidence that traders were once again providing advance capital to farmers and farmers were once again sending their produce to distant markets on trust through traders. As prior to the crisis, trader-farmer interactions were in many cases across religious ethnic groups (e.g.– Berom Christian producers - Hausa Moslem traders – Igbo Christian traders). John Olaniyan found Berom tomato retailers in Jos urban markets are still able to borrow substantial sums from Hausa/Fulani wholesalers without collateral and 'constantly refer to their

long standing trading relationships as the basis for the strong informal trading practices among them' (interviews January 2005).

Personal customer relationships and landlord (*mai gida*) systems play a key role in allowing trade to continue during conflict and in periods of severe conflict can result in the protection of traders from other ethnic groups. For example, the secretary of the grains sellers' associations in Sokoto reported that during religious riots in the North, '*we had to hide our visitors from other parts of the country to protect them*' (interview, August 2004). In Sabon Gari market, Kano, traders stated that they telephoned customers of other ethnic/religious group to warn them not to come to the market during a particular violent conflict. The close ties that enable this to take place are in contrast to the conflict outside of the market. As one Igbo trader stated: "*The Igbos and Hausas in this market are one- they are all eating from the same pot- this market. We are one family.*" A butcher in Kano stated: "*once in the market we are all Nigerian, it is when I am in my community that I consider my tribe and religion first. [The] market belongs to everybody.*" (interview with Chairman, Kano state butchers, October 2004).

Case study: Business as a route to broader reconciliation
In Kaduna after the 2001 riot a pastor told his congregation to buy their bread from a local Moslem baker. The imam of the nearby mosque went to see the pastor and said his congregation would reciprocate. This initiative extended to other areas, including stone throwing. The pastor asked the imam to help stop Moslem youths throwing stones on Sunday at the church. The imam stopped this and the pastor was able to restrain youths from his church taking retaliatory action (Jonathan Evans, pers. comm.).

5.5 Key points from section 5: resolving and avoiding specific conflicts
- Grass roots actors (who take the heaviest casualties during conflicts) are vital to resolving conflict.
- Trader associations commonly play a very effective role in conflict management and resolution in urban trading contexts through well-established regulatory mechanisms/services. The leadership of these organisations plays a particularly crucial role.
- Trader associations have taken the initiative in supporting the development of vigilante groups, in the absence of adequate formal policing
- Traders of different ethno-religious groups may protect one another in a market context, even when outside the market they are forced to take opposing positions.

6. Conclusions and recommendations

This study has drawn attention to the ways in which Nigeria's agricultural produce trade has the potential to promote both conflict and cooperation. Complex food marketing networks extend across the country and often involve substantial inter-gender, inter-ethnic and inter-religious cooperation. However, we have shown how trade-related issues can lead to conflict, especially in circumstances where deep-seated structural factors have already raised tensions and there is political will to encourage conflict. Market places are often flash points where underlying tensions spill out. However, trade and its associated institutions can play a key role in avoiding or resolving conflict. Key points were summarised at the end of sections 2, 3, 4 and 5 above. Here we review our major conclusions and associated recommendations.

6.1 Identify conflict pressure points and potential flash points along specific commodity chains

Analysis along individual commodity chains provides a potentially valuable tool for identifying conflict pressure points and potential flash points, especially prior to public sector or donor investment or support. This may enable pre-emptive action. Commodity chain analysis is a tool which PropCom and other organisations involved in developing market institutions in Nigeria should find particularly useful. It is important to ensure that such analysis addresses conflict risks.

6.2 Tackle the structural causes of conflict through promoting economic growth and livelihood diversification that is sensitive to conflict avoidance

Poverty and lack of economic growth are major structural causes of conflict in Nigeria. Widespread economic growth, well distributed both spatially and across social and ethnic groups, if coupled with effective governance, would do much to reduce conflict potential in Nigeria, in both trade and non-trade contexts.

Economic growth can put extra pressure on limited resources and a locally overheated economy can encourage massive rapid population movement. This has been shown to be particularly dangerous, because of the sudden growth of large non-indigene communities which have not had the time to build relationships with their hosts and in which traditional mores and conventions have commonly been disrupted in the early stages of migration. There is therefore a need for conflict and livelihood support initiatives to encourage an associated diversification of livelihoods away from conflict related resources such as land, and towards associated development of new skills, knowledge and behaviour. This scoping study has shown that there is limited knowledge concerning the relationship of pro-poor economic growth to conflict.

NGO, bilateral and multilateral donor programmes not specifically targeted at conflict frequently fail to consider conflict sensitivity in their design. Similarly, conflict related programmes have rarely taken into consideration the role of traders and other businesses. The latter type of intervention has primarily been targeted at national scales and elites with smaller scale interventions concentrating on civil society organisations with a specific remit to resolve conflicts. Awareness-raising among local conflict-focussed NGOs and public sector bodies in Nigeria would be beneficial.

6.3 The key role of youth education and employment initiatives

Specific support is needed for listening to young people and their leaders and working to channel their energies into positive actions. The employment and scholarship issues are especially sensitive in settler areas, where these are a constant source of tension. There is a dangerous spiral linking lack of education, lack of jobs, and lack of youth identity which encourages participation in paid violence for meagre reward: "identity lights the fuel" (Jonathan Evans, pers. comm.). Reductions in youth unemployment will not just reduce the rogue element which may encourage conflict in order to benefit from looting etc. but also reduce the potential for others wishing to enlist such groups for conflict creation purposes to achieve their aims.

6.4 Awareness of the complexities of intervening in land rights questions

Land rights are a crucial issue. Land dynamics form the backcloth to many of the conflicts which have spilled over into Nigerian trade relations in recent years; the Jos Plateau crisis of 2001 presents a prime example. However, the specific material and symbolic value of land and its central position at the heart of political, economic and symbolic power relations, means that interventions by donors must be undertaken with great care, as donors may end up assuming a role as contentious political actors in a local political process.

6.5 Decentralisation and regulation of markets

Decentralisation is one means by which spatial inequalities can be reduced and ethnic rent seeking minimised. In the Nigerian context there has been an increase in the number of local governments serving small localities. This has had a detrimental effect on conflict and trade as these organisations have to find ways of raising revenue, and have to rely on revenue from markets. Local government executives are frequently alleged to be involved in corrupt allocation of market space. Bringing an end to discriminatory allocation of resources by the state in such an ethnically segmented society as Nigeria is likely to be an essential component of strategies for conflict reduction.

Consultation with commercial interests, legalisation of illegal markets and improvements in infrastructure of existing markets (especially sanitation and shelters or letting traders build their own) would further assist in reducing current areas of dispute.

Public sector ownership of markets has resulted in tensions and inadequate infrastructure investment. There is a perception amongst traders that privatised markets would not only bring improved facilities but also reduce harassment and the risk of conflict. Local Governments are rarely willing to relinquish a major revenue source but there are cases of markets contracting out the management of markets. Issues around the ownership and management of markets require further consideration and research.

6.6 Market design and location

Physical market spaces could be substantially improved to reduce the crowding and associated over-use of limited facilities which encourages their regular emergence as conflict flashpoints. Inadequate shade, inadequate safe water, lack of room to manoeuvre loads, lack of fire protection, little protection from rain, no sanitation etc. are not conducive to a cooperative environment. Investment in market places is

usually in the form of building permanent market stalls to be sold at a subsidised rate. This creates an opportunity for rent seeking and preferential treatment for particular groups, leading to increases in tension and the risk of conflict. This requires much more thought about the most cost-effective means to improvement.   This in turn will depend on transparent consultations between local government and market traders and their associations. Market site changes are often a cause of contention with Local Government and should be avoided if trade is operating successfully at the current site, or only undertaken following full and transparent consultation with traders and other stakeholders (e.g. where the current site is excessively congested and has inadequate room for expansion).

6.7 Police and privatisation of security

More effective police-community cooperation and the consequent deterrence provided by an effective police presence could offer substantial potential for conflict avoidance in many trade and market-based conflict contexts. Presently, traders tend to avoid police intervention in conflict if at all possible, hence the dependence on the trader associations in the first instance. However, there are cases where trader associations do have good relations with the police, often due to good personal links to senior police officers. The reform of the police and other security agencies is being addressed by a Presidential Implementation Committee, and there is a need to ensure that security and conflict resolution in a trade context is addressed explicitly.

The interactions between the state's police and private policing in particular will need particularly careful attention in a trader context where vigilantism is now the dominant form of security. Vigilante forces currently provide fairly successful security in many market and trade locations, and another source of employment for those with few skills. However, there are questions round equity of security with evidence of preferential treatment for wealthier traders who pay more and the potential for ethnic discrimination. The possibility of developing innovative ways of working with and regulating these groups should be explored

6.8 Supporting the role of traditional authorities and local community leaders

Traditional authorities and local community leaders may, if given support, play a stronger role in the broader local governance context in which traders operate. This is an area which needs further research since the role of traditional authorities in current market operations is commonly somewhat opaque. Blench (see Appendix 2) argues for identification of community leaders who can be readily contacted in case of tension and regular meetings to defuse tension. The impact of recent pilot support to improved information/early warning systems in the southern Plateau through provision of satellite phones to key local leaders will benefit from careful examination.

6.9 Building on the traditional roles of trader associations

Trader associations have much experience in dispute settlement but they can also fuel resentment if acting as cartels, excluding particular groups and bringing in non-indigenous business concepts. Nonetheless, it may be possible to build on the expertise of trader associations in conflict resolution. Detailed micro-studies to discover why association (and other) interventions have failed in particular recent cases could also be a useful. There is the potential to pilot conflict reconciliation

training with key carefully chosen individual members of market associations. This would require prior clearance with government and religious leaders.

6. 10 Post conflict support to connectors: the role of traders
Traders and other businesses can act as connectors building social capital and networks between ethnic groups. Women often play a key role in this, particularly in the food trade in Nigeria. However experience from across Africa shows that business development support is rarely part of post conflict reconstruction and where it is, there is no targeting of women. Micro-credit is a popular post-conflict reconstruction tool but without being accompanied by information and skills relating to business development, it can increase the risks to livelihoods and thereby increase tension.

Support can also be targeted at programmes that encourage networking and trade between ethnic groups in order to build cross-cultural social capital. Many businesses in Nigeria operating across ethnic boundaries have built cross-cultural social capital, in some cases over generations. Means of encouraging more individuals to take up these boundary spanning activities need to be explored. Similarly, the use of market places as mediation spaces would benefit from close examination and pilot studies.

6.11 Summary of key recommendations
- Identify potential conflict pressure points on specific commodity chains (including transport issues) especially before public sector or donor investment or support.
- Tackle the structural causes of conflict through promoting conflict sensitive economic growth and diversification of livelihoods away from resource constraints (such as land). Particular attention should be given to promoting the opportunities for unemployed and underemployed young men, and linking conflict and economic development programmes.
- Public sector ownership of markets has resulted in tensions and poor investment. Traders interviewed expressed the preference for an increase in private markets or private management. The benefits of private ownership and management need closer examination and possible piloting.
- Raise awareness of the potential role of business and trade related organisations in conflict resolution among local conflict-focussed NGOs in Nigeria while recognising that they can fuel conflict if they exclude particular groups.
- Design market places to reduce overcrowding and tension so that they are less likely to become flash points for conflicts.
- Explore the possibility of developing innovative ways of working with and regulating vigilante groups, bearing in mind that they are now a substantial source of youth employment in many regions.
- Recognise and support the role of traders as key 'connectors' building social capital and networks between ethnic groups.
- Businesses trading across ethnic boundaries can build cross cultural social capital. Means of encouraging more individuals to take up these boundary spanning activities and to use market places as mediation spaces need to be explored.
- Conflict resolution approaches should recognise the key role traditional authorities play in managing markets and hence affecting conflicts.

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