REVISIT OF BAKASI PENISULA NIGERIA CAMEROUN RESOURCE CONFLICT

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ABSTRACT
The discovering of huge natural oil deposit in the waters surrounding the Bakasi Peninsular changed the good harmonious relations between Nigeria and Cameroon commencing from 1981. This scenario set in motion series of events that strained the relations between both countries that even culminated in violent conflict. The paper is set to examine the role of Border-Resource based conflict, with particular interest on how natural resources in Nigeria-Cameroun Border can influence dispute and means of managing the conflict between the two countries on border issue. The study also wishes to find out types of particular resources that was the bone in of contention and its economic values to the two border countries. It was established that the Nigerian state administered the areas commonly known as Bekasi peninsular which falls along the borders between Nigeria and Cameroun for decades peacefully. However, from 1991 the Cameroun government challenged the rights of Nigeria government over the peninsular which culminated in a suit at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) at The Hague. The study data were collected through documentation of secondary sources, including review of related historical archival records, journals, write-ups and library research built on its exiting findings. The study is concluded by recommending among others, that there is the need for inclusiveness of stakeholders in the border dispute resolutions befores the intervention of the international community following the judgment of ICJ as the terms of the Green Tree Agreement, and the need for the setting up of a joint commission for exploration of hydrocarbon in the cross-border areas, be carefully managed to douse the violent, and which will also create a platform for win win solution from both countries.

Introduction

Territorial claims, ideology, colonialism, nationalism, religion and natural resources have typically been the main sources of conflict throughout the world while the influence of some of these is waning, struggles for the control of valuable natural resources have remained a persistent feature of national and international affairs for decades. In addition to helping some of the most corrupt and oppressive regimes to remain in power, natural resources have been fueling conflicts within and between African countries. Such conflict situations typically take the form of territorial disputes over the possession of oil laden borderareas, factional struggles among the leaders of oil-rich countries, and major inter-state wars over the control of vital oil and mineral zones (Klare, 2004).

The border between Cameroon and Nigeria extending from lake Chad to the Gulf of Guinea has been a bone of contention between the two territories dating back 1913. However, the knowledge that the Bakassi Peninsula habours important deposit of oil/gas reserves triggered mounting hostilities and military confrontations in the early 1990s between Cameroon and Nigeria. According to (Klare 2004), the close connection between oil and conflict derives from three essential features of petroleum. (1) Its vital importance to the economic and military power of a nation; (2) Its irregular geographical distribution; and it's imminent changing centre of gravity.

In 1993, Nigerian troops occupied the Bakassi peninsula: In 1994, after serious incidents of Border incursions that provoked shooting, and after many casualties and dead of soldiers had been recorded on both sides, Cameroon submitted its entire set of border-related disputes with Nigeria to the international court of justice at The Hague for adjudication. After examining the case for eight years, the world court ruled that Cameroon is the rightful owner of the oil-rich Peninsula, basing its argument on the 1913 border between the two colonial powers.

According to Asobu (2003), following intensive diplomatic activities culminating in the 12 June 2006 Green-tree Agreement, brokered by the United Nations and witnessed/guaranteed by four world powers- Britain, France, Germany and the United States, Nigeria eventually agreed unconditionally to hand over the oil-rich peninsula to Cameroun. On 14 August, 2006, Nigeria effectively pulled out its military and the Camerounian flag was hoisted. Two years later (14 August, 2008) the remaining Nigerian administration and police left the peninsula (AJCR 2010).

Note the Green-tree Agreement is the official appellation of the agreement between the Republic of Cameroon and the Federal Republic of Nigeria concerning the modalities of withdrawal and transfer of authority in the Bakassi Peninsula.

The Concept of Border

A border is a real or artificial line that separates geographic areas. Borders are political boundaries. They separate countries, states, provinces, counties, cities towns. A border outlines the area that a particular governing body control. The government of a region can only create and enforce laws within its borders. Borders change over time. Sometimes the people in one region take over another area through violence. Othertimes, land is traded or sold peacefully. Many times, land is parceled out after a war through international agreements. Some borders fall along natural boundaries like rivers or mountain ranges. (National Geographic Society, 1996 - 2023) According to them, borders, particularly national borders affect travel and migration. People can usually move freely within their own country's borders but may not be allowed to cross into a neighboring country, The National Geographic Society added that, many border disputes occur when people fight over natural resources. For example, Nigeria and Cameroun as our case study in this paper, and Sudan and Egypt over a region called Hallaib.

Natural Resources

Natural resources can be defined as the resources that exist (on the planet) independent of human actions. These are the resources that are found in the environment and are developed without the intervention of humans. Common examples of natural resources include air, sunlight, water, soil stone, oil, fuels and other mineral elements. (Byjus.com 2020) Explaining further, they maintained that naturalresources are naturally occurring materials that are useful to man or could be useful under conceivable technological, economic, or social circumstances orsupplies drawn from the earth supplies such as

fertilizers, metals, water, and geothermal power among others

Concept of Management

Management is process of planning, decision-making, 0rganizing, leading, motivation, and controlling the human resources, financial, physical, and information resources of an organization to reach its goals efficiently and effectively. (Neha Mathur,2020) According to him, from an administrator's point of view, management is a system of authority. Historically, management first developed as an authoritarian philosophy. Later on, it turned paternalistic. Still, later, constitutional management emerged, characterized by concern for consistentpolicies and procedures for dealing with the working group. Finally, the trend of management turned towards a democratic and participatory approach. Modern management is nothing but a synthesis of these four approaches to authority. Nwachwku, 2006, views management as a process of setting and reaching goals effectively and efficiently. Management process has some qualities or features;

- ✓ Management is associated with group efforts.
- ✓ Management is purposeful,
- ✓ Management is accomplished through the efforts of others.
- ✓ Management is goal oriented.
- ✓ Management is indispensable.
- ✓ Management is intangible.
- ✓ Management can ensue better life.

Managing in this context is having executive control of authority. It is the coordination and administration of tasks to achieve a goal.

Managing border conflict is through negotiation, in which both countries can define a clear boundary, demarcate the disputed areas and create a mechanism for effective border management.

Conflict Management

Conflict management is the use of processes, tools, and skills to find creative and respectable ways to manage disagreements and disputes. It includes the ability to resolve conflict collaboratively through effective communication skills, such as active listening, and assertive speaking. (Institute for Public Administration, 2021) To them, managing conflict is an art, it is something you improve on, not master Individuals can increase their conflict competence through skill-based training, coaching, and having leaders who walk the talk. Equally, direct intervention of conflict resolution practitioners can help organizations become more adept at addressing conflict and developing conflict competent employees. Therefore, conflict management skills and tools are the foundation of many alternative dispute resolution processes such as mediation, meeting, facilitation, negotiation and restorative justice circles and conferencing.

Nature of International Conflicts

Conflict according to Ivorgba (2005) is as old as the history of mankind, and therefore said to be normal, natural and unavoidable, yet it can too generate negative and very destructive impacts, as well as awareness, economic growth and development; conflict is an indication that somehow, there is misunderstanding that requires attention and proper's action.

International conflicts might occur between governments striving to monopolize the exploitation of resources in disputed territories. It could also arise when a nation or state intervenes in the domestic disputes of another state. Occasionally, a conflictensues where the nationals of one state or nation are attacked, dehumanized, killed or maimed by agents of another state or nation. Asobu (2003) noted that conflicts between countries are often presented as occurring between their governments and such situations are either conducted or perceived as inter-governmental struggles, while the bone of contention is usually territory or some other economic resource. It is seldom the welfare of the ordinary citizens of the states or nations concerned that provokes conflict situation in Africa, even when such reasons are branded, they often turned out to be attempts at concealing other agendas

As noted by Asobie (2003) in Baye (2010), a deeper examination may reveal that in essence, international conflict are struggles between primary social classes, clashing across national boundaries. In this regard, it was established that the real actors in international conflicts are social classes (for instance, the ruling elite) which in their struggles, mobilize and use the various institutions to push forward their goals. For the most part contests are related to the control of productive resources as the case between Cameroon and Nigeria. Even when such resources are exploited, the proceeds are typically distributed disproportionately in favour of the ruling classes and their cronies/protégés.

Real causes of conflict between Nigeria and Cameroon

Studies and research cum Wikipedia (2020) established that Bakassi and its natural resources as the main bone of contention between Nigeria and Cameroon borders. According to Wikipedia org, the Bakassi conflict was an ongoing armed dispute over the Bakassi peninsula of Cameroon. The real cause of conflict between Nigeria and Cameroun was territorial border claimed, the natural resources deposit and, rich – oil economy of the region. It was noted by Oladimeji (2021) that, after the independence of Cameroon and Nigeria, the border between them was not settled and there were other disputes. The Nigerian government claimed that the border was theirs prior to the British-German agreements in 1913, and Cameroon claimed the border laid down by the British-German agreements. The border dispute worsened in the 1980s and 1990s after some border incidentsoccurred, which almost caused a war between the two countries. In 1994, Cameroon went to International Court of Justice (ICJ) to avoid war with Nigeria after many clashes occurred in the disputed region. Eight years later the ICJ ruled in Cameroon's favour and confirmed the 1913 border made by the British and Germans as the international border between the two countries. Thus, in June 2006, Nigeria signed the Green -tree Agreement, which marked the formal transfer of authority in the region, and the Nigeria Army partly withdraw from Bakassi. The move was however opposed by Bakassians who considered themselves Nigerians and they stated to arm themselves against the decision.

Natural Resource Based Conflict

Natural resource based-conflict can be defined as a social or political conflict where natural resources contribute to the onset, aggravation, or sustaining of the conflict due to disagreements or competition over the access to and management of natural resources, and the unequal burdens and benefits, profits or power generated thereof (Marie and Arnaud, 2020).

According to Abodun (2021) conflict over natural resources has made Africa the focus of international attention particularly during the last decade. From oil in Nigeria and diamond in the Democratic Republic of Congo, to land in Zimbawe and water in the horn of Africa, the politics surrounding ownership, management, and control of natural resources has disrupted communities and increase external intervention in these countries. Such conflict has the potential to impact natural resources supply globally with both local and wide- reaching consequences.

Natural resource conflicts are disagreements and disputes over access to, and control and use of, natural resources. (Matiru 2000). The conflicts often according to Matiru (2000) often emerge because people have different uses for resources such as forests, water pastures and land or want to manage them in different ways. Disagreements also arise when these interests and needs are incompatible, or when priorities of some user groups are not considered in policies, programmes and projects. Such conflicts of interest are an inevitable feature of all societies.

It was noted that in recent: years, the scope and magnitude of natural resource conflicts have increased and intensified. These conflicts of not addressed, can escalate into, violence, cause environmental degradation, disrupt projects and undermine livelihoods. Therefore, acknowledging that conflict is a common nature of any resource use system is a prerequisite for sustainable management that is participating and equitable.

Alo (2000) reported the natural resource conflicts have always been with us, due in part to the multiple and competing demands on resources. Conflict can arise if user groups are excluded from participating in rural resource management.

They also occur if there are contradictions between local and introduced management systems. Also, misunderstandings and lack of information about policy and programme objectives, contradictions or lack of clarity in laws and policies, inequality in resource distribution or poor policy and programme implementation.Conflict will always exist to some degree in every nation, state, community and at the international level, but it can often be managed. WHAT IS CONFLICT MAMAGEMENT?

Managing Resource Based-Conflict in Nigeria

The mechanism of resource-based conflict management or resolution varies and involved different dimensions. According to Abodun 2000, the ways in which people respond to natural resource conflicts vary considerably. The mechanism may be formal or formal, violent or peaceful, equitable or not. Although the specific strategies may vary, people generally rely on some basic procedural modes to handle conflicts. Therefore, people involved in natural resource conflicts like Cameroon and Nigeria as our case study may take courses of action based on their preferences, their understanding of their options, their perceived likelihood for success and their relationship with an opponent. Finally, here the nature of the conflict itself may prescribe the use of certain legal procedures. The case of Cameroon who involved ICJ over Bakassi land border with Nigeria.

Natural legal systems for managing natural resource conflicts is another good mechanism or strategy.

Adoption of appropriate conflict management and resolution strategies need to be incorporated into natural resources management, policies, programme and projects.

Pendzich, Thomas and Wohigenant 1974 in FAO (2000) project alternative conflict management as the best approach addressing natural resource management which he said. Equally, the different conflict prevention measures through the creation of Joint Cameroun – Nigeria Border commission in 1965;Yaounde 1 Declaration of August 14, 1970; Yaounde 11 Declaration of April 4, 1971 ; Kano Declaration of September 1,1974; Maroua Declaration of June1,1975; and the activities the Cameroun - Nigeria mixed Commission from 2002 to 2007 provided a model for dialogue and mediation in the prevention of armed conflicts in Africa.Other means of border conflict management could be the use of mediation, bilateral, negotiation, facilitation, adjudication, agreement,and dialogue applied can be very much successful.

- ✓ Improve communication and information sharing among interest group.
- ✓ Address the causes of conflicts in a collaborative manner.
- ✓ Transform the conflict management process into a force promoting positive change.
- ✓ Build the capacity of community state, nations, countries and border regions, to manage their conflicts and limit the occurrence and intensity of future conflicts.

The Cameroon vs Nigeria Conflict Management and Resolution. The Background Story on Territorial Dispute

Nigeria and Cameroon have disputed the possession of Bakassi for some years leading to considerable tensions between the two countries. In 1981the two countries went to the brink of war over Bakassi peninsula and another area around lake Chad, at the other end of the two countries common border more armed clashes broken out in the early 1990s. in response, Cameroon took matter to the international court of Justice (ICJ) at the age on 29 March 1994, (Bola 2008, Niger Delta 2002) Ugbudan (2008) reported that before the discovery of huge natural oil deposit in the waters surrounding the Bakassi in the waters surrounding the Bakassi Peninsula, Nigeria and Cameroon were living in harmony, had good international relations had bilateral agreements including neutrality of Cameroonian government during the Nigerian civil war, but very unfortunate that, the natural resource discovered at the border placed Cameroon and Nigeria against each other.

How was Cameroun vs Nigeria border conflict managed?

In managing the border conflict between Cameroon and Nigeria, Uppsala (2019) reported that, in 1994, Cameroon went to the international

court of Justice (ICJ) to avoid war with Nigeria after many clashes occurred in the disputed regions. Eight years later, the ICJ ruled in Cameroon's favour and confirmed the 1913 border made by the British and Germans as the international border between the two countries. Nigeria confirmed it would transfer Bakassi to Cameroon.

The Green-Tree Agreement

Following intense diplomatic offensives and the good offices of the UN Secretary General, Cameroon was able to secure the Green-Tree Agreement with Nigeria on June 12, 2006 brokered by the UN Secretary. General and witnessed by Britain, France, Germany and the United States (Gumne 2006)

Under the agreement, the Nigerian troops were to withdraw within a maximum of ninety days and a transition period of two years was given for the Nigerian administration to be replaced by the Cameroonian administration.

According to the then Nigerian president Olusegun Obasanjo, the Green-tree Agreement was a great achievement in conflict prevention, which practically reflected its cost-effectiveness when compared with the alterative of conflict resolution. He urged that it would represent a model of similar conflicts in Africa and the world at large. Moreover, president Obasanjo had played a leading role in conflict resolution among African States. His refusal to respect the ICJ verdict would have left an unfavourable spot on his record.

In the same spirit with president Obasanjo, president Paul Biya underscored the importance of respecting the ICJ ruling, arguing that their personal credibility and that of the UN depended greatly on its implementation and that it will begin a new era of trust, peace and cooperation between Cameroon and Nigeria.

Baye (2000) on 14 August, 2000 the Nigerian troops, in a solemn ceremony, peacefully withdrew from Bakassi Peninsula, marking the climax of a long and meandry peace process that spanned a period of 12 years. This entails that the effective withdrawal of Nigerian Forces from Bakassi is an indication that it is possible for African Nations who find themselves in conflict over territorial rights and other issues to resolve the matter amicably-thus avoiding Carnage, blood-shed, socio-economic and political dislocations, which many post-independent African countries have suffered. On the other thing being equal, the Green-tree Agreement and the various stages that led up to the handing over is a model for the peaceful settlement of disputes in Africa. The entire process was graced by the treaty of Calabar between Cameroon and Nigeria on 14 August, 2008 that marked the complete withdrawal of the Nigerian administration and police as stipulated in Green-tree Agreement.

The mechanism for natural resource conflict management adopted between Nigeria versus Cameroon over the Bakassi peninsular was more of diplomacy at the last resort, against arms taken against each other. Thus, brought about peace, common understanding and cordial resolution.

Gap in the Resolution/Management of Nigeria Cameroun Resource Conflict

The authors of this paper observed with keen interest that the gap created in the resolution/ management of Nigeria Cameroun resource conflict was that thepopulation who will live with the outcome of the process was excluded, which has negative reactions, calling into question the effectiveness of the process as a settlement While the mediation of the dispute between Cameroun and Nigeria by the UN Secretary-general led to the cessation, facilitated the demilitarization of the conflict zone, demarcated the border, ensure compliance with the ICJ ruling, and promoted cross- border cooperation, the process fell short by excluding the people from the process, Consequently, while the dispute has ceased, other forms of conflict engulf the region.The effect is that post-mediation peacebuilding and an enduring peace may be a mirage in the region, owing to the costly omission of those affected from the mediation process.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Addressing conflict is a prerequisite forsustainable natural resource management. Conflicts over natural resources are growing in scope, magnitude and intensity. If not addressed in an effective and timely manner, natural resource conflict can adversely affect the nation livelihood, the case of Cameroon and Nigeria as a pointer of this paper, and can result in resource degradation. Therefore, the application of

alternative conflict management offers an innovative, multidisciplinary approach to understanding, analyzing and managing conflict both before and after they occur. Alternative conflict management mechanism seeks the development of development of participatory and consensus - building strategies and it builds upon existing formal and informal conflict management mechanism with the border regions and local communities to manage conflict and promote sustainable resource management. Alternative conflict management also seeks to strengthen the capacity of border, local institutions and communities to manage conflict and promote sustainable resource management. The study therefor, conclude that addressing the short comings of conflict prevention and resolutions mechanisms could improve stability, guarantee security and maintain peace.

The paper recommends that, governments, the general public, litigants, mediators and policy makers involved in the prevention and resolution of border conflicts should be trained on the alternative dispute resolution in Africa. The principle of inclusiveness of the affected people in the region is indespensable

Appropriate conflict management and resolution strategies need to be incorporated into border natural resource management policies, programmes and projects.

In spite of the Green-Tree Agreement that brought relative peace, some communities within the border region are still aggrieved, like Bakassi boys etc, there is the need for setting up of a joint commission for the exploration of hydrocarbon in the cross borders areas, and be carefully managed to douse the violent and will also create a platform for win-win solution from both countries.

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