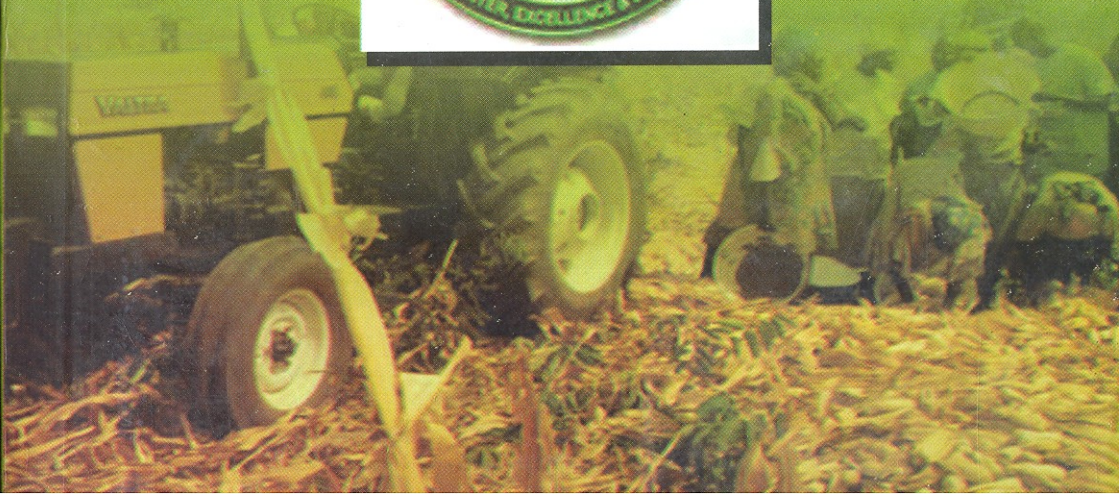
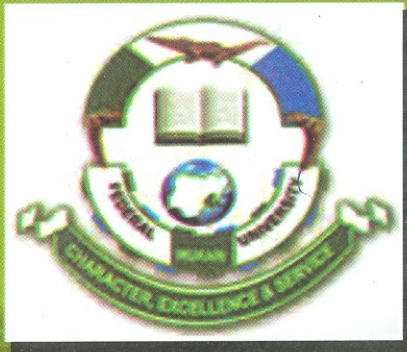


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BOUNDARY CONFLICTS AND THE CHALLENGES OF REGIONAL INTEGRATION IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA: The Case of Nigeria and Cameroun

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Abstract

The African territories that have attained independence and national sovereignty, cannot in a strict sense, be regarded as national states. They do not embrace a common past and a common culture; they are indeed the arbitrary creations of the colonialists. The manner in which European nations descended on Africa during the closing years of the nineteenth century in their scramble for territory was bound to leave a heritage of artificially controlled borderlines, which now demarcate the emergent African states. The genesis of dispute over Bakassi is a legacy of imperialist colonial rule and neo-colonial regimes in Africa. Despite the efforts of colonial authorities at resolving these disputes before the close of the colonial era, they have persisted. This paper attempts to examine how the discovery of oil/gas in Bakassi has made the border issue between Nigeria and Cameroun to be more problematic for the local population, for governance and even diplomacy. It argues that boundary disputes in West African sub-region have affected regional integration. It further explores the International Court of Justice's (ICJ) ruling over the Peninsula and its implications for integration in the sub-region. It concludes that the Nigeria-Cameroun boundary conflict resolution is a great lesson to the world that peace could still be attained through diplomatic negotiation.

Introduction

Man's conscious search for peace dates back to the foundations of the world. Unfortunately, peace has continued to remain elusive in spite of all the efforts to eschew war or any major form of conflict in the world. The dearth of world peace could easily be attributed to the selfishness and insatiability as well as unpredictability of man. If the idea and search for peace is as old as humanity, then the story of conflict is older. The state of peace and security on the African continent remains a pre-occupying phenomenon, with successes and continuing challenges.

Border security has been a fundamental problem in post-independent Africa. Riggs (1997) contends that the most intractable developmental

problem for Africa is its boundaries which obstruct development and perpetuate conflict. Since the attainment of independence by African states, the inherited colonial boundaries have triggered off complex frontier disputes. These have typically consisted of disagreements over the exact position of the dividing lines between states, claims over border territories, or a combination of both (Ikome, 2004). The status of post-independent African frontiers has been a subject of intense debates. Two schools of thought emerged in the 1960s; the revisionists and the anti-revisionist. According to the revisionists the porous and artificial nature of the African boundaries should be re-designed in order to promote peace and development. The anti-revisionists counter this argument by asserting that borders everywhere are artificial and that although Africa has suffered severely due to its partitioned nature, the cost of adjusting her frontiers will surpass the hypothetical benefits.

National borders confirm symbiotically and materially the existence of separate nation states. In the last century, the redrawing and/or dissolution of such borders, be it as a result of conflict or consensus, has determined the nature of the old and new nation-states all over the world, and nowhere more so than in post colonial Africa. Boundary problems affected many states worldwide to the extent that so many border disputes occurred. The modern history of Europe, the home land of the nation-state and its border problematic, confronts the rest of the wider world of the border phenomenon with only one or two choices, first, is the path of war and human tragedy, which constituted the emphasis in the era from the treaty of Westphalia in 1648 to the end of the Second World War, and second, is the option of peaceful cooperation characterized by the regional integration and transborder cooperation endeavours in the period since 1945 (Asiwaju and Igwe, 1988:2).

In Europe, borders no longer constitute a serious problem as regional integration is seriously promoted. In the African continent, however, both late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries had indeed witnessed a phenomenon that was to permanently shape the nature and character of African states and societies (Jummare, 1995:2).

Boundary relations in West Africa present an unsavoury impression. West Africa had been the scene of unhealthy European rivalry,

barefaced intimidation and manipulations for nearly a century. What emerged from this European encroachment was the dismemberment of a region living behind political arrangements which were completely at variance with its traditional form, both conceptually and contextually. The result was that rather than attempting to usher in co-operation, independence for West African states merely heralded a crisis of territorial redefinitions. While some of these territorial claims have lingered, some others have virtually gone into oblivion, but not without leaving a scar in the relations between the feuding countries. We find between Guinea and Liberia the dispute which arose from Liberia's claim to an area near the iron-rich Nimba Mountain. Liberia's claim was the historic alleging that the territory was usurped by France. Also between Liberia and Ivory Coast was Liberia's claim to some areas east of the Cavally River. In both cases Liberia had withdrawn her claims after the independence of both territories. But the crisis in the 1990s in Liberia again raised the question of iron-rich Nimba Mountain in the diplomatic squabbles which arose (Otoide, 1999:69).

However, Africa's boundaries lack homogeneity and functional polities. And, rather than contributing to peaceful relations, its colonially inherited borders have turned out to be a major source of conflict. The Cameroon-Nigeria border typifies the artificial and arbitrary nature of Africa's colonially inherited boundaries. Their long, imprecise, and poorly demarcated border has been the most prominent cause of the volatile relations between these neighbouring West African states.

Statement of Problem

Border and territorial disputes have typically been perceived mainly as an unnecessary and wasteful obstacle to economic and social development. 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 fuelling conflicts within and between African countries. Such conflict

situations typically take the form of territorial disputes over the possession of oil-laden border areas, 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).

African borders are not only many but they are also very porous. Not surprisingly, therefore they are besieged by problems of peace and security, of crimes and criminality, of illegal movements of people and illicit cross-border trade. This worrisome security situation resulted from boundary conflicts has compelled the countries to enter into a series of non-aggression pacts - bilaterally and multilaterally.

In the African continent, it was unfortunate that boundaries were haphazard and artificial creation of colonial masters. It was thus well established that most of the border problems in Africa today posing a challenge to the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence as well as inhibiting effective regional cooperation reflect the unhappy legacy of colonialism. Despite this, this study does not in any way suggest that boundary conflicts did not exist in Africa before colonialism. But the way they existed was quite different from the way we witnessed persistent border problems in Africa today, largely due to ethnic overhang which has now made African frontier cut across and divide the same ethnic groups. Moreso, due to the haphazard and artificial manner the boundaries were created, in any situation where the boundary in question is blessed with abundant natural resources, the dispute persists more and becomes serious. A very good example is the Nigeria-Cameroon boundary dispute over the oil rich Bakassi Peninsula. Resolving such kind of disputes becomes very difficult (Yakubu, 1995). With each geographical entity trying to maintain her territorial integrity. There have been therefore troubles arising from dissatisfaction with the international boundaries. Morocco and Algeria resorted to war, Somalia makes territorial claims against Ethiopia and Kenya, Togo, the home of Ewe groups, insists that Ghana should return to her the portion of Ewe country incorporated into Ghana; the Libya-Chad dispute was resolved in 1994; while the Nigeria-Cameroon dispute over Bakassi was just laid to rest in 2008.

Thus, most developing nations today operate within the boundary demarcation and delimitation drawn-up during colonial era. With particular reference to Africa, Africa's nation states boundaries are all

artificial in nature. African boundaries are aftermath of the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885, where the colonialists made adjustments to those borders simply with pen and ruler on a map of the continent, thus, creating multinational states and arbitrarily splitting nations by state boundaries (Hughes, 1997: 279). Some of them are now a source of instability and wars. Like the examples of the boundary conflicts (whether active now or not) mentioned above portend, African boundaries have oftentimes been known to create a *prima-facie* hostile situation, where proximate countries are enemies. This is because the exact borders of many of these states at the onset of their independence were often an extremely contentious question, that later developed into bitter disputes, often involving enormous casualties. However, on the one hand territories and resources are in some cases the overt reasons why nations fight each other. But on the other hand, a deeper perusal of some international territorial/boundary dispute cases shows that they might be other reasons supposedly latent that may take nations to war over a territory.

After independence, most of Africa became and is still troubled by the legacy of trying to get originally different indigenous groupings to live peacefully in a single country or to get the same ethnic group to live peacefully in different neighbouring countries. As in most of Africa, therefore, the origins of the conflict situation between Cameroon and Nigeria over border issues can be traced to the colonial era and some post independence political activities.

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 to 1913. Territorial disputes occur in border zones and offshore areas that were thought to possess no particular value, but suddenly become very valuable with the discovery of oil. For several decades, neither the Nigerian nor Cameroonian ruling elite showed any particular interest in the Bakassi Peninsula. However, the knowledge that the Bakassi Peninsula harbours important deposits 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 nations; (2) its irregular geographical distribution; and (3) its imminent changing centre of gravity.

Asiwaju (2003:8) observes that despite the vibrancy of the academic debate and the avalanche of scholarly publications which the subjects of boundary conflicts and integration in Africa has generated both within and outside the continent, thus providing the evidence of a sustained appreciation of the continuous relevance of regional integration in Africa, the absence of systematic border focused analysis has continued to deprive the discussion perhaps the most vital and fundamental perspective.

It is against this background that this study intends to examine the effects of boundary conflicts on regional integration in West African sub-region with special reference to Nigeria-Cameroun boundary dispute and to find out whether colonialism is solely responsible for the numerous and persistent border problems in Africa as well as what would be the solutions to the problem.

Colonial Borders and their Consequences in Africa

The basic characteristic of the nation-state is centralised control of territory. Accordingly, its demands for boundaries and boundary maintenance is insatiable. Boundaries mark off the area of jurisdiction vis-a-vis other, especially limitrophe states; they are also required for the purpose of internal differentiation and delineation into the several levels and units of sub-national administration (Asiwaju, 2003:166). Borders are imagined lines that are rarely demarcated on the ground, demonstrating their nature as artificial, historical construction and alleged, political invention.

In the last two decades boundary problems and demarcation-related issues in Africa were the subjects of intense discussion among scholars. The main ones include: Nugent and Asiwaju (1996), Oduntan (2006), and Pratt (2006).

Borders in Africa were introduced during colonialism. During the last quarter of the 19th century, there was a scramble for Africa by European colonial powers. This led to the partitioning of the African continent.

The general demarcation of African boundaries today is as a result of this major partitioning. Subsequent conventions, treaties and exchange of notes resulted in the further partitioning of African countries with artificial and ill-defined boundaries. As indicated by Asiwaju (1984), and Davidson (1992) colonial borders were created without the knowledge, consent and consultation of the African people. Therefore, due to their colonial origin the boundaries of contemporary Africa are usually considered arbitrary. Nugent and Asiwaju (1996), characterized the African borders as follows: "Borders in Africa would be arbitrary and artificial, delineated by exogenous colonial powers with little knowledge of the local communities, dividing pre-existing and homogeneous ethnic groups and thereby stirring frustrations and conflicts." The persistence of African colonial boundaries can be attributed in large measure to both European and African perceptions of boundaries.

There have been many controversies and arguments concerning the arbitrary nature of African boundaries. For Davidson (1992) the arbitrariness of the colonial borders and the dissection of ethnic groups and tribes (and even sometimes families) in the colonial era are the major causes of African conflicts. In other words, the ethnic wars that are caused by the arbitrary nature of African boundaries are the major causes for instability in the continent. Therefore, for Griggs (1997) the mismatch between nations and states is responsible for the continent's instability, civil war, genocides etc. For Loisel (2004: 4) these borders are not only arbitrary but they were also the product of continental and global rivalries among European powers. Therefore, according to Loisel (2004: 4), "Borders were drawn essentially according to the geopolitical, economic and administrative interests of the colonial powers, often taken into account at a global scale. The most often cited example is that of the division of the Hausaland, between today's Niger and Nigeria. The Franco-British treaties of 1904 and 1906 redrew the border in favor of the French side, in exchange for France's renunciation of fishing rights off the coast of Newfoundland" (Miles, 1994: 68).

Odugbemi (1995) argue that everywhere borders are artificial and the case of Africa is not different from others. According to Bach (1999), though African boundaries are arbitrary they have also advantages. Herbst (2000) has also reinforced this argument. He argues that

African boundaries are assets for state consolidation. The arbitrary nature of African boundaries has only few disadvantages, scholars like Barbour (1961), Griffiths (1996), Bayart (1996) and Young (1996) advocate for the status quo of African colonial boundaries despite their arbitrariness because attempting to reshuffle states is more costly than the hypothetical benefits. There are also scholars who advocated for territorial reconfiguration of African boundaries (Bello 1995; Herbst 2000; Sambanis 1999).

Territorial or border disputes are one of the major causes for war, and most of the wars and bloodsheds due to territorial disputes occurred in Africa (Griggs 1994). Due to the arbitrary nature of the colonial boundaries, right after the end of colonialism a border dispute has become one of the causes for conflicts in Africa. Fatile (2011) argues that as a result of growing economic activities these boundaries have resulted in disputes and clashes between neighbouring countries all over the continent. It is important to state therefore, that from the mid-fifties, the story has been that of a myriad of demands for boundary adjustments. The central argument is that boundary disputes in many parts of Africa as argued by Agbi (1986:1) "reflect the unhappy legacy of colonialism". The unhappy according to him has to do with the haphazard and artificial creation of boundaries which were said to be ill-defined in terms of geographical features whose history and precise disposition of colonial powers were never sure of. These unfortunate happenings led to a situation whereby not only the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of most African states have been affected since independence but also has made regional integration very difficult.

In colonial Africa, western powers ignored existing – ethnic, linguistic, religious, trading-links between groups of people, creating artificial zones of influence irrespective of socio-cultural realities. Yet, in spite of such extraneously imposed divisions, the majority of colonial borderlines were retained by the new independent African states. As a result, the African rulers inherited ideas about national space and the importance of properly regulating it from their European colonizers (Nugent and Asiwaju 1996:6). There are inevitably conditions of fluidity along most of the boundary zones in African states which are potential sources of boundary disputes. Consequently, several boundary disputes have broken out between African states.

Boundaries and Regional Integration in Africa

The African region has in the past several decades been the theatre of excruciating state wranglings and antagonisms. Within the geopolitical limits of the region, is one level of civil strife, which present itself in inter-ethnic discord and sharp disagreements over state structure and policies, spanning the Nigeria through crises in Togo, Dahomey, Liberia, Ghana and Sierra Leone. At another level are inter-state conflicts, which in the main have been occasioned by disagreements over inherited shared international boundary. It is difficult to discount a crisis-free international frontier in Africa, perhaps only in questions of degree. Given this spectre, is plausible to contend that since independence, peace in the African region has been illusory (Otoide, 1999:67). In the light of current trends in the international system towards achieving harmonious environment, such deduction is rather unfortunate to Africa given the foet that potentials for peace and amity abound in the region. The thrust of African peace endeavours has been towards integration, which saw the inauguration of African Union (AU) marked the culmination of a concerted local initiative for African economic and political union.

As observed by Hargreaves (1974), boundary relations in Africa present an unsavoury impression. Africa had been the scene of unhealthy European rivalry, barefaced intimidation and manipulations for nearly a century. What emerged from this European encroachment was the dismemberment of a region living behind political arrangements which were completely at variance with its traditional form, both conceptually and contextually. The result was that rather than attempting to usher in cooperation, independence for African states merely heralded a crisis of territorial redefinitions. The drive for self image among the independent states of Africa became anchored on the protection of their inherited colonial boundaries and thus compelled their determination to preserve them, no matter their fragility. While for some states, it was a question of the maintenance of the status quo, for others it was a resort to outright revisionism, to encompass territories to which they claimed historical possession (Otoide, 1999:68-69).

Not only were legal instrument inherited in Africa, Asiwaju (2003:108) noted that the institutions, personnel and the procedures have either remained the same or were derived from the antecedents which Europeans have used in dealing with boundary problems. Little wonder, then, that border relations in Africa have continued to feature the same kind of mutual jealousies, conflicts and tensions, and have

continued to be managed within the framework of the same kind of laws and procedures that were applied to such relations in the Europe of the nation-state. Structurally, the borders of Africa pose as many obstacles to international co-operation and regional integration efforts. For instance, between Republic of Benin and Niger Republic, there is dispute over Lete Island. Equally important has been the occasional friction between Togo and Benin over the location of French – financed development projects. We find between Guinea and Liberia the dispute, which arose from Liberia's claim to an area near the iron-rich Nimba Mountain. Also between Liberia and Ivory Coast was Liberia's claim to some area east of the Cavally River. While there was also crises between Ghana and Togo over the Ewe group (Touval, 1972:54-55).

The point to note is the pervasive character of territorial claims and counter claims in Africa. The prevalence of this phenomenon runs counter to the objective of forging integration in Africa. African scholars therefore in the view of Balandier (1966:44) are quick to point out that the boundaries of modern African states are artificial, of ten arbitrarily drawn with little or no regard for pre-existing socio-economic patterns and networks; that boundaries have erratically split unified culture areas and hopelessly disintegrated coherent natural planning regions and ecosystems; that a great deal of Africa contemporary economic problems have stemmed from the fact of territorial division into such a large number of competitive, rather than complementary national economies; and, finally, that most of the continent's current political problems have originated from the arbitrary nature of the colonial boundaries (which, among other things) results in artificially juxtaposing incompatible or antagonistic groups.

Regional integration demands the effective devaluation of the barriers functions and effects of the boundaries between the participating states. The elimination of the border as barriers and its promotion as bridge between one another constitute the acid test of sincerity of purpose of the national states engaged in a regional integration project. In Africa, and indeed most other regions of the developing world on the other hand, regional integration experiments have not met with similar success. In the particular case of Africa, the records of failure have been quite remarkable (Asiwaju, 2003:4). While the necessity for regional integration has never been in doubt, the effort to date an affair of governments rather than of the people – have not achieve set objectives.

Despite the vibrancy of the academic debate on the avalanche of scholarly publications which regional integration in Africa has generated both within and outside the continent, thus, providing evidence of a sustained appreciation of the continuous relevance of regional integration in Africa, the absence of a systematic border-focused analysis has continued to deprive the discussion of perhaps the most vital and fundamental perspective.

In regards to boundary conflicts and African integration, the crucial point is that, in the past as in the present, "the views.. about African boundaries are not much influenced by historical or comparative analyses, but rather by the political context in which such views were formulated". In such circumstances, African boundaries became scapegoats or something to be blamed for causes which lie elsewhere. Rather than being properly viewed as symptoms, African boundaries have tended to be targeted as the disease and critics have concentrated attention and efforts on the removal of the symptoms and not on the diagnosis and treatment of the disease. Instead of being objectively explored and scientifically analysed for their enormous but generally ignored potentials for international peace, cooperation and development, as required by any serious sense of commitment to regional integration projects, national territories and boundaries are continuously peddled as irritants of conflict, and the associated borderland as, by definition, militarily threatened areas that tend to be neglected by the governments and avoided by private investors (Asiwaju, 2003:15).

However, Africa's boundaries lack homogeneity and functional polities. And, rather than contributing to peaceful relations, its colonially inherited borders have turned out to be a major source of conflict. The Cameroon-Nigeria border typifies the artificial and arbitrary nature of Africa's colonially inherited boundaries. Their long, imprecise, and poorly demarcated border has been the most prominent cause of the volatile relations between these neighbouring West African states. On a number of occasions, the border conflict between these two countries – particularly over the oil-rich maritime areas – has almost escalated into war. Many analysts believe the best way to avert this would be to redraw the border between these countries, in a manner acceptable to both.

Unfortunately, however, the two states have developed divergent views on the border question, which have fed into the pro-revisionist versus anti-revisionist dichotomy in the African border discourse. Nigeria

favours a diplomatic solution that would address the arbitrary nature of colonial boundaries and would permit border adjustments in line with shifting national and regional circumstances. By contrast, Cameroon has stressed a legal solution that hinges on sustaining the inviolability of Africa's frontiers.

Nigeria-cameroun Boundary Disputes and Settlements

Boundary disputes are often bitter, contentious, and can boil over into armed conflict.' This is especially the case in Africa where, at the Berlin Conference of **1884-1885**, colonial powers carved out boundaries without regard for inhabitants and local geography. Fear of ethnic fragmentation in post-colonial Africa led countries to sign the 1964 Organization of African Unity (OAU) Cairo Declaration on Border Disputes among African States. In spite of the Cairo Declaration, African countries continue to call upon international judicial bodies to mediate present day border disputes.

The Nigerian-Cameroon relationship is characterized by mutual distrust and friction emanating from the claims by both countries to the disputed Bakassi Peninsular. The boundary is the longest of all Nigeria's international boundaries and is the most complicated topographically (Vogt, 1987). Consequently, the boundary disputes between Nigeria and Cameroon Republic arising from their long, but ill-defined borders (1680 kilometers or 1050 miles) are of colonial origin. However, it has remained a source of conflict in direct bilateral relations of the two countries since independence (Ate and Akinterinwa, 1992).

The border between Nigeria and Cameroon over the Bakassi Peninsula and Lake Chad areas has been disputed for decades. Among the many border disputes that Cameroun and Nigeria have had in the years since independence, the Bakassi peninsula stands out very clearly as the most serious dispute of all. This portion of the disputed border draws increasing attention, as it became public knowledge that the peninsula is very rich in petroleum and natural gas. Cameroon and Nigeria have come to the brink of war several times over the ownership of the peninsula in 1981 and 1996. The show of arms, has left many dead and wounded. Fighting occurred on the lands surrounding the peninsula, (which are equally disputed), on the peninsula itself, and on the sea. The big question that faces both nations is that of sovereignty over the mineral rich peninsula—and in answering this question, both nations resorted to the use of military force to claim the territory (Mbuhm, 2004).

Dispute along the Cameroun-Nigeria border has been a matter of historic proportions, especially along the Cross River to the Sea section where in lies the Bakassi peninsula. As we have already noted, the most important document that concerns the demarcation of the border between the Cameroons (then Southern Cameroons and *Cameroun*) and Nigeria is the 1913 Anglo-German Treaty. Confidential documents made public in London now shed light on how important an instrument the treaty was. Not only are the pillars of the treaty the only pillars that completely marked the entire border, but also, the entire confidential documents reveal a high degree of reliability—so much that not even Her Majesty's government dared to temper with the treaties that fixed the pillars (Bekker, 2003).

The first noted conflict over the Cameroons and Nigeria coastal area could be traced to the dispute between the Germans and the British over German success in signing treaties with the Cameroon Kings of Akwa and Bell Town in Douala on July 14th 1884. The treaties in effect, proclaimed the German Protectorate extending from the Rio Del Rey area to Gabon. This angered the British Consul, Hewett whose treaties were signed late 17 (we recall here the popular saying in Cameroon history of "Too late Hewett!" The British, perhaps to save face, or perhaps genuinely, criticized the German move but went ahead to downplay the loss of the territory terming it "the flat, swampy, and unhealthy Cameroons-especially as we retain, in the coast of Ambas Bay and the neighboring mountains, almost the only part of that region that can be inhabited by Europeans."

Sensitivity over the Southern Cameroons-Nigerian border arose from the fact that in 1954 the Nigerian government single-handedly, but also to its disadvantage, inaccurately redefined the border, leaving out the Obudu cattle ranch, which lies inland, north of Bakassi.²⁶ In attempting to instruct Southern Cameroons to desist from carrying out the survey, the British government showed preferential treatment when it failed to question why and how the Nigerian government could have made such a mistake. As later correspondence would show, irresponsibility on the part of the Nigerian government was equally responsible for triggering the squabble over the Obudu Cattle ranch.

The contested Bakassi peninsula is an area of some 1.000km of

mangrove swamp and half submerged islands mostly occupied by fishermen settlers (Anene, 1970:56). The discovery of potential oil reserves in the waters surrounding the Peninsula has only helped heighten tensions between the two countries. Since 1993, the peninsula, which apart from oil wealth also boasts of heavy fish deposit, has been a subject of serious dispute, between Cameroon and Nigeria with score of lives lost from military aggressions and tribal squabbles (Olumide, 2002:4).

Disputes along the Cameroon-Nigeria boarder has been a matter of historic proportions especially along the Cross River to the Sea section where in lies the Bakassi peninsula. The dispute over the Bakassi peninsula is not only the product of redefinition of boundary by the colonial powers but more so a product of resource allocation and clash of tradition and modernity in which the pre-colonial history of the ancient kingdom of Calabar haunted the postcolonial reality of contemporary Nigeria and Cameroon (Nicholas and Sam, 2010).

The primary cause of conflict between Cameroon and Nigeria was the discovery of natural crude oil in the region. It is interesting to say that long before the discovery of oil in Bakassi, Cameroonians and Nigerians in the region lived in harmony although few squabbles were registered here and there. The reason both countries did not pay attention to Bakassi is in part because it was a remote area inhabited by people considered to be non-consequential. Notwithstanding, when oil and other natural resource and minerals were discovered in the peninsula, attention from both countries and also from their colonial connections was ignited thus creating tension, argument and in some cases death. This is sad and really hypocritical because if oil was never discovered in this region, both regimes would have cared less about the region with its poor, remote, marshy and nonconsequential inhabitants.

Although the conflict between Cameroon and Nigeria in the Bakassi peninsula is generated by the discovery of oil and natural resources, it is equally a problem of land allocation, underdevelopment and more so the effects that governance has on national identity. The conflict itself lies in the fact that the people of Bakassi live in an area disputed by Cameroon to be theirs but claimed by Nigeria for decades (Nicholas and Sam, 2010).

Nigeria's effort at peace building has been predicated principally on the pursuit of domestic security through the promotion of peaceful relations between herself and neighbours, and between neighbours themselves. It is against this background that Nigeria's role in peace building across Africa should be examined. The dominant role in the mediation of the crises between Liberia and Sierra Leone, Burkina Faso and Mali, and Togo and Ghana are some of the clearest indications of this peace building role. The biggest effort to date however could easily be seen in the case of the conflict with Cameroon over the Bakassi Peninsula. The extreme restraint that Nigeria has demonstrated and its acceptance of the International Court of Justice ruling that ceded the Peninsula to Cameroon is a supreme example of its quest for peace (Sesay, 2003).

The conflict between Nigeria and Cameroon was a boundary and territorial dispute – the Bakassi Peninsula being the most contested. Attempts were made in the past to resolve the dispute through bilateral negotiations, but in 1981, and again in 1993, 1994 and 1996, the dispute nearly escalated to a war. Between 1994 and 2002, the matter was before the International Court of Justice at The Hague. A judgment was pronounced in 2002 by the ICJ on the matter and the Nigerian government issued a statement rejecting the verdict of the International Court. Yet following negotiations between the two countries, facilitated by the UN and crowned by the June 2006 Green-tree Agreement in New York and subsequent instruments, Nigeria completed the withdrawal of its military, administration and police from the Bakassi Peninsula in August 2008. This has been described as a remarkable outcome in conflict resolution in Africa. However, it will be naïve to conclude that the issue has been neatly resolved without a careful examination of the linkages propelling the conflict and resolution processes (Baye, 2011).

Socio-Economic Implications of the Bakassi Conflict Resolution on Integration in West Africa

Reflections on the possible socio-economic implications of the Bakassi conflict resolution are anchored on expenditure-reducing and expenditure-switching effects of peaceful settlements, wealth-generating effects of international credibility, cross-border activities enhanced by the new-found confidence and the need for accompanying

measures. In an escalating border conflict situation, the countries involved generally spend much more on security and military activities. Such military spending often crowds out social spending on health, education and infrastructure, a practice that negatively affects the welfare situation of the citizenry. As hostilities are scaled down through a negotiated settlement, wasteful military spending is scaled down as well, hence the expenditure-reducing effect of peaceful settlement of border conflicts (Baye, 2011).

The social implications of the ruling are that Nigerians, who have lived in Bakassi all their lives, will have to face the sad reality of having to evacuate a region that is part and parcel of them immediately. Most people living in that areas have their businesses located there and so leaving the area will mean detaching them from their source of income. Moreover, all infrastructural facilities, including hospitals, schools, recreational centres, that were originally put in place by the country stands the risk of being forfeited resulting in a fruit less effort and loss of income.

Another far-reaching implication of the judgment is the strategic or security implication for the Nigerian state. The victory of Cameroon will make the nation lose its eastern access to the Atlantic. This implies that without Cameroon's approval, Nigeria's naval ships cannot move freely to southern Africa. For security reasons, this is not too palatable and not in the interest of the nation (Aghemelo and Ibhasebhor, 2006).

At the same time, there are potentials and incentives to switch from military spending to social sector spending, a situation that will enhance the general welfare of the population. In the case of the Bakassi Peninsula dispute settlement between Cameroon and Nigeria, both countries will realise savings in military and associated logistical expenditures. Also, the peaceful settlement of the Bakassi dispute has increased the international credibility of the presidents of Cameroon and Nigeria, as well as that of the economy of both countries. This new-found credibility would act as an incentive to both domestic and foreign investors to invest and create employment opportunities, which will provoke income-generating activities that are badly needed to reverse the dismal socio-economic situation of the bulk of the populations of both countries. In addition, due to historical and ethno-linguistic ties between Cameroon and Nigeria, even during hostilities, trans-border trading did not stop (Konings 2005). It is expected that with the

peaceful handing over of Bakassi to Cameroon, fruitful socioeconomic activities between the two countries will be revamped. In this regard, it will be in the interest of both countries if more formal trading arrangements are negotiated, so as to curb smuggling, enhance the competitiveness of home industries and increase tax revenues accordingly.

From the Nigerian perspective, this declaration meant many things. Firstly, the social implication is that Nigerians, who have lived in Bakassi all their lives, would have to face the sad reality of having to evacuate a region that is part and parcel of them, thus losing not only their cultural connection but also their source of livelihood and resources. Politically, the decision made the Nigerian government seem weak and unable to solve the problems of the citizens. Economically, the decision could mean that oil companies had to leave the area and relinquish the oil wells to the Cameroonians, thus crumbling the Nigerian economy. Although negative implications could easily be seen from the Nigerian perspective, cooperating with the decision could bring Nigeria respect in National politics as a promoter of world peace and it could also be a diplomatic strategy to lobby Nigerians acceptance as a member of the UN's security council.

For one, there are fears that losing Bakassi to Cameroon may mean the loss of the entrance to the Calabar port to Cameroon. This is because the entrance to the Calabar port lies in the Calabar channel and going by the terms of the 1913 agreement between Britain and Germany which the World court relied upon as the authority for Cameroon's claim to Bakassi, the channel belongs to Cameroon.

Also, the loss of Bakassi has also placed the multi-million Naira Export processing zone (EPZ) in serious danger. This is because the Calabar EPZ depends largely on this important segment, it would only mean that the port belongs to Cameroon out rightly or Nigeria will have to pay charge.

From the Cameroonian perspective, this judgment was not only a boost to the Biya regime but it assured the general population of the important of the United Nations as an organization that handles international issues. The only problem left now if for the Cameroonian government to integrate the people of Bakassi into the system and work hard to bring development in the region so that they do not feel isolated. It will also be the wish of the general population that the

government should start the exploitation of oil from Bakassi so as to rescue the country from economic crisis and the impoverishment that has come to slow growth and in some cases bring death to many.

Cross-border activities will be enhanced further if Cameroon and Nigeria push forward their intentions to initiate a number of political and economic confidence-building measures, and to consider the adoption of a treaty of friendship and non-aggression between them. Furthermore, accompanying measures by Cameroon, Nigeria and the international community, as well as other socio-economic and political developments emanating from the entire border conflict settlement are needed to enhance the peace dividend.

The government of Cameroon needs to carry out important infrastructural developments in the health, education, road, water and telecommunications domains in the Peninsula. It will be encouraging if the international community were to recognise and reward the remarkable level-headedness exercised by the two statesmen, Paul Biya and Olusegun Obasanjo, in the conflict resolution process, and subsequently also by President Yar'Adua of Nigeria. Such a reward, which could take the form of a joint peace award, might act as a catalyst to encourage other countries in conflict to opt for peaceful settlements.

Concluding Remarks

African boundaries have been described as arbitrary, vexatious, and even as scandals of history. Border agreements have been termed ambiguous, obscure, inconclusive, and illegal. Understandably, at independence and thereafter, African boundaries have triggered off complex boundary disputes. These have typically consisted of disagreements over the exact position of the dividing lines between states, claims over border territories, or a combination of the two. International boundaries that are clearly defined and well-managed are very important for good international relations, national and local security, efficient local administration and for using natural resources efficiently (Pratt 2006).

The colonial powers subjugated and divided Africa disregarding the relationship between territorial boundaries and the anthropogenic homogeneity and/or characteristics of the various ethnic groupings. International conflicts were depicted as being shaped by: the nature and size of the booty that would accrue from the conflict, the nature of the relationship between the social classes that constitute the main actors in the conflict, and the nature of domestic politics in nation-

states that form the bases for the contending parties. The effective withdrawal of the Nigerian military, police and administration from Bakassi indicates that it is possible for African countries in conflict to resolve matters amicably and avoid carnage, blood-shed, socio-economic and political dislocations, which many post-independent African nations have inflicted on themselves.

The frontier policy of the two countries have unduly restricted to emphasis on the legal and geo-political aspects of boundaries especially from a state-centric approach. Consequently, the question that has reverberated in the minds of the policy-makers has always been how states dealt with their borderlands and not vice-versa. Although the Cameroon-Nigeria cooperation in development and security initiatives has taken into consideration joint exploitation of shared resources, joint naval patrol, provision of social amenities and the general welfare of the borderlands people, it is still up to the two countries to establish the institutions which will manage these reforms (Elong, 2011).

The future of Cameroon-Nigeria frontier policy will depend on the political will and commitment by their leaders to deliver on their promises as they have done in the implementation of the ICJ judgment. There is no doubt that neglect of border areas contributes to the problem of border incursions. Cameroonians along the Nigerian border use mostly foreign currency, watch Nigerian television, listen to Nigerian radio and are cut off from contacts with their own country. Cameroon's new border policy should, therefore, continue to provide for the construction of schools, hospitals, roads, agricultural posts, telecommunications network, pipe-borne water, etc. It is perhaps only by carrying out infrastructural developments and effectively occupying border areas that future incursions can be checked and sustainable peace guaranteed. Rewarding the main protagonists could be catalytic in replicating peaceful settlements of similar international disputes (Baye, 2011). One way to encourage integration in West Africa is by a complete change of outlook or orientation towards the border communities. The peculiar circumstances of the border communities must be appreciated by the central authorities and a harmonious cord between them. Inter-communal harmony between the border communities. While not proposing any act that would threatened the cherished sovereignties of African states, it must be stressed that security is better guaranteed in an atmosphere devoid of secret and underground manoeuvres. These are the hallmarks of dissatisfied border communities (Otoide, 1999).

It is important to note that there are inevitably conditions of fluidity along most of the boundary zones of Nigeria and her neighbours, which are potential sources of boundary disputes. As it is well known, several boundary disputes have broken out between African states and, so far there is no acceptable criteria which may afford the best guide to a settlement of an "Unhappy Legacy of Colonialism". It is therefore hoped that the maturity and high level diplomacy exhibited by these two countries will be emulated by other African States with similar border problems (Aghemelo and Ibhasebhor, 2006).

There is an urgent need for a drastic change of African attitude towards boundaries in Africa. As noted by Otoide (1999:76), it is a clarion call that demands the collective attention of every group or institution in Africa if drive towards a meaningful integration process is to be achieved in Africa. To the extent that we cannot dismantle the colonial boundaries, it therefore behoves on everyone that one lasting divisive impact of colonial rule, which we must contend with is boundary. All postulations regarding free market and migration within the sub-region would obviously come to nothing if the management of the boundaries that separate the nation states remain a veritable source of brutal conflict and mistrust. West African states must now grab the bull by the horns.

To conclude, the Nigeria-Cameroun boundary conflict resolution is a great lesson to the world that peace could still be attained through diplomatic negotiation and a sign that the UN could still be looked upon as a world unifier and promoter of peace among nations.

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