

Nigerian-Benin Borderland Conflict; A Case Study of Conflicts Impact on Lolo and Madecalli Border Communities

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1 INTRODUCTION

Problem: Intense patriotic zeal and nationalist philosophical expressions have created complicated tension in the two border areas of Nigeria and Benin – Lolo and Madecalli. This has resulted in conflicts affecting both communities in the two nations.

Proposed Research Outline: Research available literature on border conflicts to gain ideas of conflict origins, develop a research design to approach the impact on residents and propose recommendations for available research and resolutions.

2 BACKGROUND

Many of West Africa's borders were imprecise due to the West African boundary's haphazard nature designed arbitrarily by European colonialists. Some of these boundaries are drawn straight lines, and others often cut across ethnic and linguistic lines. In other words, previously related and politically united communities found themselves on opposite sides of the boundary lines. The poor boundary demarcation creates an avenue for cross-border community conflicts in West Africa's border regions [4]. The inadequate précised demarcated boundary between Lolo and Madecalli over Tungan-Kungi area presents a challenge to cross-border relations between Nigeria and the Benin Republic. The British and French Colonialists divided the two entities unilaterally without taken into cognisance the dynamics of the affected communities [6].

Based on the Anglo-French convention of 1898, the Lolo-Madecali border is defined by a line from "pillar 35" (which is on top of a hill about 2km south Madecali) to River Niger. The two towns remain undefined while the mathematical lines dividing the two communities are variously modified by the Anglo-French Agreement of October 1906; the Demarcation Agreement of July 1912; the Exchange of Notes of February 1914 and the 1960 Description [3]. However, claims over farmland became an issue of great concern for both communities. On both sides, claims are laid to the disputed area of Tungan-Kungi.

The Lolo residents cited both historical sentiments, migration trends and marital linkages to justify their claims. In contrast, The Madecali residents attached factors including land rights, original occupancy and administrative control of the area [2]. Intense patriotic zeal and nationalist philosophy expression further complicate tension in the two entities' border area. The dispute led to community cross border conflict between Lolo and Madecali in 2009 over the actual boundary demarcation, nationhood's legal status, and ownership of the territorial land [10]. Other factors influencing the conflicts include; agricultural and food insecurity, poverty, decrease in trans-border trades, unemployment, hike in prices of imported goods, forced displacement, poor orientation and reintegration, proximity to formal education and lack of clear border control policies. The effect is also visible with the shortage of infrastructure and disorganisation of the family system and threatened the border residents' living standard [7]. Therefore, this research examines the nature of the 2009 border conflict between Lolo and Madecali and its impacts on inter-state relations between Nigeria and Benin.

3 PROPOSED WORK

3.1 Aims and Objectives of the Study

The study will examine the nature of the 2009 border conflict between Lolo and Madecali and its inter-state impacts between Nigeria and Benin. The following are the study objectives;

1. To examine the factors responsible for cross-border community conflicts in West Africa.
2. To examine the causes of the border community conflict between Lolo and Madecali communities of Nigeria and Benin.
3. To examine the impacts of the Lolo and Madecali border community conflict on Nigeria and Benin inter-state relations
4. To assess the effectiveness of the mechanisms in resolving the conflict between Lolo and Madecali.

3.1.1 Research Questions

1. What are the factors responsible for cross-border community conflicts in West Africa?
2. What are the causes of the border community conflicts between Lolo and Madecali communities of Nigeria and Benin?
3. What the impacts of the Lolo and Madecali border community conflict on Nigeria and Benin inter-state relations
4. How effective are the mechanisms put in place for resolving the conflicts between Lolo and Madecali?

3.2 Rationale

Although there is extensive literature to suggest the origin of Nigeria-Benin border conflict, the research has not identified the nature of the 2009 border conflict between Lolo and Madecali communities and its impacts on inter-state relations between Nigeria and Benin. Therefore this research aims at studying the impacts using updated methodologies and approach. In this proposal, the foundational knowledge of border conflicts requires that heavy consideration extended to understanding the socio-economic, humanitarian and administrative deficiencies affecting both communities. The expected outcome is to proffer recommendations for conflict resolution to the communities.

3.3 Methodology

3.3.1 Study Design

The study employs the qualitative research method through an empirical survey by conducting specialised interviews, Focus Group Discussions and direct observation, i.e., interactions with respondents are organised systematically, and information was sourced through specialised interviews.

3.3.2 Study Area/ Location

Lolo community is located in Kebbi State, Nigeria, sharing the same border with Madecali in the Benin Republic. Both countries have had trade relations for a long time, which has significantly increased their economic growth. Madecali and Lolo are typical of these border markets which developed out of this economic necessity. The large-scale economic activities taking place in Madecali and Lolo towns attracted a large number of people to settle in the towns. Eventually, the same ethnic groups are found along with the two countries' border areas, namely Nigeria and Benin (Tandia, 2010).

3.3.3 Inclusion Criteria

The respondents for this study will be thirty-one (31) individuals from Lolo and Madecali border communities. The selection criteria are seven (7) border security officials (Immigration, Customs and Gendarmes present at the border area), seven (7) officials from the ECOWAS Commission, five (5) the National Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) of Nigeria and Benin. NBC is the standing institutions responsible for liaising with neighbouring states to ensure excellent and friendly border relations. The last Twelve (12) participants are informants and focus groups from Lolo and Madecali communities example community leaders.

3.3.4 Sample and Sampling technique

Purposive sampling is chosen for officials in the ECOWAS and NBCs. The informant interviews and focus group discussion is the basis for gaining responses from the two communities of Lolo and Madecali. The selected residents are chosen because both communities are the victims of the 2009 conflicts and undertake recurrent daily activities along the border route.

3.3.5 Data Instruments and Collection

In chronological order, the study will be carried out using the following methodological tools:

1. Individual Interviews with Officials in the ECOWAS Commission
2. Individual Interviews with Official in the NBCs of Nigeria and Benin Republic
3. Individual Interviews with security official.
4. Focus group discussion with the residents.

This research will be conducted using both the primary and secondary data sources. For the primary sources, data will be collected from an empirical survey in the ECOWAS Commission, the NBCs of the Nigeria and Benin, and the border communities of Lolo (in Bagudu Local Government Area of Kebbi State) and the Madecali Communities (in the Benin Republic). The field survey's objective will be to obtain data through observation and direct request. The study will employ a qualitative research method in understanding the nature of the Lolo and Madecali border community conflict and its impacts on inter-state between Nigeria and Benin. The study will gather data from the national and sub-national levels in Nigeria and Benin.

3.3.6 Method of Analysis

The analysis method to be adopted in this study is a descriptive research method based on discourse analytical skills.

3.4 Work Packages

This section provides the details required to achieve the research project aims and objectives. The PhD research paper deliverables require a three to four years period for completion. The following flow is established:

1. Literature review and analysis: Fundamental literature about border conflicts will be reviewed and cross-referenced across related topics globally.
2. Data Instrument Design: This package designs the instruments for conducting the research. The research model, data gathering technique, study population, sample selection and manipulation criteria, data analysis and other relevant aspects constitute the data instrument design.
3. Field initial report feedback: Initial report to receive constructive feedback from research sponsors and supervisors on field survey and interviews. This package sets a critical path for the research direction and ensures the progress of the project.
4. Development of enhanced field report and discourse analysis.
5. Final Evaluation and Report: Present a report of the final findings of the research project—additionally, futuristic strategy recommendations towards advancement in the research of border conflicts between Nigeria and Benin.

4 ETHICAL ISSUES AND SOCIAL IMPACT

The discussions will be conducted in a private and well-safeguarded location to avoid external influence and violence on both communities' participants. The researcher will seek permission from the respondents through oral and written documents. Writing under a pseudonym to protect each participant's identities ensures their safety after the paper is published. Non-maleficence to participants ensures the study poses no threat to any respondents. If respondents are uncomfortable during the research, the researcher will cover such loopholes by creating anonymous responses to the respondent's private details.

5 BENEFICENCE TO PARTICIPANTS

Though there is no significant and direct contribution of the proposed study to the respondents, the study will help proffer information regarding fostering regional integration within West Africa confine and creating sustainable peace in the border. It can also help them critically analyse the situation from a distance and learn to avoid further border crisis. During the focus group discussion, each member is provided with the avenue to express their opinion regarding the situation and critically analyse and reference other border crises. The implication of this is to learn from past mistakes.

6 MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR RESEARCH

The complete this PhD research, the management plan provides a title line for deliverables. See (Appendix A – Gantt Chart). The first deliverable is the literature review of existing research on border conflicts in the two communities, West Africa and globally. This also requires access to unpublished reports; therefore, it will take 7 months. The next task is identifying the data collection design and definition of research terms, e.g. impact groups; this will take 3 months. Additionally, each impact group requires evaluation – 6 months. The next deliverable is the criterion for field data collection. This evaluates the study population's selection criteria and sample participants, conducts surveys, and travels to location and interviews; therefore, it will take 9 months. An initial field report will be submitted to the supervisor for feedback; this will take 3 months. Furthermore, discourse analysis from supervisor feedback will take 3 months. Finally, create the complete report on findings of conflict impact and recommendations for further research and resolutions will take 5 months. Therefore, the research will take approximately 36 months.

7 JUSTIFICATION OF RESOURCES

Access to the right resources is critical in achieving the research project. Access to researchers on border conflicts and residents with experience is advised. A vital resource is access to ECOWAS and NBC officials, security personnel and informants as participants to gather accurate data via in-depth Telephone calls, email exchange and virtual face-to-face meetings (Irvine, 2011). Other resources include research papers, books, journals, weblinks and report to provide a rounded knowledge of the research project. At some

time during the research, there will be a need to travel to the communities to understand the demarcation borderlands further.

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GANTT CHART

The Gantt Chart (created in Microsoft Excel) provides an at a glance proposal of the phases required to complete the research study of the impact of border conflicts in Nigeria and Benin borderlands.

