

Boundary Conflict Management Strategies in Nigeria: A Critique

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Abstract

The creation of states and administrative sub-units aimed at further developing rural areas in Nigeria has generated new challenges. Ethnic, religious, intra and inter-state boundary conflicts over land ownership and usage, mineral resources royalties and grazing rights between contiguous communities have become prevalent. These conflicts have resulted in loss of lives, destruction of property and internal displacements. This study examined boundary conflicts management strategies in Nigeria within the context of Adadama and Amagu communities border conflict between Cross River and Ebonyi states. Primary data for the study was generated from twenty-five key informant and in-depth interviews with relevant officers of government institutions including the National Boundary Commission, Office of the Surveyor-General of the Federation, Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution. Representatives of Cross River and Ebonyi states governments as well as community, women and youth leaders in the two communities. Secondary data for the study were retrieved from relevant publications. Findings indicate that institutional strategies for border conflicts management in Nigeria are strictly administrative mechanisms devoid of win-win outcomes which is the hallmark of conflict management. However, in the specific case of Adadama and Amagu, the two communities established an indigenous Peace Committee to manage grievances arising from the border dispute. The indigenous strategy enhanced tolerance and peaceful co-existence in the two communities. The study recommends hybridization of institutional and indigenous mechanisms in the management of border conflicts in Nigeria.

Keywords: Boundary, conflict management strategies, internal boundary

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1. Introduction

The internal boundaries of Nigeria have continued to change from 1914 starting with the amalgamation to creation of regions and states. In 1963, the Mid-Western region was created out of the then Western region. Four years later, a more drastic restructuring of the nation's borders was undertaken by the military administration of General Yakubu Gowon. This led to twelve states structure of Nigeria. Thereafter, another exercise of states creation was carried out in 1976 when General Murtala Ramat Mohammed's administration introduced a nineteen states structure for Nigeria. In 1987 and 1991, two and nine additional states were created respectively by General Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida's administration. The regime of General Sani Abacha created another six new states in 1996, bringing to thirty-six the number of states in Nigeria excluding Abuja (the Federal Capital Territory of Nigeria). It should be noted that all the states creation exercises except that of 1963 were carried out side by side with the creation of local government areas, chiefdoms, emirates etc. What emerged from the various states creation exercises in Nigeria are thirty-six states (excluding Abuja- the Federal Capital Territory), seven hundred and seventy four (774) local government areas, several districts, villages and community areas.

As states and local administrative units continued to be created, there grew with it conscious inclination by Nigerians towards 'statism' at the expense of nationalism and patriotism leading to inter/intra state, inter/intra local government boundary conflicts and expansionists tendencies all in the quest for land and mineral resources. The scale and complexity of boundary conflicts led the Murtala-Obasanjo administration to appoint the Justice Nasir Boundary Adjustment Commission in 1976 to examine boundary disputes in Nigeria. Furthermore, the National Boundary Commission (NBC) was established by Decree No.38 of 17th December 1987, (CAP 238 Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 1990) to focus solely on boundary determination, delineation, demarcation and management in Nigeria.

According to the National Boundary Commission (2017), there are eighty-six (86) inter-state boundaries in Nigeria. These inter-state boundaries can be grouped into two categories:

1. Resolved/undisputed boundaries in Nigeria – These are boundaries that have been investigated, field traced, defined and resolved after series of meetings. There are thirty-eight (38) boundaries in this category. However, it must be noted that there may still be sectors in some of them that are still in dispute.
2. Disputed/unresolved boundaries with on-going action in Nigeria – These are boundaries receiving National Boundary Commission's attention and are at different stages of the intervention process. There are forty-eight (48) boundaries in this category.

This implies that more than half of inter-state boundaries in Nigeria are disputed. Violence associated with boundary conflicts in Nigeria have resulted in loss of lives, destruction of property, internal displacement of persons, amongst others (Affe, 2016, Odogwu, 2017, Balogun, 2014, Okutu, 2015, 2016, 2017). Thus, using Adadama and Amagu communities' boundary conflict between Cross River and Ebonyi states as case study, this paper undertook a critique of boundary conflict management strategies in Nigeria with a view to interrogating their nature, effectiveness and the emerging challenges. The study findings were derived from primary and secondary data sources. Primary data were retrieved from key informant interviews while secondary data were sourced from relevant publications.

2. Methodology

This study utilised the qualitative method of data collection; thus, in-depth and key informant interviews served as instrument for the collection of primary data while secondary data was sourced from journals articles, books and other relevant publications. A total of twenty-five key informant and in-depth interviews was conducted with relevant government institutions including National Boundary Commission, Office of the Surveyor-General of the Federation, Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution, Abuja, representatives of Cross River and Ebonyi state governments, community, women and youth leaders in the two communities.

The data collection process was guided by the research ethics of voluntary participation, anonymity, and respect. First, the process of recruiting respondents was determined by respondents' willingness to participate in the study. Second, respondents were assured of anonymity and confidentiality of their personal information. Third, the researcher ensured that no responses were identified with the respondents. Confidentiality and anonymity of responses helped to reduce the incidence of bias. The study findings were content-analysed thematically.

3. Causes of Boundary Conflicts in Nigeria

Since Nigeria gained independence in 1960, the country witnessed years of tumultuous conflicts between various ethnic groups. Land issues are one facet of the conflict dynamic in Nigeria. Fabusoro, Matsumoto, and Taeb (2008) noted that access to land has been shown to be important in poverty reduction, economic growth, and the empowerment of the poor. The importance of territory is perhaps why land conflicts are so prevalent, and why they are more difficult to solve than other conflict issues. Olabode and Ajibade (2010:263) observed that timing is crucial; "if two adversaries are unable to settle their territorial questions early in their relationship, the resulting dispute is likely to last for many years." If a dispute lasts for years, a legacy of conflict is constructed that makes conflict management intervention efforts much more difficult. This scenario appears to be the case in the boundary dispute between Adadama community in Cross River state and Amagu community in Ebonyi state. The historical analysis of the conflict provided earlier indicates that the two communities have a history of border conflict dating back to pre-independent Nigeria. Therefore, there seem to be a legacy of conflict between the two communities which has hampered conflict management interventions.

The Nigeria Watch (2015) database indicates that between 2006 and 2014, violent deaths over land issues accounted for 3.79% of all violent deaths across the country. This shows that land conflict is a significant cause of death in Nigeria. However, the low percentage here could be due to a few reasons: first, land conflicts tend to be under-reported in comparison to ethnic, oil, and religious conflicts, which are often accorded prominence in news reports. The second could be the way land issue conflicts are coded in Nigeria Watch's database, which may identify more conflicts as "criminal" or "political" rather than over land issues, even though land may well play a role in these conflicts.

According to Jibo, Simbine and Galadima, (2001), studies on land conflict in Nigeria indicate that the majority of violence in the Middle Belt is due to land issues. Another important consideration is that not all land conflicts in the Middle Belt and the north are between pastoralists and farmers. In Benue and Taraba states, the Tiv are also in conflict with the Jukun, another farming group. This dispute arises from differing concepts of land use and farming; The Tiv practice a shifting cultivation pattern wherein they move from plot to plot each season, while the Jukun remain in the same farm plots year after year. When the Tiv encroach upon Jukun land, conflict ensues (Roma, 2008). Conflicts over land in the south-west and south-east regions of Nigeria has mostly centered around land ownership and boundary while land disputes in the south-south centers around oil. Communities in the south-south region occasionally have disagreements with the federal government and international oil companies over land and mineral rights and royalties in addition to environmental degradation of land used for fishing and farming due to oil spills. The International Crisis Group (2008) reports that communities across the Delta are increasingly insistent in their demands for agreements that grant them rights in the exploitation of oil and gas reserves on their land.

The Land Use Act of 1978 gave the federal government of Nigeria ownership of all land in the country. It also empowers the federal government to allocate lands in its discretion. There have been many calls for the abrogation of the Land Use Act; Dode (2012: 248) describes the abrogation of the Act as an event which "will

give the people direct control over their landed property, with which they will have the liberty to do business with banks and other organisations, and thus lead to their economic enhancement.”. The call for a review of the 1978 Land Use Act is occasioned by allegations of abuse by both the Federal and state governments. It should be noted that the Land Use Act stipulates that the states hold lands across the country in-trust for the federal government.

Katseli (2004) argued that at the heart of the various conflicts in Nigeria lies land because of its high material and symbolic values. Evidence shows that whether they result from pre-existing agrarian tensions or not, conflict situations in rural societies deeply affect the politics of land, and whether it is at the heart of a conflict or gets dragged into it. Land requires a careful approach by policy makers because of its central element in the evolution of societies and therefore the place of neutrality should be adopted in land conflict management. Boundary and land related conflicts in Nigeria is increasingly becoming frequent especially in the dimensions of ethnic conflict relatively linked to issues revolving around land.

4. Conflict Management Strategies

Conflict management involves strategies deployed in seeking to control conflict before, during and after occurrence. Various scholars such as Leffel, Hallam and Darling (2012), Pepin (2005), Tanner (2000), Zartman (1997), Huseman (1977), Marion (1995) and Green (1984) have explained conflict management noting that it is more elaborate and wider in concept and application. It involves conflict resolution and transformation when and where necessary. It covers the entire gamut of managing conflicts positively at different stages, including institutional strategies to prevent conflict. Therefore, conflict management encompasses conflict limitation, containment, litigation and conflict prevention. Sanders (2011), Gonclaves (2008), Ojiji (2006), Wilmot and Hocker (1998) outlined some strategies for managing conflicts; these include: clarification of communication and the checking of perceptions, which, in turn, involve the following: speaking out what is in one’s mind or heart, listening carefully, expressing strong feelings appropriately, remaining rational, asking questions, maintaining a spirit of give and take, avoiding harmful statements, asking directly what is going on, telling others one’s opinion, looking for flexible “shades of gray” solutions, recognising the power of initiating a co-operative move, identifying conflict patterns, and engaging in negotiations of agreements and settlements.

Afolabi (2017) and Oyeshola (2005) further argued that conflict management incorporates arbitration, litigation and adjudication especially in relation to group, national and international conflicts. In relation to interpersonal conflicts, two categories, namely partial/temporary conflict management and potentially damaging conflict management are exhibited. Under the first category, three strategies are distinguishable, namely bargaining, bandage and role dominance approaches. These approaches have their specific characteristics. The bargaining strategy can manage or resolve the immediate conflict. It focuses on demands of the conflicting parties and uses concessions and compromise as instruments of managing the conflict. Everyone gains something but also loses something. In this strategy, areas of agreement are emphasised and disagreement ignored or glossed over. The disadvantage of this approach is that it can involve an individual or group giving up things which are important to them in order to arrive at “superficial agreement”. This approach can be useful if continuing the conflict without agreement would put too much pressure on a relationship. Usually, this approach does not focus on improving the overall relationship of the parties in conflict. The strategy is dominant in many diplomatic discourses.

The bandage strategy ‘pretends’ that there is no real problem and as such, it does not demand any serious discussion. Meanwhile, the relationship continues. This approach can provide temporary relief, but does not resolve the root cause. Usually, the conflict returns. The role dominance approach defines people and groups in terms of their social roles. It can provide a resolution to the immediate conflict but normally disempowers the one in the “lesser” role. It also perpetuates an unequal power relationship.

In potentially damaging conflict management strategy, the conquest strategy can bring a temporary cessation to the immediate conflict. It creates a “loser” and a “conqueror”, but neither party ultimately benefits as the “conqueror” is deprived of the full contribution of the “conquered”. In the context of avoidance strategy, it may be argued that some conflicts may not be worth addressing, if they are very minor nuisances in the overall relationship. However, avoidance strategy only postpones dealing with conflict and as a consequence, the conflict usually escalates. All parties are disempowered. Generally, there are several strategies in managing conflict which are further discussed below:

4.1 Communication Strategies

Communicating during conflict is essential, though, it can be perceived differently by each party. Fleetwood (1987) noted that no meaningful conflict management can be discussed without linking it with communication. Similarly, Salleh and Adulpakdee (2012), observed that poor communication leads to misunderstanding which in turn breeds conflict. Communication has six parts: “a source, an encoder, a message, a channel, a decoder, and a receiver”. Tack (2012) argued that accounting for the multifaceted characteristics of communication difficulty is

understandable. Adding to this are the sometimes purposeful roadblocks of generalising, summarisation, confusion and misrepresentations. When taking into account the complexity of communication, the issue of an acceptable resolution is more probable. Leas (1982) lists some useful items during the de-escalation phase of a conflict. These items include boundary establishment, increased structure to the procedure, heeding to similar resolutions, responding to threats with reaffirmations of position, and involvement of an authority as a third party. Leas (1982) further emphasises the forward movement of conflict management through the stages of searching for answers, verbalisation of differences, and stimulation of an environment where joint resolutions can be effective.

Summarily, communication therefore can be said to be the process of sharing and exchanging information between individual or a group and this is a vital instrument in conflict management because it involves the use of signs, symbols, language and gestures. Adejimola (2009) noted that where there is poor or absence of communication, conflict may likely escalate while exchanging information can assist in effective resolution of conflict. Therefore, it can be argued that the success of conflict management strategies to a large extent depend on effective communication. Kazimoto (2013) further reaffirmed the role of communication in conflict management in his submission that the most significant and consistent element in effective conflict management is sincere, honest, open and clear communication.

4.2 Collaborative Strategies

According to Froyd (2010), the collaborating mode is high assertiveness and high cooperation. Collaboration in conflict management strategies can be described as “putting an idea on top of an idea in order to achieve the best solution to a conflict”. The best solution can be defined as a creative solution to the conflict that would not have been generated by a single individual. The collaborative mode is appropriate when conflict is important to the people who are constructing an integrative solution, when the issues are too important to compromise, when merging perspectives, when gaining commitment, when improving relationships, or when learning.

Collaboration combines a high concern for both people and objectives and works best when all parties are committed to the resolution of the conflict. Hence, collaborating strategy includes listening to needs and goals in order to achieve a common goal. Gonclaves (2008) described collaboration strategy in conflict management as a means of reaching a better solution through communication and cooperation. This results in a win-win situation. This is based on effective listening, and confronting the situations in a non-threatening way. The parties focus on the problem, not the personalities. It is a situation where both parties win. Ojiji (2006) further posited that collaborative strategy in conflict management is more socially adaptive as it leads to a solution that is acceptable to the parties involved. Collaborative skills are active listening, non-threatening confrontation, identifying concerns and analysing input.

4.3 Compromising Strategy

Froyd (2010) states that the compromising strategy in conflict management is moderate assertiveness and moderate cooperation. Compromise strategy may be described as “giving up more than you want”. It involves both parties in a conflict giving up some of their demands in order for the conflict to be resolved. Times when the compromising strategy is appropriate can be when dealing with issues of moderate importance, when there is equal power status, or when there is a strong commitment for resolution. Compromising strategy can also be used as a temporary solution when there are time constraints.

The strategy of compromising consists of a series of trade-offs. Those utilising the compromise conflict management strategy, according to Gonclaves (2008), always strive to find a middle ground. It is thus characterised as a fairly assertive and cooperative strategy, with a goal to reach mutual agreements. Nevertheless, if this strategy is used excessively or exclusively, it may lead to simply making everybody happy, without resolving the original conflict. Ojiji (2006) noted that compromise becomes necessary in situations where the positions of the parties are so incompatible that the two cannot be reconciled without one of them losing something in the process. Compromise as a conflict management strategy is a mixture of accommodation and competition, usually for the sake of preserving. It can lead to a half-hearted commitment by both parties. At times moral issues can be ignored for the sake of compromise. Compromising skills are negotiating, finding a middle ground, assessing value and making concessions.

4.4 Joint Problem-Solving Strategy

The process of joint problem-solving strategy in conflict management is to explore the problem before a group in such a way as to allow the group to make the best decision concerning that problem (Albert, 2001). It is where the conflict situation is regarded as one from which mutually beneficial solution can be developed and the possibility of self-supporting resolution of the conflict is feasible. Joint problem-solving strategy aims at a re-definition of the nature of the problem among the parties themselves and seeks to find an integrative solution.

4.5 Avoidance/Denial Strategy

According to Ojiji (2006), conflict avoidance occurs when one party in a potential conflict ignores the conflicting issues or denies the significance of the issue. It is a way of not addressing the conflict, or a tactical way of postponing the conflict for a better time, if at all such a time will come. It should be noted that in such a situation, the person or group is unassertive and uncooperative. Gonclaves (2008), on the other hand, argued that the strategy of avoidance in conflict management comes from a negative perception of conflict. He suggests that the strategy is used when the conflict involves “issues of low importance”, or “to reduce tensions, or even to buy time”. The avoidance strategy is also used when one party in a conflict is in “a low power position without control over the situation”. However, choosing to manage conflict using avoidance often convey “negativism, critical and sarcastic comments, and may breed passive aggressiveness”. Consequently, this may lead to hostility and hurt feelings.

4.6 Accommodation Strategy

According to Gonclaves (2008) to accommodate means “smoothing”. Those who manage conflict by accommodating others are mostly concerned with preserving relationships. Accommodation strategy in conflict management promotes goodwill and peace; however, it often comes at the cost of low-assertiveness with high cooperativeness. Ojiji (2006) explained that this strategy of managing conflicts comes from a cooperative disposition with a conscious attempt to neglect one’s needs and focus on satisfying those of the other party. Accommodation is a conflict management strategy that reflects a high concern for preserving a relationship, even if it means sacrificing one’s own goals or interests. A party in conflict that uses this strategy bears the responsibility for maintaining the relationship. While this appears as turning the “other cheek”, a number of difficulties come with this strategy, including the high probability for resentment to develop. Again, the possibility of a more dramatic conflict emerging in the process cannot be dismissed.

4.7 Competition Strategy

This conflict management strategy proceeds from self-centered needs over the other party. Gonclaves (2008) argued that competition strategy in conflict management is generally characterised by aggressive communication behaviour that is threatening and seeking control. He adds that those who manage conflict this way generally fear losing control over the other party and demonstrate a lack of interpersonal skills. Such person experience constant tension, anger and disapproval. As a result, competition as a conflict management strategy often fail to satisfactorily resolve or manage conflict. Thus, competition strategy in conflict management is characterised by a high concern for achieving personal goals. This strategy is usually destructive to the relationship of the parties in conflict. Parties in conflict who use this strategy will most likely be willing to sacrifice anything to achieve their goal or protect their interest.

Albert (2001) further developed and outlined other conflict management strategies. These are:

4.8 Strategic Withdrawal: This is a situation in which the “oppressed” party decides to retreat from the conflict spot to look for a way to attack back. This could be win-lose or lose-lose. It can also be called ‘collateral damage’.

4.9 Confrontation: This is when the “oppressed” party retaliates immediately. This is a lose-lose strategy. The outcome is destructive and both parties and groups lose or the stronger party wins. The outcomes in this instance are either lose-lose or win-lose.

4.10 Third-Party Decision-Making: This is a situation when the issue in dispute is reported to a third party to deal with it, for example, reporting to a body with appropriate power or authority to manage issues in relation to the conflict.

Summarily, conflict management strategies are more of the action-driven dimension of conflict resolution mechanisms. How conflict management is handled can be either a variant of much of conflict reduction and control, or conflict escalation. It adopts a whole lot of diplomatic techniques and skills necessary to contact and interact with disputing parties as well as coordinate the intensions and responses timely. In the process, it assumes an intervention mechanism, including monitoring and evaluation of conflict behaviours and the degree of compliance with resolution on ending violence (Afolabi, 2017).

4.11 Institutional Frameworks for boundary conflicts management in Nigeria

Nigeria established the National Boundary Commission (NBC) which was promulgated into existence by Decree No.38 of 17th December 1987, (CAP 238 Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 1990) for the management of border related conflicts in the country. The Commission began operation on a permanent basis in January 1989. The establishment of the NBC was informed by the need to have an agency that focused on addressing on a

detailed basis, issues on internal and international borderlands. Towards this end, the agency was empowered among other things to:

- Intervene, and deal with any boundary disputes that may arise between Nigeria and any of her neighbours with a view to settling the dispute;
- Intervene, determine and deal with any boundary dispute that may arise among states, local government areas or communities in the Federation with a view to settling the disputes;
- Define, and delimitate boundaries between states, local government areas or communities in the Federation and between Nigeria and her neighbours in accordance with delimitation instrument or document established for that purpose;
- Take all necessary steps towards the implementation of resolutions on internal boundary disputes.

In carrying out its function, the National Boundary Commission operates by means of two standing committees:

4.11.1 International Boundaries Technical Committee (INBTC)

The INBTC co-ordinates Nigeria's international boundary issues. Nigeria's international boundaries are categorised into land and maritime boundaries. Nigeria has land boundaries with Niger, Benin, Chad and Cameroon while her maritime boundaries is shared with Republic of Equatorial Guinea, Sao Tome and Principe, Benin Republic, Republic of Cameroon and Ghana in the Gulf of Guinea. The International Boundaries Technical Committee's efforts in this line are geared towards the enhancement of peaceful coexistence among border communities, good neighbourliness and the promotion of African brotherhood. Hence, its activities are hinged on the promotion of peaceful boundary regime, trans-border cooperation and promotion of Nigeria's national interest generally.

4.11.2 Inter-State Boundaries Technical Committee (ISTBC).

Inter-State Boundaries Technical Committee (ISBTC) of the National Boundary Commission oversees issues related to inter-state boundaries in Nigeria so as to facilitate management of conflicts arising from boundary disputes; as well as the nurturing and sustenance of trans-border relationships. As a strategy, the National Boundary Commission takes all contending parties in internal boundary disputes as stakeholders whose participation in the dispute resolution processes is crucial. Accordingly, the states, local governments, border communities and security agencies are incorporated into the dispute resolution processes. The various processes are conducted through:

1. Joint Meeting of Officials (JMO);
2. Joint Consultative Committee (JCC);
3. Joint Field Team (JFT) and Ad Hoc verification and ethnographic survey teams.

These processes are coordinated by the Inter-State Boundaries Technical Committee and forwarded to the National Boundary Commission. By virtue of the enabling law of the National Boundary Commission, State governors are members of the National Boundary Commission whenever issue(s) on their boundaries are presented for deliberations.

4.12 Findings

4.12.1 Management Strategies in the Adadama and Amagu Boundary Conflicts

The management strategies deployed in the Adadama and Amagu communities' boundary conflict can be categorised into two; namely: (i) institutional and (ii) indigenous strategies. The institutional strategies are those deployed by the federal government of Nigeria through relevant agencies, strategies utilised by Cross River and Ebonyi state governments and strategies deployed by Abi and Ikwo local government areas. The indigenous strategies are those developed and deployed by Adadama and Amagu communities towards managing the boundary conflict.

Federal government strategies

The Federal government's strategies have been through the interventions of the National Boundary Commission (NBC) which is the statutory agency with the mandate to address issues related to boundary conflicts management in Nigeria and the Office of the Surveyor-General of the Federation (OSGOF) which provides technical supports to the NBC. In 1998, (two years after the creation of Ebonyi state), following the outbreak of conflict over the boundary between Adadama and Amagu communities, the NBC in collaboration with OSGOF commenced official processes for the delimitation, delineation and demarcation of the Adadama and Amagu boundary. In year 2005, after completing the processes of retracing the boundary, the National Boundary Commission presented its recommended position for the boundary line to Cross River and Ebonyi state governments for concurrence in order for the demarcation to commence. Both states rejected the NBC's proposed boundary line. Since then, various intervention strategies have been undertaken by the NBC, Office of the Vice President of Nigeria which coordinates and oversees the NBC as well as Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation through correspondences and interfaces with the NBC, Cross River and Ebonyi states governments. Tables 8 below outlines various federal government conflict management strategies deployed on the Adadama and Amagu communities' boundary conflicts:

Table 1: Summary of National Boundary Commission's intervention strategies and outcome on Adadama and Amagu communities' boundary conflicts, 1998-2013

S/N	Date	Activity/Intervention	Venue	Outcome
1	25/03/1998	Joint Meeting of Officials on Ebonyi-Cross River inter-state boundary	Government House, Calabar, Cross River state	Constituted JFT to retrace the boundary
2	13/06/2000	Meeting of Joint Field Team	Government House, Abakiliki, Ebonyi State.	NBC, OSGOF, Ebonyi & Cross River states deliberations on JFT report
3	20/02/2001	Joint Meeting of Officials on Ebonyi-Cross River inter-state boundary	NBC Conference Room, Abuja.	Further deliberations
4	12/08/2005	VP met with NBC, governors of both states and other stakeholders	VP's conference room.	Further deliberations
5	6/10/2005	Joint Meeting of Officials on Ebonyi-Cross River inter-state boundary	Metropolitan Hotel, Calabar	Deliberations deadlocked NBC's recommended boundary lines rejected
6	28/10/2005	Meeting of Technical Committee on Ebonyi-Cross River inter-state boundary.	OSGOF, Abuja	Further deliberations
7	4/11/2005	Joint Meeting of Officials on Ebonyi-Cross River inter-state boundary	NBC's Conference Room, Abuja	NBC appealed for spirit of give and take.
8	24/04/2006	Meeting of Experts on Ebonyi-Cross River boundary	NBC's Conference Room, Abuja	Deliberations deadlocked
9	30/06/2006	Joint Meeting of Officials on Ebonyi-Cross River inter-state boundary conflict	Merit House, Abuja.	Deliberated on challenges of completing the tracing of the boundary
10	09/10/2006	Joint Meeting of Officials on Ebonyi-Cross River inter-state boundary conflict	Government House, Calabar, Cross River state	Reviewed preparations towards completing the boundary retracing
11	08/02/2007	Joint Meeting of Officials on Ebonyi-Cross River inter-state boundary conflict	NBC's Conference Room, Abuja	Decried lack of support by both state governments towards retracing the boundary
12	20/02/2007	Joint Meeting of Officials on Ebonyi-Cross River inter-state boundary	NBC's Conference Room, Abuja	Appealed for support from both state governments towards retracing the boundary
13	11/03/2009	House of Representatives Committee on Special Duty visits the two states because of the boundary conflict	Government House, Abakiliki, Ebonyi state and Government House, Calabar, Cross River state	Appealed to both states to amicably resolve their boundary disputes
14	12/10/2011	Joint Meeting of Officials on Ebonyi-Cross River inter-state boundary conflict	Government House, Abakiliki, Ebonyi state.	Reviewed events in the two states in respect of their boundary
15	06/10/2012	Joint Meeting of Officials on Ebonyi-Cross River inter-state boundary conflict	Library Complex, Calabar, Cross River state	Decried escalation in the boundary conflict.
16	19/02/2013	Stakeholders Meeting on Ebonyi-Cross River Inter-state boundary conflict	Rockview (Classic) Hotel, Abuja.	Set up peace committees to resolve the boundary conflict. bemoaned the massive loss of lives and properties as a result of the boundary conflict

Source: Fieldwork, 2022

4.12.2 Cross River and Ebonyi States government strategies

As a result of the escalation of violence between Adadama and Amagu communities, the governors of Cross River and Ebonyi states held a Peace meeting on the 17th of January, 2013. Thereafter, the two state governments jointly established Ebonyi-Cross River States Department of Border Security to monitor and ensure security in border communities in the two states. On February 21st, 2013, the two state governments also established the Inter-State Peace Committee as a conflict management strategy for the Adadama and Amagu boundary conflicts and any other boundary conflict that may emerge between the two states. Membership of the Committee comprises:

1. Representative of the Deputy Governor's office at the level of Permanent Secretary (co-Chairmen)
2. Chairmen of the two local government or his representative
3. Surveyor-General of the state or his representative
4. Five community leaders from the local governments
5. Representative of the DPO
6. Representative of the SSS
7. Representative of the state Attorney-General
8. Representative of NBC
9. National Assembly and State Assembly members from the communities

The Committee is to receive reports from the inter-Local Government Peace Committee for deliberation at meetings with National Boundary Commission. The Committee was mandated to meet quarterly.

4.12.3 Indigenous Strategies by Adadama and Amagu communities

In 2001, the traditional rulers of Adadama and Amagu communities jointly established and co-chaired the Adadama-Amagu Development Association (ADAMADA) as an indigenous and traditional strategy to manage the boundary conflict between the two communities. Other members of the Committee were: traditional priests of the two communities, youths and women leaders of Adadama and Amagu communities and prominent orthodox religious leaders from the two communities. The Committee's mandate was to restore and ensure the maintenance of peace along the border communities and manage grievances arising from any conflict that may occur.

In order to achieve this, strategies involving use of cultural and traditional methods in conflict management was developed and deployed by the Committee, these strategies are further discussed below:

The first strategy was the composition of membership of the Committee, every group, age grade, religion and gender was represented in order to give a sense of belonging to everyone. Secondly, the Committee adopted the strategy of imposing punitive fine/levy on anyone who foments trouble in relation to the boundary between the two communities. The punitive fine/levy is usually in the form of items such as tortoise, snakes (a particular specie which is scarce), white skinned goat, fowl, yams, oil, etc. These items must be provided by the community of the offender/transgressor. This ensured that the community of a transgressor/offender took full responsibility for the action. Another strategy adopted by the Committee was that the items brought as fine/levy were taken to the community of the aggrieved person and after necessary sacrifices and rituals, the items were jointly cooked by women of both communities and eaten by everyone. Also as a strategy, the ADAMADA Committee meeting venue was rotated between the two communities.

These strategies tremendously increased tolerance and peaceful coexistence between Adadama and Amagu communities. The Committee ceased to exist between 2010/2011 when the traditional ruler of Adadama died. Due to this vacuum and delays in the selection of a new king, violent confrontations between the two communities escalated and have remained till date. While it existed, the Adadama and Amagu Development Association Peace Committee had positive influence and reduced violent confrontations between both communities thereby effectively managing the boundary conflict between 2001 and 2010/2011.

4.14 A Critique of Boundary Conflicts Management Strategies in Nigeria within the Context of Adadama and Amagu Boundary Conflict

Over the years, the conflict management strategies deployed by the National Boundary Commission (NBC) on the Adadama and Amagu communities' boundary conflict have essentially been through administrative mechanisms or "ground to paper" approach. These strategies have relied on rigid administrative processes and procedures. Indeed, a critical observation of the various strategies of NBC aimed at managing the Adadama and Amagu communities' boundary conflicts shows efforts and interventions aimed at convincing the disputing parties to accept a borderline determined by scientific boundary tracing and marking without consideration for human relationship. This approach has no room for negotiation in the "spirit of give and take" resulting in a win-win situation which is the hallmark of an effective conflict management strategy. The rigidity of the strategies is a factor for its ineffectiveness in the management of the Adadama and Amagu communities' boundary conflicts.

Furthermore, an effective management of the Adadama and Amagu communities' boundary conflicts needs to begin by the conflicting parties addressing their differences which can be termed negotiation. Negotiation, according to Morris (2008), is a process in which two or more participants attempt to reach a joint decision on

matters of common concern in situations where they are in actual or potential disagreement or conflict. Ikejiani-Clark (2009) describes it as the process whereby the parties within a conflict seek to settle or resolve their conflicts. Miller (2003) asserts that negotiation involves communication and this is usually governed by pre-established procedures, between representatives of the parties involved in a dispute. Therefore, one distinctive feature of negotiation is that communication is critical to the process.

Invariably, the goal of negotiation, according to Jeong (2000), is to reach an agreement through joint decision making between the parties. In a nutshell, negotiation brings series of benefits because it integrates and accommodates the interests of all parties in a conflict. The strategies deployed by the Federal government in managing the Adadama and Amagu communities' boundary conflicts do not embody this key ingredient of effective conflict management. More so, findings revealed that when meetings are summoned by the government to consider issues related to the Adadama and Amagu communities' boundary conflicts, representatives of the two communities are in many instances left out. Such meetings are attended by top government officials from Cross River and Ebonyi states leaving out the parties in conflict thus, denying them opportunities to engage each other and negotiate their differences.

Although, some of the National Boundary Commission's conflict management interventions on the Adadama and Amagu communities' boundary conflicts may be regarded as mediatory, they are not mediation because mediation is a facilitated negotiation. In explaining negotiation, Le Baron Duryea (2001) argued that mediation is a process in which an impartial third party helps disputants to resolve a dispute or plan a transaction, but does not have the power to impose a resolution. It is process where a disinterested third party listens to each side's arguments and attempts to help craft an agreement between the parties. Ikejiani-Clark (2009) notes that, essentially, mediation is an activity in which a neutral third party, the mediator, assists two or more parties in order to help them achieve an agreement on a matter of common concern or interest. As Moore (1996) noted, mediation is the intervention in a negotiation or conflict of an acceptable third party who has limited power, but who assists the involved parties in voluntarily reaching a mutually acceptable settlement of issues in dispute. Drawing from the above, the various conflict management strategies deployed by the government has failed so far when dissected based on the definition of mediation in conflict management. It is important to note that negotiation and mediation are the two most important conflict management mechanisms in the alternative dispute resolution spectrum because they allow the disputants to determine the outcome of the peace process. The government through the NBC has been unable to utilise this conflict management window.

An overall assessment of the conflict management strategies developed and deployed by the government in the Adadama and Amagu communities' boundary conflicts revealed that they have so far increased a win-lose perception among the disputing communities thereby breeding hatred, anger, animosity, bitterness and suspicion of its genuineness. Thus, Adadama and Amagu communities as well as Cross River and Ebonyi states governments have constantly rejected federal government's recommended borderline thereby making the boundary conflicts intractable. Practically, government's efforts are more or less 'peace interventions' not conflict management strategies; Indeed, if government's strategies are interrogated under the context of Otite and Albert's (1999) definition of conflict management which this study adopts, they do not qualify as conflict management strategies; rather, they can be classified as peace interventions as stated earlier. Thus, this paper argues that the institutional frameworks for the management of the boundary conflicts between Adadama community in Cross River State and Amagu community in Ebonyi State does not fit into the western or indigenous conflict management models. Accordingly, this has created bottlenecks, hampered effective management of the conflict and resulted in escalation of the conflict. Furthermore, the indigenous strategy developed and utilised by Adadama and Amagu communities between 2001 and 2011 which involved payment of levies by the community of an aggressor, joint offering of sacrifices, cultural and traditional rites complimented the institutional mechanisms in engendering peace and stability within that period.

Conclusion and recommendations

Boundary conflicts are gradually emerging as a major source of insecurity, loss of lives, destruction of property and internal displacement in Nigeria as showcased by the Adadama and Amagu communities' boundary conflicts. Therefore, institutional frameworks designed to manage it needs to be critically strengthened. Nigeria is already bedeviled by so much security challenges; hence, allowing boundary conflicts to escalate across the country is a luxury the nation cannot afford. So far, institutional efforts by the federal government and Cross River and Ebonyi state governments through relevant agencies and institutions to end the Adadama and Amagu communities' boundary conflicts have not yielded the desired results. Thus, the study recommends that the NBC should adopt and deploy Alternative Dispute Resolution hybrid processes (localised integration of administrative, indigenous and western conflict resolution mechanisms) in managing the boundary conflict. This involves co-opting traditional rulers, local government officials, experts in conflict management and administrators and survey experts in the management of the boundary conflict. Also, Adadama and Amagu communities should resuscitate and re-energise the indigenous conflict management mechanism (Adadama and Amagu communities

Development Association Peace Committee).

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