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The paradox of Cameroon-Nigeria interactions: Connecting between the edges of opportunity/benefit and quandary

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Cameroon and Nigeria are neighbouring nations that share a common border, people and history. Both nations relied on this propinquity to create opportunities that benefited them in the economic, social and the political domains. But considering the ethnic character of and the stakes involved in controlling the natural resources of the borderlands, these opportunistic benefits were intermittently perturbed by incidences of conflict and hostility typified by the Bakassi territorial dispute, pirates' actions and the transnational insecurity orchestrated by Boko Haram and, hence placing the relationship on the balance of a paradox. However, this paper, based on written data, argues that the geographical and historical proximity - and therefore interdependence between Cameroon and Nigeria has been beneficial for both countries and has reinforced their willingness to work together in seeking lasting solutions for their conflicts and the growing trans-border insecurity threats.

Key words: Paradox, interaction, proximity, connection, edge, opportunity, benefit, quandary, Cameroon, Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

German colonial rule in Cameroon came to an end when a joint Franco-British contingent defeated the Germans in 1916. Cameroon was subsequently partitioned between Britain and France.¹ The British territory that comprised about one-fifth of the total area and population of the former German protectorate consisted of two narrow non-contiguous regions bordering Nigeria and stretching from the Atlantic coast to Lake Chad. The southern part became known as British Southern Cameroons while the northern part as British Northern Cameroons² and were

merged with, and ruled as integral parts of Nigeria for purposes of easy administration. This was in sharp contrast to the French Cameroons which was incorporated into the French colonial empire as a distinct administrative unit separate from neighbouring French Equatorial Africa (Mbuagbaw and Brain, 1974:95-96) (Figure 1).

In 1960, the French Cameroon got its independence as the Republic of Cameroon, and in 1961 following the results of United Nations organized Plebiscites to determine the future of both British Cameroons, Northern Cameroons got independence by joining the Federal Republic of Nigeria, which had got independence earlier in 1960. The Southern Cameroons reunified with the Republic of Cameroon. There was every indication, particularly in the period preceding reunification of the

¹For the partition of Cameroon, see Osun-Tokun (1977: 55-71). The use of British Southern Cameroons and the Southern Cameroons are used interchangeably here to refer to the same territory.

²For the history of the Northern Cameroons, see, for instance, Le Vine (1964); Welch, (1966); Ouba (2013). Northern Cameroons voted in the 1961 UN-organized plebiscite for integration into the Federation of Nigeria.



Figure 1. Cameroon-Nigeria Geographical proximity. Source: (<https://www.type>, 2013).

Southern and French Cameroons that Britain intended to integrate it fully into Nigeria despite its distinct status as a trust territory (Awasom, 1998: 168–83). The British method of administration had important consequences for future political developments. It created the appearance that Nigeria, rather than Britain, was the colonial power ruling the Southern Cameroons. But even after the reunification of both Cameroons, the inhabitants of the former Southern Cameroon consistently felt as if they were being recolonized by their French counterparts. All the same, they had accepted to form a common nation; a nation that by divine design had Nigeria as a neighbour. Due to their geographical and historical circumstances (the colonial encounter) both countries were led to increase interactions that afforded them political, economic and social benefits. But maximizing the opportunities and benefits that emanated from such interactions was erratically perturbed by incidences of hostility between both countries, which they often faced with a common mind of resolving them. This paper also indicates that the Cameroon-Nigeria relation is depicted by a paradoxical portrait of opportunities and/or benefits and crises; crises they always try to upend. That is the reason why in the first part of the article, we attempt to discuss the qualitative frame of Cameroon-Nigerian relations. The second part depicts the opportunities both nations derived from each other (that is the economic and

socio-political benefits since the period before colonialism); meanwhile the third is consecrated to the hostile circumstances (quandaries or difficulties) that conditioned the other side of the interaction both nations experienced and how they tried to overcome them for a sustainable good neighbourliness, multiplied opportunities and benefits.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND OF THE CAMEROON-NIGERIAN INTERACTIONS

The existing theoretical structure of the Cameroon-Nigerian relations fall within the confines of distributive ethnic compositions, colonial influence on indigenous boundaries, permeability of the Cameroon–Nigeria border and the dispute between both states over the Bakassi Peninsula. In fact, however separated these nation-states seem to be they remain a common people, especially the inhabitants of the frontier-line (Omede, 2006:17; Ate and Akinterinwa, 1992). They are duly associated not by colonial effort but through ethnic affiliations. Rather, colonial state creation dishearteningly fragmented brethren. No wonder, Njoku (2012: 198-199) claims that the permanent presence of a population with a common historical experience, and of the same ethno-cultural stock on both sides of the ostensible international divide

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is one of the natural features which have stubbornly frustrated Cameroon and Nigeria attempts to physically demarcate their borders. He maintains that ethnic groups and sub-groups of Nigerian origin cut across the Nigerian international boundaries with Cameroon. The four major ethnic groups that originally occupied the boundary area between both nations are the Ibibio, Efik, Ekoi, some Bantu and semi-Bantu peoples, and that the semi-bantu (Ibibio/Efik, Ekoi and Boki). This is confirmed by Hansen (1981) when he indicates that these groups constitute part of the Bakassi border region which “. . . falls under sub-national areas where the socio-economic lives and well being of the people are directly and significantly affected by proximity to international boundaries.”

These boundaries (artificial in nature) once created as Niger Thomas (2001:55) suggests, cut across native areas, split communities and distorted the functioning of some of these communities, like the Ejagham and Boki groups of Manyu Division divided between Nigeria and Cameroon into Ejagham-Nigeria and Ejagham-Cameroon. Kah and Nkwi (2011: 44-51) attribute this ethnic division and disintegration to the German and British boundary demarcation exercises of 1912-1913. Fanso (1989:53) adds that the Ejagham, who straddle the Cameroon-Nigeria border, are also located in the area extending from west of Nchang near Mamfe town to Ikom in Nigeria. They also extend from Agbokem on the Cross River to the Oban Hills and Calabar at the mouth of the Cross River. Pemunta (2011:171) supports Fanso when he says that Ejaghams and the Bayangs maintain similar socio-economic and political institutions and have historic connections to the outside world by virtue of their trans-border location on the Cameroon-Nigeria frontiers. Besides the Banyang, their northern neighbours living on the “over side” of the Cross River generally referred to as Anyang and the Keyaka-Ekoi people (Obang, Ekwe and Keaka) also constitute an ethnic connection with those distributed in neighbouring Nigeria.

This is also the case with the Mbembe people of Abong (Nigeria) and Abongshe (Cameroon). Shewa (2006:27) and Ntoi (2003:13) confirm this when they say that the Abongshe and Abong peoples, living on both sides of River Donga are all Mbembe. They are only divided by the River, which represents the international borderline between Cameroon and Nigeria, and they all depended on one another's political, economic and social contacts.

This interdependence introduces a high degree of permeability on this boundary. Similarly, Kane (1976:23-24) points out that within the Kanem Bornu Empire, the presence and connectivity of these Cameroon-Nigeria peoples, like the Kanuri (often referred to as the Kanuri of Nigeria and Kanuri of Cameroon) made them to consistently see themselves as brothers despite colonial influences. They depended on one another's political, economic and social activities and thus enhancing the permeability of the Nigeria-Cameroon borders. Njoka (2012:199) sees the interconnectivity of these cross-border communities as a serious issue for the respect of

the international boundaries since some of these groupings share deities and totems, ancestral shrines and major rites (birth, manhood, maidenhood, womanhood, marriage, child-bearing and death), annual festivals and rituals that all members of each group across the frontier are traditionally obliged to take part in.

For their convenience and interest, the colonial masters portioned out various ethnic groups among themselves. Asiwaju (1984) points out that a study of European archives points to the idea of an accidental rather than an intentional making of African boundaries. This means that the European interests were of primary concern. Therefore in determining boundaries³, the Europeans did not take African interests into consideration. An Anglo-French Commission of diplomatic and colonial experts was formed for the purpose of demarcating the boundaries, but the limits of its expertise soon became evident. Lord Salisbury commented:

We have been engaged in drawing lines upon maps where no white man's feet have ever trod; we have been giving away mountains and rivers and lakes to each other, only hindered by the small impediment that we never knew exactly where the mountains and rivers and lakes were' ” cited in Molem and Johnson-Ross (2006:103–122).

³ For a better understanding, it is perhaps good to briefly classify existing border types and thereafter attempt to situate that of the Cameroon-Nigeria within its frame. As a matter of fact, there exist two classifications that have been commonly used to identify international boundaries: first, the Boggs' Classification (1940), which identifies international boundaries into (a) physical or natural (these types of boundaries follow a particular natural feature such as a river, watershed, mountain range, and so on. According to Griffiths (1996:67-68), there are about 45 per cent of African boundaries that follow rivers or watersheds. (b) Geometric: these boundaries follow straight lines, arcs of a circle such as longitude and latitude. While 44 per cent of African boundaries are straight lines, 30 per cent follow other rectilinear or curved lines. (c) Anthro-geographical: these types of boundaries relate to various human settlements, culture, and language, and (d) compounded: these types of boundaries comprise various basic elements mentioned above.

The second type is the Hartshorne classification (1938) that identifies the following types of international boundaries: (a) Antecedent boundaries are drawn before cultural landscapes are developed. According to Kapil (1966:657), “antecedent boundaries exist wherever political jurisdictions have been formally allocated before human settlement has taken place or, at least, before major socio-cultural features, such as industrial growth, markets, or regions of circulation and movement, have had time to develop.” (b) Consequent/subsequent boundaries; those delimited after such features have already emerged, which coincide with social, economic, cultural, or linguistic discontinuities. It is also referred to as a subsequent boundary since it is drawn after the development of the cultural landscape and follows cultural lines. (c) Superimposed boundaries: those drawn after the development of the cultural landscape but without regard to possible cultural boundaries (Ibid.) These “boundaries are those that do not coincide with [...] discontinuities” as those in consequent boundaries. Asiwaju (1984) points out that there are 109 international borders that divide 177 cultural or ethnic groups in Africa. (d) Relict boundaries: are those that can still be seen in the cultural landscape, even though they no longer have any function of political division. Examples of relict boundaries are the “Great Wall of China,” the “Berlin Wall” that separated East and West Berlin, and “Hadrian's Wall” in the United Kingdom that was built in AD 122 to demarcate the northernmost boundary of the Roman Empire. From the above analyses, the Cameroon-Nigeria border is classified to be superimposed, the reason why the porous nature of its existence is common.

Although geographers were available to provide advice, European knowledge of the physical, let alone the human, geography of Africa was still rudimentary. A famous epigram defines geography as being about maps rather than chaps, but its value is always defined by “the knowledge of the chaps who draw the maps” (Asiwaju, 1984). The notion and function of the term ‘boundary’ differed fundamentally in the European and African contexts. However strict the observation of these boundaries were to be, the reasoning of the inhabitants of the Cameroon-Nigerian border lines was not the same. Their geographical proximity caused the disrespect of the lines a familiar commodity.

The Cameroon-Nigeria border is permeable and economic activities, including smuggling thrive on this border (Niger-Thomas, 2001; Molem, 2001; Kate, 1996). There has been an increase in the actual quantity of cross-border flows, as well as a deepening of the penetration of cross-border operations into the heart of the national territories (Akinyemi, 2014:14). This implies that cross-border operations have undergone some structural reorganization. It also indicates that the socio-economic interactions of the respective indigenous populations are carried on with little regards for the colonial demarcation. Because the boundary is ill-defined and unimportant to them, the locals hardly confine their socio-economic activities to particular areas. Indigenes in both countries are able to evade gendarmes from Cameroon and police, customs and immigration officers from Nigeria given that they cooperate in their actions and are very familiar with the terrain. Akinyemi (2014:15-16) explains that due to the porosity, smuggling and black marketeering became a normal way of life and continue to flourish, in spite of the various institutions put in place to check the menace. Funteh (2011) adds that the menace became so serious along the border line of River Donga that the border regimes of both countries were left with no choice than to participate and surrender their authority to the overwhelming influence of these practices. These two authors all maintain that smuggling is no longer an issue for concern, but has become an accepted strategy for both survival and capital accumulation.

An example of such capital accumulation is what Pemunta (2011:171-173) describes among the Bayang and Ejaghem ethnic groups. He does not only portray how these groups benefited from the middlemen role they played during the transatlantic slave trade linking the Cross River State and the Western Grassfields region of Cameroon and their nowadays linking services between the West and Central African regions, but also how they profited from their trans-national sex life. He sustains that the colonial plantations which attracted other people into this region “. . . accelerated monetization of the economy, the creation of new tastes, values and status symbols which the indigenous economy could no longer sustain.” And so, in the face of abject poverty and slim

opportunities towards self-improvement, “women gravitate towards economic opportunities including trans-border trade and transactional sex work as an escape from the collusion between patriarchy and capitalism.” This transnational trade, smuggling (for that matter) and sex work the Bayang and Ejaghem women practice was represented by temporal and long term sale of sexual services and the creation of eroticized relationships for material accumulation. ABEMO (2002, as cited by Pemunta) clarifies that sex work in this region had been a long time female activity. But the boom in this sector was caused by the unfettered post-effects of prosperity following the Nigerian oil boom of the 1970s, alongside the economic downturn that began affecting Cameroon in the late 1980s. This generated a patriarchal moral panic as men lost control over their wives and daughters who had become trans-border economic agents trading in both goods and in the illicit sale of sex across the Cameroon-Nigeria border. But not only these traders, smugglers and the prostitutes but other categories of people benefit from their activity. They included even state officials of both nations themselves who sometimes partook in the profits of smugglers. This is what caused Akinyemi (2014:18) to say that: “. . . smuggling along the Nigeria-Cameroon border is so common and so regarded as a cross border trade activity and well organised business in such a way that the indigenous people of the border communities collaborate with influential state functionaries and citizens within the two states,” which of course had a great influence on the economy of both nations as well as border incursions.

Among the major smuggling items from Nigeria are petroleum products, stolen vehicles, current trafficking, agricultural products and drugs, meanwhile livestock, humans, cotton, fish are the main items trafficked from Cameroon. This situation has remained alarming in the northern part of Cameroon, especially with the shutting down of Nigeria borders with her neighbours owing to the insecurity problem perpetrated by the extremist Islamic sect, the Boko Haram for the past few years (Funteh, 2015). Aboubakar et al. (2010:37-38), like Gwengi (2009:34) agree with Funteh when they estimate the fuel entrance of fuel into the Far-North Region of Cameroon from Nigeria to have increased to 67 percent after the border shutting. And this was through illegal means. Soudina and Gougeve (2011:47) equate this increment to 8,000 cubic meters per day, which represented about two-thirds of the total fuel consumed in the region. They also put the smuggling of cotton into Nigeria from the region during this period at a high rate in this order: (Limani 40%), Fotokol (24%), Kouseri (13%) Dabanga (11%), Maroua (9%), Kolofata (4%) Mblame (3%) and Mokolo (1%). For a while now, the act of smuggling really dominated this very porous Cameroon-Nigeria borderline. Meanwhile the issue of insecurity reigned supreme in this area, it was expected that trans-border transactions would negatively be affected. But it was not the case for

the situation rather increased the profit margin of many local traders, especially smugglers. In fact, it is clear from the forerunning discussion that the concept of national borders is just a political creation.

In traditional Africa, the concept of a political or ethnic boundary was expressed in terms of neighbours with whom a particular State or polity shared a territory and such a boundary was conceived of in terms of a region or a narrow zone fronting the two neighbours marked off by it. In this sense, the boundary was the zone where two States were united or joined together. In other words, African boundaries were usually rooted in ethnic and social contact. European states, however, conceived of boundaries as lines or points of separation. In the case of Cameroon, the Anglo-French partition of the former German colony in 1916 provided that inhabitants living in or near the border region had six months from the time that the border was delimited to express their intention to settle in a region placed under the jurisdiction of the other colonial power. A problem was thereby created. Africans who had become frontiersmen had no immediate knowledge that their lands and kins divided by the boundary were now 'foreign'. They did not know that the new boundaries functioned differently from the traditional ones with which they were familiar. They thought the former were only important to the white men who made them and were not immediately concerned about their existence until they were checked at crossing points. It was then that they began to feel the impact on their relations with their kin and neighbours and began to create new and secret routes across the frontiers (Fanso, 1986:58-75). But these new borders soon faded in their minds in favour of their familiar economic and socio-cultural interactions. This may be the reason why MacGaffey (1999:67) questions this whole concept of illegality/smuggling and legality. He states that the illegal (that is, illegal in the eyes of the foreign authorities) transport of trade goods and persons across what now became official boundaries followed the institution of trade restrictions. Everything changed and what had been normal trade relations for the indigenous population suddenly became illegal. That is to say that the ". . . erstwhile free traders. . ." of these zones now became involved, "willy-nilly" in trans-border clandestine trade as smugglers. He observes that while clandestine trade impoverishes the state, it brings considerable wealth to people who have no other means of acquiring it, and hence representing ". . . a local solution to local problem". According to Brownlie (1979) the actual demarcation of the Cameroon–Nigeria border took place over a long period of time from 12 July 1884, when the German colony of Kamerun was established, through the plebiscite of 11 February 1961. It was the outcome of this plebiscite that divided the British Northern and Southern Cameroons into distinct territories, which chose independence by joining Nigeria and French Cameroun, respectively. He provides a list of treaties and agree-

ments documenting changes in the Cameroon–Nigeria boundary that took place during that time period. It is important to note that Northern and Southern Cameroons were British protectorate territories administered as part of Nigeria, without a separate administrative agency for the Cameroons. As a result, the colonial boundary was not considered as an impediment to social and economic activities, thus maintaining the ethnic–linguistic continuity of the region. In fact, at one time the leading political party in Nigeria was the National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC) and Cameroonians participated fully in the Nigerian parliament. This shared colonial history encouraged the Nigerian state to lay claim to the Bakassi Peninsula.

The Peninsula is located at the South-Eastern tip of Nigeria, where the Peninsula pushes south ward into the Gulf of Guinea. It is a low-lying region bordered on the West by the estuary of the Cross River, on the North by the AkpaYafe (also known as the Akpalkang), on the East by the Rio del estuary, and on the South by the Gulf of Guinea. The Peninsula itself consists of series of Islands covering approximately 50 square kilometers and occupied for the most part by long established communities of Nigerians, in several dozen villages." Both Nigeria and Cameroon claimed ownership of the Bakassi peninsula and by so doing, both countries engaged in series of verbal vituperation and military maneuvers which had serious political and security implications on the sub-region. The claim over the Bakassi Peninsular by Cameroon was based on two major factors, namely: The 1913 Anglo-German Treaty of 11 March 1913 and the 1975 Maroua Declaration. But Nigeria did not see things the same way, the reason why both countries were constantly at daggers-drawn.

As a matter of fact, the claim was marked by the discovery of oil by both countries on the Peninsula. It is perhaps important to indicate here that before the discovery of this oil, the Cameroonians and Nigerians in the area lived an unperturbed life, well aside from the few squabbles so to say, since both nations paid little or no attention to this area considered remote and inhabited by people considered to be non consequential. But the discovery of oil and other natural resources triggered hostilities between both countries in the area. For both countries, the conflict became as a result of the scramble for oil while the indigenous population of Bakassi relates the dispute to the separation of families from their ancestral ties due to the scramble for Africa (Akinyemi, 2014: 13; Funteh, 2015).

Whatever, the laying of claims to the Bakassi Peninsula introduced a prolonged antagonism between Cameroon and Nigeria. Konings (2005:275–301) states that after the reunification of Southern Cameroons and French Cameroon, the Cameroon republic treated the border between it and Nigeria as sacrosanct and resented the continuing ties between Nigeria and the Southern Cameroonians. Over the years when Nigerian troops

ventured back and forth across the border, Cameroon reacted strongly. It is not surprising that skirmishes between the two states intensified when Cameroon filed a series of pleadings with the International Court of Justice (ICJ) beginning in 1994 through 1998 against Nigeria for 'violently contesting Cameroon's sovereignty over the Bakassi peninsula' and for occupying the territory with military troops. While Cameroon protested Nigeria's 'impositions' into the Bakassi, it did little to develop the region meanwhile Nigeria built roads, schools and medical clinics in the area, thereby further strengthening its assertions that the people living in the region were Nigerians and not Cameroonians.

The Nigerian-Cameroon relationship is characterized by mutual distrust and friction emanating from claims by both countries to the disputed Bakassi peninsula (Omede, 2006; Ate and Akinterinwa, 2002). The boundary is the longest of all Nigeria's international boundaries and is the most complicated topographically. 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 as recorded by the 1965, 1981, 1993, 1994 and 1996 events. Significantly, the major area of dispute between Nigeria and Cameroon is the Bakassi Peninsular. Akanmode (2002:4-5) suggests that the Bakassi peninsula is largely occupied/populated by Nigerians, and owing to poverty this community depends on the fish and oil deposit available in the area for their livelihood. Having discussed the why and how Cameroon and Nigeria clashed in 1993, he settles on how the ICJ tried to resolve the palaver. He concludes by indicating his dissatisfaction for the ICJ's verdict of attributing the territory to Cameroon, which according to him was contrary to the wishes of the local population, that of continuing to trade as one and indivisible community. But the problem of the inhabitants had never been how and where to trade since such interactions of theirs had existed prior to this date. Their cross border interactions, often blurring the delimited international space, would reign even amidst all legal impediments, especially in this sense of a shared territorial proximity. They created profitable opportunities for themselves within the confines of their relations (Funteh, 2015:224).

Opportunities and profitable consonants

This part is consecrated to the economic and socio-political opportunities and benefits both peoples obtained from their proximity and interaction with one another.

The economic domain

Before the period of colonialism, owing to their geo-

historic proximity, the people of Northern Cameroon and Nigeria carved out commercial opportunities. The most prominent and important trade routes were Garoua-Yola, Maroua-Mubi and Mora-Maidoguri. There existed another route from Ngoundere through Kontcha to Yola. From Northern Nigeria, the principal products imported to Northern Cameroon included glass, beads, leather goods, cowries and stenciled cloths. Most of these came from Sokoto and Kano (Tazifor, 2003:32-33). These trade items were brought into Cameroon by the Hausa and Fulani traders. They went as far as the southern part of Cameroon (Gibson, 1996:45-47). The Cameroon population exported to Nigeria ivory, kola nut, wild pepper and slaves acquired through raids and wars. The people of the middle belt left a commercial imprint in the minds of the Northern Nigerians with commercial centres established in Ngoundere, Mbum, Tibati, Banyo, Bali, Nso and Bum. The prominent trade routes to these centres were Bali-Bum, Nso-Takum, Banyo-Gashaka, Kontcha-Bakundu, Ngoundere-Mbum and Yola. While some of these centres developed following a particular trend, a trend determined by the nature of trade transactions, others like the latter two existed since the period of trans-Saharan trade. They were animated by the Sudano-Sahelen people's sharing of a common geographical space, economic and socio-cultural values.

The Grassfields' commercial dealings with Nigeria prior to the nineteenth century are also of interest. A conjuncture between high altitude, difficult mountainous landscape of the Grassfields and the lack of navigable waterways fueled human portage in the region. The region did not however benefit from the vast trading networks that crossed Africa in various directions and which coastal chiefdoms took great advantage of (Nyamjoh, 2011:5-7). The mountain range that extends from the Grassfields to Lake Chad and the Jos Plateau of Nigeria remained largely undisturbed until the nineteenth century. Trade was mainly in slaves, ivory, kola nuts, salt, oil, iron, cloth pearls and cowries, which in certain parts of the regions medium of exchange. During this period the Bamenda Grassfields was still very largely outside the trading networks of the Benue and Adamawa. But these two networks spread themselves into the Bamenda Plateau at the end of that Century thereby offering the communities of the region the possibility for differentiation. In this light, two Tikar *fondoms*, Bum and Fumban, occupied strategic positions the former for trade with Wukari and the latter for trade with Banyo. The people of Bum, Beba Befang, Wum and Esimbi, following their proximity to the Nigerian markets made them middle men. This was because the Nigerian market was for them than the rest of the Grassfields markets like Ndop, Bali and Ndu. In their middlemen role, these groups brought back from their Nigeria ventures dane guns and cartridges, castor oil, salt, and clothes. The Nigerians on their part gained beads, meat, tobacco, hoes, spears heads, machetes, raffia bags and sometime slaves. These trading interac-

tions existed since the period prior to colonialism (Mafiamba, 1965:6).

Warnier (as cited by Nyamnjoh, 2011:8) on his part claims that at first, trade between the Benue and the Grassfields was still mainly in the hands of the local population, which was not the case with the Adamawa region, totally under the control of the Hausas (whose impact in the Grassfields has been such that there was hardly a local market where Hausa traders with their mats of herbs, salt, powder and cooking ingredients of all sorts) were absent. The mountainous and the drainage pattern of the region made it difficult to travel, especially during the rainy season, meaning that only certain routes were possible for traders. Kola nut, mostly produced in Wimbun and Nso areas was sold in Nigeria through Banyo, Yola and Takum. Unfortunately, the importance of the Banyo route was diminished when the French and British setup customs posts to check the ins and outs of goods, an act that discouraged the trades. Among these groups of traders, especially the Nso', the employment of the donkey (popularly called the kola animals in the area) for such long-distant trade commissions was the best option. In the second half of the nineteenth century, meanwhile the *fon* of Nkambe sent traders through Ako to Abong in Nigeria, that of Bafut sent traders as far away as Takum. Also traders from Takum and other parts of Nigeria, mostly the Ibos, also came to trade in the Western Grassfields where some, after the sales, decided to get established in the region. Here, some of them developed flourishing businesses, never perturbed by the indigenes who were often employed to serve these businesses. As a matter of fact, the Western and Eastern Grassfielders have yielded some of the most enterprising entrepreneurs in present day Cameroon thanks to their interaction with Nigerians. In the towns of Bamenda and Bafoussam for instance, in as much as many have established prosperous building, clothing and kitchen utensil material stores, flourishing motor-spare-part centres, many of such businesses are owned by Nigerians. This is also true with towns like Yaounde, Limbe and Kumba.

With the advent of German colonialism, the issue of slave raids came to an end. This led to the valorization and exploitation of other economic opportunities for both peoples, particularly within the German established plantations in Cameroon. Being administered as an appendage of Nigeria, the British Southern Cameroons was starved of development funds and its economy remained centred on the plantations that had been established under German rule (Ardener et al. 1960; Konings, 1993). There was not even a separate budget for the Southern Cameroons territory until 1954 when it achieved a quasi-regional status and a limited degree of self-government and the only source for revenue to up-keep the territory came from the plantations. Mbuagbaw et al. (1987: 86–87) maintain that even before this time “. . . the German plantations were returned to their proprietors, and within two years were in full production; it was

Table 1. Plantation recruits from British Cameroons and Nigeria, 1925-1955.

| Year | British Cameroons | Nigeria | Total |
|------|-------------------|---------|--------|
| 1925 | 5,735 | 63 | 5,798 |
| 1930 | 5,412 | 233 | 5,645 |
| 1935 | 10,025 | 415 | 10,440 |
| 1938 | 17,879 | 2,509 | 20,388 |
| 1940 | 15,517 | 6,801 | 23,317 |
| 1945 | 16,897 | 7,800 | 24,697 |
| 1955 | 14,871 | 7,123 | 21,994 |

Source: Report on the Cameroons (1925, 1930, 1935, 1938, 1945 and 1955); Warrington (1960:400-402).

the main financial and economic bulwark for the territory”. The Germans improved much of the coastal section; expanded port facilities at Tiko and Victoria and constructed numerous shops, warehouses and office buildings. The least of their effort was the erection of a number of workers' camps which, although somewhat primitive in facilities and construction nevertheless provided plantation workers with relatively clean and comfortable surroundings. These provided for most Cameroons and Nigerians, like the other nationals who worked in the plantation (Table 1, which shows plantation recruits from British Cameroons and Nigeria from 1925 to 1955) as well, a “connective resemblance opportunity and blend.” More significantly, it abolished the existing border between the former German Kamerun Protectorate and Nigeria, resulting in the free movement of goods and labour. The territory's economic life involved and depended largely on the large number of workers the plantation drew from within the British Cameroons, French Cameroon and Nigeria, and such was a ground for better opportunities and livelihood for the workers and their related persons.

Chiabi (1986:59–68; 2006:23) claims that however different both peoples may appear to be, Cameroon-Nigeria connection offered for their people many economic as well as other opportunities, especially for the frontier inhabitants, albeit in varying degrees. In consonant with Chiabi, Amazee (1990:281–293) and Weiss (1996:39–51; 1998:34) argue that there is considerable evidence that eastern Nigerians benefited greatly from the absence of any real border between the two regions. There was a growing migration of eastern Nigerians, particularly the Igbo, to the “greener pastures” in British Southern Cameroons. Migration became instrumental in escaping from widespread land scarcity in their densely populated areas and in providing the necessary manpower and trading circuits in the underdeveloped Southern Cameroons, often encouraged by the colonial authorities. Migrants started working in the various agro-industrial enterprises in the territory, notably the then newly established Cameroon Development Corporation (CDC) and Pamol. Both agric consortiums inherited the

former German plantations in the area (Ardener et al., 1960; Konings, 1993).

They claim that since the 1940s, there has been a spectacular increase in the Nigerian population of the plantation labour force. In the 1950s Nigerians, especially Igbo, comprised roughly 25–30 percent of the CDC labour force and 80 percent of the Pamol workforce. Many of these workers settled in the Southern Cameroons. They acquired land for food farming and cash cropping, originally on a usufruct basis, by providing village elders with a token payment. Although the transfer of land was not intended to be permanent, Nigerians were able, with the increase in the value of land and the formalization of land tenure, to secure titles and set themselves up as landlords (Fisiy, 1992; Kleis, 1975, 1980: 89–100). A growing number of them used their earnings from plantation labour to launch small-scale trading enterprises, selling food and durable goods in the vicinity of the plantations. Gradually, Igbo came to dominate the market trade in local foodstuffs and imported goods, as well as the transport industry and the retail and wholesale distribution of palm oil in an area centred on Kumba, Tiko and Victoria (Limbe). In these towns, large numbers of Nigerians entered the restaurant business or became involved in photography, baking, tailoring, shoemaking, bicycle repairs and a variety of other small enterprises. In the Kumba area, they were the principal buyers of cocoa, which at this time became Southern Cameroons' major export crop. Moreover, their higher level of Western education enabled them to occupy the majority of the white-collar supervisory and managerial positions in the plantations and in the Southern Cameroons civil service (Kleis, 1980: 89–100).

However, the dominant position of the Igbo in the regional economy and administration was deeply resented by the local population, leading to an explosive situation after the Second World War when regional politicians started exploiting the "Igbo scare" in nationalist struggles. As a result, the Igbos became the victims of verbal and physical attacks by frustrated local inhabitants and were told to return home. They were accused, usually fancifully, of every vice "under the sun" like bribery, corruption, narcotics, adulterating palm wine and medicines, counterfeiting, theft, profiteering, seducing local women, cannibalism, sorcery, disrespect of local customs and authorities, and so on (Ardener, 1962; Amaze and Oben, 1989:63–89). In February 1948, for example the Bakweri Native Authority passed the following regulations with the aim of controlling relations between the "autochthonous" population and the Igbo:

Nobody is allowed to sell his or her house to an Igbo, neither may anybody give his or her house for rentage to an Igbo; no farmland may be sold to an Igbo or rented to an Igbo; nobody may allow an Igbo to enter any native farm or forest for purpose of finding sticks for building or for any other purpose; houses or farms already sold to an Igbo man shall be purchased by the Native Authority, which will afterwards resell same to some suitable person;

nobody shall trade with Igbos for anything of value or not; all landlords must ask their Igbo tenants to quit before 15 March 1948; no Cameroonian woman is allowed to communicate with the Igbos in any form.⁴

Similarly, during the 1947–60 period, Southern Cameroonian workers at the CDC and Palmol undertook a series of informal and collective actions aimed at removing Igbo and Ibibio supervisory and managerial staff.

Nonetheless, when Cameroonian politicians, like John Ngu Foncha, got satisfied with the effects of instrumentalisation of the anti-Igbo sentiments for their political agenda in 1961; by becoming independent by reunifying with French Cameroon, the growing economic activities of the Igbo in particular and Nigerians in general did not mean much as before, especially with the opening up of Cameroon state to new avenues of international trade. Both countries still benefited from their commercial interactions. In fact, as a member of the Commonwealth and the Franc Zone, the share of foreign trade in Cameroon's GDP was nearly 50 percent with three top export partners being Spain, Italy and France. The commodities mainly exported were mineral oils, wood, charcoal, cocoa, cotton and aluminum. But as concerns import partners of Cameroon, Nigeria comes first (Table 2, which shows import representation in 2011 with Nigeria topping the list); France and China come second and third respectively. The latter two are interested mainly in mineral oils, cereals, vehicles, machinery, and electric and electronic equipment. As a matter of fact, Cameroon's main trading partners (suppliers) in percentage stands as follows: France (40%), Nigeria (16%), Belgium (7%), Italy (5%), US (5%), and buyers such as Belgium (41%), Italy (10%), Spain (9%) and France (7, 5%).

Between 2000 and 2010, the quantity of goods moving from Nigeria to the Far northern part of Cameroon was estimated at about 145,000 metric tons per year and that moving from Cameroon to Nigeria was estimated at 112,000 metric tons. Cameroonian exports include re-exports of imported rice, rice paddy from the SEMRY project in Maga and Yagoua. It was not uncommon to see daily for over three months over 15-40 trucks full of paddy rice leaving Maga to Nigeria, and thus representing about 36,000 tons of paddy, or 24,000 tons of rice equivalent. In 2010 and 2011, over 70,000 tons of rice, 80 percent of total production at SEMRY went to Nigeria (Bello et al., 2013:34). Also, fish (dried and seasoned) often also flew in great quantities to Nigeria. Fifty-five to 70 percent of fish caught in the Adamawa region, 65 percent in the North and 93 percent in the Far North all flowed the Limani line into Nigeria, often carried in big trucks and on motorcycles (Halirou, 2008:56-78; Bello, Hamso and Dissa (2013:35). Apart from the

⁴Buea National Archives, PC/h 1, 1948, Letter from Bakweri Native Authority, Buea, to Senior Divisional Officer, Victoria, dated 21 February 1948, "Conditions of Settlement".

Table 2. Cameroon Import representation, 2011.

| Global imports by Cameroon | | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|------------------------|
| Imports from | Trade value (thousands) | Share (percent) | Growth (percent 5 yrs) |
| Nigeria | 2,205,873 | 23.99 | NA |
| France | 1,618,298 | 17.60 | NA |
| China | 599,363 | 6.52 | NA |
| Belgium | 382,933 | 4.17 | NA |
| Equatorial Guinea | 326,377 | 3.55 | NA |
| Germany | 326,602 | 2.52 | NA |
| United States | 270,983 | 2.95 | NA |
| Japan | 258,834 | 2.82 | NA |
| Brazil | 258,192 | 1.98 | NA |
| Italy | 249,961 | 2.81 | NA |
| India | 181,920 | 1.88 | NA |
| Mauritania | 131,728 | 1.43 | NA |
| South Africa | 127,327 | 1.39 | NA |
| Netherlands | 127,024 | 1.38 | NA |
| United Kingdom | 125,555 | 1.37 | NA |

Market value: 9,193 (million) Source: (<http://www.nyamnjoh.com>, 2013). Note: By 2013, Nigeria occupied the third position in the Cameroon import list as follows: China 16.8%, France 16.6%, Nigeria 12.3%, Belgium 5.3%, Italy 4.3%, US 4.2% .

mentioned items, there was a huge quantity of cows, sheep, fowls that left Bogo, Maroua, Meme, Pouss, Gazawa, Djounde and the entire Logone and Chari area to Nigeria. By 2010, more than 1,000 cows went to Nigeria per week. Soudina and Gougeve (2011:45) estimate that more than 65 percent of these animals and birds brought to the market later took the Limani-Banki route.

Following the food crisis of 2008, Cameroon responded by eliminating rice import tariffs. The aim was to cushion the impact of escalating food prices and to reduce any potential civil unrest. Even though rice prices later declined from their global peak of over \$1000 per metric ton in early 2008, Cameroon's zero tariff on rice remained in place. Prior to the food crisis, Nigeria had a 109 percent duty on rice imports. Between May and October of 2008, the Nigerian government suspended this tariff, but then instituted a reduced tariff rate of 30 percent for milled rice. This tariff was not applied to the CIF price of rice but to a minimum reference price, which was increased in the second quarter of 2012 to \$699 per ton for relatively low quality imports. This was well above the world market price for the same quality, causing the import duty to be much higher than it would be if the tariff rate were applied to the world price. Then in February 2012, a total ban on rice imports was put in place. Such rice policy differences encouraged Cameroonian traders to take advantage of higher prices on the Nigeria side of the border. For example, the price of rice in Nigeria in early 2011 was about 462 FCFA per kg whereas in Douala the price was 330 FCFA/kg. Rice imported into the Douala port made its way to Nigeria from all parts of

the border, although the most rice seemed to be re-exported in the northern part of the country (World Bank, 2013: 67).

The World Bank (2013: 45) claims that these goods include general merchandise, plastic products such as sandals, vegetable oil⁵ and petroleum products, especially fuel. The Banki/Limani trajectory was animated by the transportation of huge quantities of loin cloths, spare parts of cars, bicycles and motorcycles, food and elementary products, cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, electronics, electrical appliances, building materials, like corrugated iron sheets, cement, tiles, carpets glasses and paints, and household utensils and equipments and fuel commonly known as *zoa-zoa*, *funge*, *awa rawa*, just to name but these few. Apart from the economic opportunities and/ or benefits the peoples of both countries derived from their interaction with each other, they also obtained socio-political gains.

⁵ A significant volume of vegetable oil is exported from northern Nigeria to Cameroon. The area surrounding Kano has long been a traditional region for growing groundnuts, much of which was processed into vegetable oil. More recently, the sources of oilseeds have diversified to include sunflower, oil palm, maize, soya, and sesame, which are grown throughout much of Nigeria even though Kano still remains an important assembly point in the north. The organization of trade is such that Cameroonian traders typically travel to Kano to purchase the oil, although some Nigerian traders also bring the oil to Cameroon. Trucks of 30MT capacity are used to transport the vegetable oil from Kano to the border where it is loaded onto smaller 10MT trucks, which cross the border into Cameroon. **Sometimes, these truck drive through into Cameroon.** It appears that this border crossing is preferred by most vegetable oil traders in northern Cameroon because of lower customs duty payments that they are able to negotiate.

The social and political domains

Since the 1940s, Southern Cameroonians increasingly found their way to Nigeria to benefit from the more advanced political and social offers of the Nigerian society. They were usually students, teachers, journalists, petty traders, businessmen or employees in Nigerian institutions and/or firms. The presence of Nigerian universities provided Cameroonians scholarship opportunities, which they used in obtaining employment in Nigeria or when they came back home. Innumerable teachers, lawyers and medical doctors and practitioners of Anglophone origin in both secondary and tertiary institutions in the English speaking regions of Cameroons, for example, acquired their certificates from Nigerian institutions of learning. Of course, this is not a recent trend. Such was common since the 1920s when many English speaking Cameroonians (some of whom later became prominent politicians) academic hope and satisfaction came from Nigeria. Meanwhile some rarely rose to positions of influence in Nigeria; the Nigerian experience had a significant effect on the emergence of Southern Cameroonian aspirations, like nationalism. For some students, their presence in Nigeria was the opportunity to gain political nurturing by the disposition of the time. Prominent Southern Cameroonian nationalist leaders like Emmanuel Endeley, Paul Kale, John Ngu Foncha, Nerius Mbile, Samson George and Solomon Tadeng Muma and others received part or all of their political education in Nigeria, fine equipment for their political ideas, career and prosperity (Ebune, 1992; Ngoh, 1996; 2001).

Their educational, work and political expectations caused these young Southern Cameroonian intellectuals to come to think in terms of organizing various sorts of mutual welfare associations among themselves to pursue a better status and life for their territory. The most important of these took shape in Nigeria, like the creation of the Cameroon Youth League (CYL) in 1940 by Kale and Endeley, the creation of the Cameroon Federal Union (CFU) in 1942 to replace the defunct CYL and the creation of the Cameroon National Federation (CNF) by Endeley to replace the CFU. Almost inevitably the leaders of this latter organization, soon after its creation, became involved in Nigerian nationalist group, particularly in the political organization Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe was attempting to form. In 1944, Endeley and Kale, together with L.M. Namme and Mbile, participated in the founding of Dr. Azikiwe's National Council of Nigeria and Cameroons (NCNC). Out of this collective participation grew the first Southern Cameroons interest in developing political organizations with a peculiar Southern Cameroon orientation. The aspirations of the party were to exert mass pressure on the colonial administration in order to hasten the political development of Nigeria and Southern Cameroons. In itself, this party was a direct response to the four "obnoxious bills" of the Richards Constitution, so

named after Sir Arthur Richards, Governor of Nigeria (Ebune, 1992; Ngoh, 1996; 2001).

However, by 1953, crisis in the part and its outcome gave the Cameroonians politicians the opportunity to create different political parties, programmes, interactions and gains, which included the successive constitutional changes, a quasi-regional status for Southern Cameroons, a limited degree of self-government and full regional status within the Federation of Nigeria. In fact, during the July 1953 London Constitutional Conference, Endeley, citing fear of "Nigerian domination", requested the unconditional withdrawal of the Southern Cameroons from the Eastern Regional House of Assembly in Nigeria, and its transformation into a separate region of its own in line with its trusteeship status. Britain agreed and implemented separation in 1954, making the Southern Cameroons a semi-autonomous quasi-region of the Nigeria Federation with its own House of Assembly and Executive Council located at Buea. Endeley was called the Leader of Government Business, primarily because Southern Cameroons was not yet a full region (it was not until Southern Cameroon became a full region that his title of *Premier* - to mean head of government - came to exist). In 1955, there was a split in Endeley's Kamerun National Council (KNC) party, which was then allied with the Action Group (AG) and John Ngu Foncha emerged as his rival on the platform of the new party; the Kamerun National Democratic Party (KNDP). This party's goal was complete secession of Southern Cameroons from Nigeria and eventual reunification with Francophone Cameroon. Endeley was accused of abandoning his former stance of pro-unification in favor of integration with Nigeria. At about the same time the *Union des Populations du Cameroun* (UPC) party in Francophone Cameroon was being banned by the French Governor. Nowa (2011) claims that as they fought a bitter and violent guerrilla war against ruthless French troops, they would often cross over to the British Southern Cameroons for sanctuary.

In mid-1957, there was a Constitutional Conference in London to resolve issues preparatory to Nigeria's independence which was initially proposed for a date in 1959, but "not later than 2 April 1960." In August that year, Tafawa Balewa became Premier in an All Nigeria Federal Executive Council. On 25 September the Willink Commission was set up to deal with the case of Nigerian minorities. Interestingly, the Willink report was published in October 1958 – recommending against the creation of new regions in Nigeria. Nowa (2011) posits further that in the January 1959 Election in Southern Cameroons, Endeley was voted out of power and replaced by Foncha, a man with even less disguised anti-Nigerian instincts. In October that year, the Enugu based 1st Queens Own Nigeria regiment (1QONR) was temporarily deployed to Southern Cameroons for "Training". He sustains that the UPC sympathizers in Bamenda viewed this as a counter-insurgency deployment in support of the hated French

colonial administration. In early 1960, responding to more violence in the area, the 1QONR again returned to Bamenda area in full force, followed shortly thereafter by the 4QONR from Ibadan which was deployed further south to Kumba near the coast. The 5QONR and 3QONR later replaced both battalions followed later by the 2QONR.

These shows of military force did not endear Nigeria to certain opinion leaders in the local population. On 1 October 1960, Nigeria became independent with Alhaji Tafawa Balewa as President. According to the KNDP, these shows were the very reasons to convince the local population against the Nigerian option. But for part of some Southern Cameroonian elite, particularly the pro Endeleys with their integrationist outlook, this was the reason to shift from an anti-Nigerian stance towards a more positive view of Nigeria. From their perspective, regional status seemed a satisfactory answer to the problem of Nigerian domination, the lack of Southern Cameroonian participation in the Nigerian political system, and economic stagnation experienced by the territory. Interestingly, this became a platform for debates within the ranks of the various Southern Cameroonian elites, with the pro Fonchas raising more possibilities of an alternative political option for the Southern Cameroons to escape from its subordinate position in the colonial system and from Igbo domination. Consequently, reunification with French Cameroon was esteemed as the better option for British Southern Cameroonians.

Among some members of the Southern Cameroonian elite, there was the emergence of the "Kamerun idea". This is a reference to the belief that the period of German rule created a Cameroon identity or nation. This colonialist school pointed out that this idea hardly corresponded with reality since German colonial rule had been too short to create a Cameroon identity among the multiplicity of ethnic groups on its territory. Kofele-Kale (2002:3-23) however, claims that it was not the reality of the German experience but rather the memories (factual or otherwise) or myths that inspired the Southern Cameroonian elite to start advocating reunification. To strengthen their arguments, the elite often referred to the close relationship that existed between ethnic groups on both sides of the British-French Cameroons border. This boundary, they stressed, was regarded as an unnecessary inconvenience by the frontier people in the area because it restricted the free movement of people belonging to a common ground.

But Welch (1966) and Johnson (1970) believe that the idea of reunification was much more popular among Francophones than among Anglophones. Its devoted and consistent flag bearers were loyalists of the UPC, the radical nationalist party in French Cameroon, which was the sponsor of the KNDP, and Francophone immigrants in the Southern Cameroons who saw reunification principally as a way of eradicating discrimination by the British Administering Authority and removing their

second-class citizenship in the Southern Cameroons. They maintained that although the Southern Cameroonians ultimately voted by a majority of seven to three in favour of union with the former French Cameroons during the 1961 Plebiscite organized by the UN, there is overwhelming evidence to suggest that if a third option of either independence or continued trusteeship had been put forward, it would have been considered in a favourable light. Nowa (2011), agreeing with this claim, opines that "Being deprived of this preferred option by the United Nations with the complicity of the British, the Southern Cameroonian population was given what amounted to Hobson's choice: independence by joining Nigeria or reunification with the then independent Republic of Cameroon". The eventual vote in favour of reunification appeared to be more of a rejection of continuous ties with Nigeria than a vote for union with Francophone Cameroon. While most Southern Cameroonians dismissed outright integration into Nigeria because of the territory's previous neglect and domination by the Igbo under Nigerian colonial administration, they were also reluctant to join Francophone Cameroon fearing that reunification might result in domination by the Francophone majority and loss of their cultural heritage and identity. But the ruling party in the Southern Cameroons, KNDP, had assured them that the constitutional provisions for a reunified Cameroon, namely, the creation of a loose federation, would guarantee the equality of both partners and the preservation of their cultural legacies (Welch, 1966; Johnson, 1970). But just shortly after the reunification of the British Southern Cameroons and Republic of Cameroon to form the Federal Republic of Cameroon, the opportunities Cameroonians and Nigerians had enjoyed from a prolonged unperturbed period of interaction with one another was soon tasted. Both countries would be confronted with intermittent scenes of uncomfortable territorial, terrorist and sea pirate quandaries.

The quandary

This section of the paper dwells on the Cameroon-Nigeria dispute over the Bakassi peninsula, the insecurity perpetrated by the extremist Islamic sect, Boko Haram, in the northern parts of both countries and those caused by pirates on the Cameroon coastal region.

Territorial palaver over the Bakassi Peninsula

Significantly, the major area of dispute between Nigeria and Cameroon was the Bakassi peninsula. The clash of interest over this area began with low profile clashes in 1965 when the people of Bundam near Memfe (Cameroon) were attacked by the people of Ikom in the Cross River States of Nigeria due to mere suspicion

across the border (Tazifor, 1998: 265-266). On 16 May 1981, the first serious scuffle between Nigerian and Cameroonian forces occurred. This was provoked by the fact that Nigerian patrol boats were attacked with high gun shots on the Akwayafe River by the Cameroon force, which resulted in the death of five Nigerians. Three were also seriously injured. This incident was in reaction to the arrest of the District Officer of Idabator by the Nigerian forces. Also, in May and June 1991 Cameroonian forces entered 9 fishing villages where they hoisted Cameroon flag and announced their intention of renaming the villages. They also promised the people health units and education facilities. But before getting to this stage, the settlers were told to pay their taxes (Cornwell, 2005:52). Ngoh (1996:277) explains that these people were well-informed of how to evade taxes and did so with great skills. By this time the governments of President Ibrahim Babangida and Cameroon's President Paul Biya were far too occupied with their shared experiences of the difficulties of "democratization" to allow the possession of a few fishing villages to stand in the way of good neighbourliness. One can say that the change in the leadership in Nigeria and the firm re-entrenchment of the soldiers at the head of affairs was synonymous to renewal of clashes in Bakassi.

When Babangida came to the end of his rule, he stepped down on 26 August 1993 in favour of an interim administration under the leadership of Ernest Shonekan. But on 17 November Shonekan was replaced by his deputy, General Sani Abacha, a man much less inclined to compromise, says Cornwell. On 21 December 1993, a battalion of Nigerian troops occupied Diamant and Jabane, two islands on the peninsula with the fishing communities requesting help from Calabar and Abuja against the Cameroonians (Ngoh, 1996:277). Cameroonians were accused of harassment and maltreatment of Nigerians living on the peninsula. In retaliation Cameroon's military response led to several deaths and immense destruction of property. Again in 1994, Nigerian troops occupied the localities of Idabato, Uzuma, Kombo and Janea, which led to another serious clash, which resulted in the flight of over 18,000 people into the Cross River State in February 1994 (Nowa, 2011).

The year 1996 saw a renewal of confrontations. The Nigerian military occupying the four villages clashed again with Cameroonian troops leading to several dead on both sides; both capturing prisoners-of-war. Whatever, the affronts took another perspective in April 1996 when, according to presidential directive from the Nigerian General Staff Head quarters, Abuja, no. GHQ/390 of 11 April 1996 the Cross River State administration was urged to conduct election for the post of Councilor in the Bakassi peninsula. Soh (1998:27) posits that this was in reaction to Cameroon government's actions. It reportedly conducted council elections in the area in January 1996. Both countries were therefore utilizing the peninsula for their political egos and propaganda. However, the manifestation of such ego and propaganda could only be

checked if both parties were ready to follow the course of peace and end the conflict. This meant down-playing their ego and providing workable opportunities for peace. The opportunity for the course of serenity was working together.

As the conflict was putting both states at daggers-drawn, they were at the same time looking for the most appropriate opportunity to challenge the status quo. This opportunity began showing up following the incident of 1965. Both governments decided to cooperate in creating a joint commission to look into the cause (the ill-defined boundary limits) of and attempt settling the matter. The joint Nigeria-Cameroon Boundary Demarcation Team was set up and while O.A. Aqua and Dennis Mbata represented Nigeria, G. Obenson led the Cameroon delegation. After a serious study of the issue, they all settled on the respect for the Anglo-German 1913 Treaty, and agreed to place inter-visible beacons along the 1913 boundary (Onowo, 2003:23). Soh (1998:27) explains that this decision was based on the respect of the OAU's sovereignty and boundaries precepts.⁶ In January 1966, Major General Ironsi came to power in Nigeria. He committed his government to respect all prior international agreements made by the Balewa government. In July 1966, then Lt. Col. Yakubo Gowon came to power in Nigeria and committed his government to respect all prior international agreements made by the Ironsi and Balewa governments.

However, the beacon-placement exercise was suspended due to the 1966 Nigerian civil war. Due to the support President Ahidjo gave to Nigeria during the secessionist attempts of the Biafra,⁷ which included the

⁶In 1964, Nigeria approved the Cairo Declaration of the Organization of African Unity of July 1964, committing African States to the inviolability of colonial borders. Specifically, AHG/RES 16(1) states: "Solemnly declares that all Member States pledge themselves to respect the borders existing on their achievement of national independence." Nigeria ratified this declaration, and by implication restated its commitment to the Nigerian-Cameroun colonial border, as it had done in 1960 (Exchange of Notes with the UK) and again in 1962 (Diplomatic Note 570).

⁷Thus, Nigeria gained and sustained Cameroun's support during the civil war, was partly because Ahidjo was afraid of the effect - on southern Camerouns - of a precedent for secession by supporting Biafra. It was not a secret that southern Camerouns had always preferred self-determination. They were also in possession of French intelligence reports that Biafra would someday annex the former Southern Cameroon along with Fernando Po in a swath of territorial acquisitions in the area of the "Bight of Biafra". Adult male Ndigbo living in Cameroun at that time were, therefore, required every Saturday to report to designated open fields and kept there for many hours before being released by Police. In this manner Ahidjo kept a tight reign on their movements and threw them off balance. Not to report usually led to unwelcome domestic visits by Cameroun gendarmes. In supporting Biafra, France was interested in breaking up Nigeria, the large threatening Anglophone nation-state, but was not interested in the balkanization of Cameroun which it, therefore, kept discreetly informed of goings on inside Biafra. Such "intelligence" and "rumors" about alleged future Biafran intentions, were never actually officially confirmed by anyone but it played into old rivalries in the NCNC and Eastern region going back to the days that Southern Camerouns was administered alongside Nigeria as a Trusteeship territory. After the war, General Gowon of Nigeria - with Ahidjo's support - decreed that the name "Bight of Biafra" be removed from maps of the Gulf of Guinea close to the Nigeria-Cameroun-Equatorial Guinea border area. It was renamed "Bight of Bonny", see Cornwell (2005:52).

prevention of the flow of war materials to the secessionists that contributed favourably to the end of the crisis, the Nigerian Government remained grateful to Cameroon. With the reign of peace in Nigeria, both governments resumed consultations about the boundary issue. In 1970, both governments reconstituted the joint commission, which accepted the Anglo-German Agreement of 1913 as its point of reference. But disagreement in the commission centred around the definition of the course of the Akwayafe River. For fear that such disagreement could prolong matters, both governments decided to explore possible avenues in the pursuit of peace.

Both states shifted from a joint-commission strategy to highest-state-authority principle; the authority being the heads of states themselves (the presidential good office). In April 1971 the presidents of Nigeria and Cameroon met in Yaoundé. This, among others, was because the issues articulated by wartime policing of the border to prevent infiltration and exfiltration resurrected the old quest to clarify the boundary. This was amplified by Nigerian reports that Cameroon had been exploring for oil along the undemarcated maritime border between both countries while Nigeria was busy fighting its civil war. It is this matter that was addressed on 4 April 1971 at Yaoundé when Nigeria's General Gowon and Cameroon President Ahidjo, accompanied by large delegations, signed the "Coker-Ngo" Line on British Admiralty Chart No. 3433 "as far as the 3-nautical-mile limit" (The Secretary-General of the *Cuff*, 2011). The status of the Bakassi peninsula proper was not an issue for discussion (maps from that period show Bakassi peninsula in Cameroon). A meeting of the Nigeria-Cameroon Boundary Commission, therefore, took place in Yaoundé, Cameroon from August 12-14 where Gowon and Ahidjo signed charts defining the new maritime boundary (Akanmode, 2002:4-5).

Subsequently the commission, in reinforcing the urge for peace, redefined the maritime boundary as the Ngho-Coker line. This remarkable finding transferred the control of the Calabar channel to Cameroon and was shortly retracted by the Nigerian government. Both presidents again met in Garoua in August 1972 and in Kano in 1974, all resulting to the shift of the boundary slightly to the east of the Ngho-Coker line, conceding the presence of Cameroonian oil rigs in the Calabar channel. From 30 May to 1 June 1975 Gowon and Ahidjo met in Maroua. The Maroua Accord certainly conceded Cameroonian sovereignty over Bakassi. All these efforts were geared towards a harmonious habitation of neighbours bound by the force geo-historical proximity. But on 29 July 1975, Gowon was overthrown by General Murtala Muhammed who repudiated the Maroua Accord. This also was General Olusegun Obasanjo's first opinion in August 1977 when he became the President. Nevertheless, the value of the Maroua Accord was later approved and the 1913 Agreement remained central to both governments.

It is important to note here that the respect for these presidential agreements led to the reign of relative peace between both states in the peninsula in the 1970 decade. But things changed in 1981 (*Ibid.*).

With this change, both governments alternated their peace-pursuing strategy; from accords to the application of fault-recognition-and-compensation polity. Meanwhile the former represented a kind of preventive diplomatic policy the latter was aimed at managing differences. After the 1981 incident in which five Nigerian soldiers were killed, the Nigerian Government demanded an apology and compensation from Cameroon. Initially, Cameroon refused, which ominously influenced relations between the two countries. In July 1981, however, Cameroon recognized its fault and undertook to pay compensation, and the crisis eased, with plaudits to Nigeria's President *Alhaji* Shehu Shagari for his restraint and for containing his hawkish military. The incident led to the resuscitation of the joint commission, and the border dispute was officially reopened (Ijoko, 1999:32-35). The official reopening of the border dispute preceded the reemergence of hostilities of the early 1990s and the introduction into the matter the third-party prescription with efforts of regional and international organizations; OAU, the UN Security Council and International Court of Justice at the Hague (ICJ) occupying the central stage.

Following the clashes in 1994, Cameroon discovered that bilateral talks with Nigeria could not entirely be the solution to the issue. Yet, it laid a formidable groundwork upon which third parties built their arguments for the peace search. As tension continued to mount and many lives were lost as a result of the conflict, the Cameroonian government took legal action on 29 March 1994 by filing a law suit against Nigeria at the ICJ on her sovereignty over the Bakassi and another on 6 June 1994 while simultaneously complaining to the OAU Central Organ of Conflict Prevention and Management of the Nigerian illegal occupation of its territory. Cameroon was confident about this law suit following the resolutions of the 1913 Anglo-German agreement and the 1975 Maroua declaration on the peninsula. During the 31st OAU Heads of State Summit in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in 1995, some African leaders tried getting Presidents Biya and Sani Abacha of Cameroon and Nigeria respectively to a round-table dialogue with the aim of resolving the dispute. They relied greatly on the workability of highest-state-authority principle that previously helped sustained peace between both states. Unfortunately, its application this time did not yield the desired fruits. It was this result that prompted the OAU to assign Togolese President Eyadema to follow-up the peace talks. Consequently, from 16 to 17 February 1996, Ferdinand Leopold Oyono and Chief Tom Ikimi, Cameroon's External Relations Minister and Nigeria's Foreign Minister respectively, met in Kara, Togo and agreed as follows: that Cameroon and Nigeria recognise that the matter was with the ICJ; and they agreed to end all hostilities on the peninsula

(Funteh, 2011:81; Ngoh, 1996:338). The Kara Accord was one of the bases of inspiration for the UN.

Following the non-respect of the Kara agreement, the United Nations Security Council expressed its position on the Cameroon-Nigeria conflict over the Bakassi Peninsula, namely, both states should respect the Kara cease-fire accord, refrain from further violence, take necessary steps to return their forces to the positions they occupied before the dispute was referred to the ICJ, and they should redouble their efforts of reaching a peaceful settlement through the ICJ. It was here that the Security Council acknowledged the bilateral and regional efforts aimed at ensuring a peaceful resolution of the dispute as well as the UN Secretary General's and ICJ's proposals to send a fact-finding mission to the disputed area.

A UN mission was dispatched to the area on 15 March 1996 and the court made an interim ruling. The mission found that the evidence in support of Cameroon's allegations of Nigerian aggression was contradictory and insufficient for a categorical ruling to be made, and Nigeria promptly hailed this as a victory. The other parts of the ruling, that both sides withdraw from positions occupied since 3 February and that the ceasefire be observed, were simply noted. Barely a month later, between 21 and 24 April, the fighting resumed and only the arrival of the UN mission in mid-May seemed to have persuaded both combatants to greater discretion. In 1995 Nigeria's submission arrived at The Hague, questioning the competence of the court to decide a border issue at dispute between two members of the Lake Chad Commission. But this had no effect on the evolution of the court's findings. Before the court could make a ruling, it was again approached by Cameroon, protesting against a renewed Nigerian offensive in Bakassi on 3 and 4 February 1996. Cameroon asked the court to rule on Nigeria's aggression and to demand the withdrawal of forces to positions held before the fighting of 3 February. It also demanded the cessation of all military activity to allow the court to gather evidence *in situ*. By the end of September 1996, matters still seemed no nearer a solution. The ICJ had announced no new findings, and the UN mission to the region proved to have a goodwill rather than fact-finding brief (Grey, 2002:225).

Matters dragged on indecisively until 2002, when the ICJ finally decided in favour of Cameroon. It is interesting to note that what seemed easy took eight years of intensive negotiations to settle. Representatives from both states worked hard to support their thesis and the ICJ listened carefully reviewing historical documents in a bid to arrive at a just settlement. Among the points Cameroon presented to justify their claim was the 1913 agreement in which the boundary was defined and signed, meanwhile Nigeria claimed, among others, that the most democratic way to decide Bakassi sovereignty was to conduct a referendum since according to it, the 300,000 inhabitants of the area did not want to be

Cameroonians. On 10 October 2002, based on old colonial documents, the ICJ delivered a judgment in favour of Cameroon. The boundaries in the Lake Chad region were determined by the Thomson-Marchand Declaration of 1929-30 and the boundary in the Bakassi by the Anglo-German agreement of 1913 (Grey, 2002:225).

With this settlement, Nigeria was supposed to quickly and unconditionally withdraw its administration from the Lake Chad area under Cameroon sovereignty and from the Bakassi Peninsula. Cameroon on its part was supposed to remove its citizens from anywhere on the new border between the two countries and the land boundary from Lake Chad in the north to Bakassi in the south was demarcated and signed by both countries. But weeks before the ICJ ruling, Kofi Annan, the then Secretary General of the UN invited President Paul Biya of Cameroon and Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria to and they met on 5 September 2002 in Paris in the presence of French President Jacques Chirac. Both presidents pledged to abide by the anticipated decision of the ICJ, and agreed to establish an implementation mechanism. But this was not the case with the larger Nigerian population, especially after the ruling was released in their disfavour. This created a political uproar in Nigeria, where some media went as far as identifying a Western conspiracy against them. In effect the Nigerian government refused to withdraw from Bakassi or cede sovereignty as demanded in the Court's ruling (Funteh, 2011:76).

This reaction called for further diplomatic interactions that further compromised Nigeria's resulted to compromise of position. Nigeria later compromised her standing for a breakthrough to occur. When Annan facilitated the formation of the Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission on 15 November 2002 at Geneva, with the aim of enabling a smooth handing over ceremony, the Mixed Commission did their work on the handing over logistics and recommendations on confidence-building between both states. On 5 August 2003, a meeting at the Yaoundé Hilton Hotel evaluated work and activities of the commission. It was observed that between May and July 2003, the following occurred: high level visits were made with the visit of President Biya to Nigeria (May 2003) and an exchange visit by Nigerian Vice-President (July 2003); the Abuja Meeting of 10-12 June 2003 established a working programme and a time table for the implantation of the 10 October ICJ Judgment; both countries had paid in 1.25 million US dollars each to the UN Trust Fund as contribution to foster the demarcation of boundary exercise; Nigeria disclosed that a bill on the Border Region Development Agency, which was awaiting presidential approval would provide social infrastructure to the communities along the international boundaries; and Cameroon however expressed worries that Nigeria was yet to withdraw her troops and administration from Cameroon territories. A few years later, on 12 June 2006,



Figure 2. The Green Tree “Handshake”. Source: UN News Service (2011). Note: Paul Biya (left), O. Obasanjo (right) and Kofi Annan (UNO, Secretary General, middle) during the signing of the Green Tree Accord.

the two parties met at the Green Tree Estate in Manhasset, New York, where they concluded the “Green Tree Agreement” (see plate 1) and the handing over ceremony to be done in front of UN officials and diplomats from numerous countries. Nigeria was given 60 for its forces to quit the disputed peninsula (UN News Service, 2011) (Figure 2).

The handing over ceremony was held in the capital of the fishing town of Archibong, northern Bakassi. It was, witnessed by the African Union, the British, French, German UN and US officials, as well as the Nigerian Chief of Defence Staff, General Martin-Luther Agwai, and the heads of the army, navy, airforce and police. When the Nigerian flag was lowered and that of Cameroon rose, and documents were signed by Nigerian Justice Minister Bayo Ojo and Cameroon’s Vice Minister of Justice, Maurice Kamto, it signified the transfer of authority over the disputed Bakassi peninsula. The final handing over ceremony took place in Calabar in Nigeria in 2008, laying to rest the long standing conflict, hence giving the opportunity for confidence reestablishment, multiple transaction between a people ruled by the destiny of geo-political proximity and historical association (Funteh, 2015).

Meanwhile this positive attitude was fast developing amongst the inhabitants of the southern regions of these countries; the northern parts were not experiencing entirely the same situation: “. . . the Cameroon-Nigeria interaction, became complicated, especially on the northern borderlines when the Federal Government closed up her borders with Cameroon following the deadly attacks of the Nigerian northern population by the Boko Haram- a radical Islamist group in Nigeria” Aboubakar et al. (2010:37-42-47). But this came only when the pirates on the coast of Cameroon had been terrorizing the local population.

Pirates on the Cameroon Coast

When the ICJ’s judgment over the Bakassi peninsula favoured Cameroon, a section of the local Bakassi inhabitants (the majority of them; Nigerians) became disgruntled about the decision. They believed that as a common people they were to be consulted by the ICJ before declaring the territory Cameroon’s. But since this was not done, they claimed this was in disrespect of their common feeling; this feeling being that of one people and the desire to preserve and protect it. It was for this reason that they opted to breaking away from the ICJ’s decision and seek a neutral future for themselves. This future was breaking away from Nigeria and Cameroon in order to form their own nation. To obtain this, they planned to make their voices heard by terrorist attitude, pirates on the sea and hostage taking. *Terrorism Monitor* (2010:13) captures this popular opinion on the Bakassi in these words:

The United Nations should realize that we have the right to decide where we want to be and the right to self-determination. We are Nigerians and here in our ancestral home. You can see some of the graves here dating back to the 19th century. How can you force a strange culture and government on us? We appreciate what the Nigerian government is doing but let it be on record that they have betrayed us and we will fight for our survival and self-determination. We expected that the government as well as the ICJ could have come to the people and called for a referendum so that the people would decide what they wanted for themselves. But we don’t really know why it had to be done that way. If they do not then we and our brothers on the other side will decide to take things into our hands, and have our voices heard no matter what it takes until our desire is attend.

Taking things into their hands and having their voice had no matter what it takes was inclining to pirate actions; and taking control of what they called their own political future.

Funteh (2015:227) maintains that this political future would begin with political movements. In July 2006, the Bakassi Movement for Self-Determination (BMSD) joined with the Southern Cameroons Peoples Organization (SCAPO) and the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) to declare the establishment of the Democratic Republic of Bakassi, an unsuccessful attempt to found a new nation in the small peninsula that brought out few supporters. After the Nigerian Senate ruled the transfer of sovereignty was illegal in 2007, the three groups again declared the independence of Bakassi in July 2008, this time with BMSD declaring it would subsume all its activities under the “joint leadership” of MEND. The secessionist SCAPO movement had a different plan including Bakassi with the Southern Cameroons in a secessionist “Republic of Ambazonia.”

The pirates called themselves Africa Marine Commando (AMC). They claimed responsibility for the abduction of 6 sailors from a Belgian ship anchored 40 km off Douala. An AMC spokesman said the hostages were moved to a camp on Nigerian territory and demanded the release of 10 Ijaw fighters in a Cameroonian prison and the immediate opening of direct talks with Cameroon president Paul Biya (*Le Jour*, September 29, 2007). The immediate opening of talks with the president was to discuss practical steps of giving up Bakassi peninsular for the new nation to form. The AMC, which appears to be a faction of the larger Bakassi Freedom Fighters (BFF) movement, also kidnapped 7 Chinese fishermen in Cameroonian coastal waters who were later freed in exchange for an undisclosed ransom (*Radio France Internationale*, 13 March 2007). These gunmen in light boats attacked 2 cargo ships in Douala harbor, kidnapping 2 Russian crewmen from one ship and looting the safe and abducting the captain of the second ship, a Lithuanian refrigerated vessel. The security of Douala's port is a major regional concern as Douala acts as the commercial lifeline for the land-locked Central African Republic and Chad, another major petroleum producer which runs its oil through the Chad-Cameroon pipeline to the Cameroon port of Kribi (*Cameroon People*, 13, 20 November 2007).

Although the Cameroon government refused to acknowledge the political dimension of the violence in Bakassi by declining to identify the insurgents as anything other than "armed bandits." The decision of 14 August 2009 to hold a ceremony marking the transfer of authority in the Nigerian city of Calabar rather than in Bakassi was interpreted as an acknowledgement that Bakassi was far from secure. But before then, as a response to all these incidences of insecurity, the Cameroon and Nigeria peoples decided to assist one another. The Cameroon's *Bataillon d'Intervention Rapide* (BIR)⁸ commandos were sent to the coast in 2007 to assist the Nigerian Delta Command in dealing with the rapidly deteriorating security situation (*The Sun*, 13, 29 October 2008). They gave the Nigerian residents of Bakassi the option to move to a "New Bakassi" some 30 km inside Nigeria. Many Nigerians wished to move from Bakassi but remained there after hearing reports of the uncomfortable conditions in the new settlement (*IRIN*, 13 November 2007). These uncomfortable conditions were not limited to the Cameroon coast, but were also introduced in the northern part of Cameroon and Nigeria with the actions of the Boko Haram.

Boko Haram and insecurity

The Boko Haram (*Jama'atu Ahlis Sunnah Lidda'awati w'al Jihad*) is one of such religious articulates of insecurity in Nigeria and its environs. It was founded in 2002 in Maiduguri, the capital of Borno state, by self-proclaimed religious teacher Mohammed Yusuf, who was thought to be in his mid-30s and had considerable private wealth with the aim of establishing *Sharia* Law and eliminating westernization in Nigeria. This isolated religious community based on *Salafism* and social *Talibanism* pedestal in Kanamma village in Yobe State attracted a handful of followers from Niger, Chad and Cameroon, estimated between a few hundred and 10,000. But for Cameroon of recent, the group's multi-nationalistic character has for long exerted influence mostly in Nigeria, meanwhile retaining an arsenal of weapons for what it considered "defense." For more than a decade later, its activities provoked a sight of one of the world's most recent but ruthless, violent, and aggressive terrorist organizations with a clearly offensive strategy, even though with more an inwards focus. However, the turning point in this group's rise to full-fledged militancy occurred in July 2009 after a four-day battle with Nigerian government forces in Bauchi, Kano, Yobe and Borno provinces, which resulted in a dead-toll of 800 of its members, its leader Mohammed Yusuf inclusive. The avenging of his death, notoriously video-recorded and widely became the principal rallying point for Boko Haram after reconstituting itself in September 2010 (www.usip.org: 2010:1-6).

In fact, Yusuf's death still resonates with the group today. With the change of leadership from Yusuf, a preacher, to the more radical and violent Abubakr Shekau in 2010, the latter tied Boko Haram to the international jihadi movement in his statements by adopting anti-American rhetoric and showing support for jihadists in Algeria, Yemen, Somalia and Iraq. Boko Haram also stepped up attacks on the Nigerian population, targeting police stations, churches, schools, media houses and state institutions and kidnapping individual and groups of person (over 500 men, women and children – including the 276 Chibok school girls in April 2014), and these mostly occurred in north-east, north central and central Nigeria. In fact, between July 2009 and June 2014, over 6,000 civilians were killed in Nigeria, including at least 2,500 in the first half of 2014 (*BBC News*, 2015-01-03). With these actions, especially the suicide bombing carried out at the UN headquarters in Abuja, a more critical international attention was activated thereto. After a while, he changed from just mere jihadist propaganda to the establishment of a Islamic Caliphate to constituted, Eastern Niger, northern parts of Nigeria and Cameroon, following the ethnic and cultural intertwinement/entanglement of these areas, and not to forget the recent discovery of rich oil deposits. It was following the insecurity that reigned in Nigeria that the government decided to shut down its frontiers with

⁸The BIR was formed in 1999 as the *Bataillon Léger d'Intervention (BLI)*, a special intervention force designed to eliminate foreign rebels, bandits and deserters (the "coupeurs de routes") who were destroying the security of Cameroon's northern provinces through cattle rustling, abductions, murder and highway robbery. As part of military reforms carried out in Cameroon in 2001, the unit took on its current BIR designation. BIR officers are selected from the graduates of the *Ecole Militaire Interarmées* in Yaoundé.

these neighbours.

Achuge et al. (2014) claim that the federal government of Nigeria, on 23 February 2011, sealed its northern border with Cameroon in an effort to curtail the activities of the Boko Haram insurgents, maintaining that the closure extended from Borno State by Lake Chad, to the southern end of Adamawa State, around halfway along Nigeria's 1,500-mile border with Cameroon. The 23rd Armour Brigade of the Nigerian Army, Yola Brigadier General Rogers Iben Nicholas added that ". . . the decision to shut the Adamawa side of the border with Cameroon was imperative to stop illegal movement in and out of the country," and also that the closure was ". . . meant to effectively reduce the activities of the insurgents." In his own words: "What I have done is to completely close the border. No one will enter and no one will leave Adamawa State," (*Aljazeera*, 2014). According to the Nigerian Army, Boko Haram fighters set up bases in sparsely populated areas of its northeastern neighbours - Cameroon, Chad and Niger - which were used to flee across the border after staging attacks to avoid military pursuit (*Ibid.*). These attacks caused enormous alarm, fear and insecurity in and around northern parts of Nigeria. But the shutting of the borders did not mean much to this sect, considering the porosity of the borders, as they easily crossed over to attack neighbouring villages.

The consequences of their actions were soon felt on many fronts by the Nigerian regime and its subject and the neighbouring countries (Niger and Cameroon), which include the mass displacement and migration of inhabitants of the conflict-affected areas, which include over 1.5 million by December 2014 (*Ibid.*). The Cameroon situation was more critical as not only more than 50,000 refugees from Gwoza Local Government Area crossed the porous borders to seek refuge in the region of the Far North Region of Cameroon. The impact of the Boko Haram was directly felt in Cameroon with the kidnap of many foreigners (French, Germans, Italians and Chinese) working or visiting the Far North Region, who were often released after the payment of huge sums of money as ransom. More so, they made constant encroachments into Cameroon where they attacked and raided local villages, performing mass killings and kidnapping many. Most of these occurrences occurred in Amcide, Baga, Tourou, Guirdivig, Limani, Kolofata, Dabanga and Fotokol with far reaching ramifications that included displacement of persons and the closing down of schools, offices and businesses (Musa, 2014).

All these instituted permanent fear, terror and insecurity along in the region as earlier highlighted. But these were gradually being contented by the *BIR* as it put up stiff resistances that resulted in a significant dead toll of the Boko Haram, although suffering a number of deaths and casualties as well. But since the security issue was becoming prolonged and complex for both nations, Cameroon and Nigeria decided to think together in

bringing the situation to an end, amidst other responses of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) of Nigeria, Chad and Niger, UK, USA, Russia and China. Both countries met severally in Yaoundé (2013), in Abuja (2014) within the confines of creating a Nigeria/Cameroon Trans-border Security Committee, and from which the creation of a Coalition Force to fight terrorism announced on 30 November 2014 by Cameroon. This force would include 3,500 soldiers from Benin, Chad, Cameroon, Niger and Nigeria. In as much as the operational value of this force was to be felt, the intervention of Chad in the issue gave a serious blow to the strength of the BH, as it fought with the Cameroonian soldiers in Fotokol and crossing over to Nigeria to regain for the Nigerian government most of the territories it lost to the BH.

Conclusion

This paper attempted to discuss the shared relationship between Cameroon and Nigeria, enhanced by their geographical and historical immediacy. It tried to show that both nations shared worthy moments of mutual socio-political and economic interactions since the pre-colonial period. These interactions were exemplified by the opportunities (political schooling and participation, job creation and commercial and social benefits) both peoples created for and enjoyed from each other. Even when this cordial dealings was intermittently interrupted by some disheartening circumstances of victimization (masterminded by a few colonial politicians), and secessionist tendencies, territorial dispute and the terrorizing actions of pirates and the Boko Haram - events that prompted many scholars to class the relation between the nations as "perpetual hostility" - the respective governments remained connected in an attempt to close these sad pages of their relationship. In fact, historical analysis and strategic examination of Cameroon-Nigeria political and economic relationship revealed a considerable level of warmth, cordiality and mutuality of interest and purpose. It is hoped that the resolution of the territorial differences between both states and the joint efforts of containing the Boko Haram would serve as a spring-board to revisit, reconsider and valorize the cordial side of the interaction they enjoyed since the pre-colonial era. They also need to reconsider the nature and effects of their foreign policies and profoundness of their shared opportunities. This will help them to minimize the tricks and profanes introduced by colonial and neocolonial legacies not often aimed at orienting the construction of the African continent to an indigenous sustainable beneficial offer. Of course, these offers can only be maximized when both countries also try to understand the reality and complexity of the character of their frontier lines (ethnic connectivity, intense black marketeering and smuggling, growing

pirate activities along the Gulf of Guinea, severe transnational security intimidation) better and also try to take proper practical collective measures to secure a hitch-free and future of greater opportunities. This is so because their geographical placing is nature's gift and whatever outcome (vice or virtue, for that matter, emanates from such position depends largely on the choices both countries would have made.

Conflict of Interests

The author has not declared any conflict of interests.

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