

Nigeria - Cameroon borderland: Prospects of economic cooperation and integration

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Abstract

Most of the international boundaries in Africa were delimited in the last quarter of the 19th century. The adoption of the “*Uttis possedis*” principle of boundary maintenance by African states in 1963 solidified the boundary regimes. The state-centric policies in border management result in further conflicts, wars and litigation depriving of cross-border cooperation. Though attempts at economic cooperation have been made at regional and sub-regional levels, results have not been encouraging. It has become imperative the African countries to adopt new models of economic cooperation and integration. This requires some new thoughts so the cross-border concept has to be analyzed to look at the potential for economic integration. The paper suggests that transborder cooperation focused on historical linkages could considerably reduce conflicts and litigation, and the borders converted to bridges rather than barriers from the grassroots as opposed to the state-centric views.

Keywords: border areas, Nigeria-Cameroon border, transborder cooperation in Africa.

INTRODUCTION

The Federal Republic of Nigeria shares boundaries with five countries of which three namely Benin, Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea are coastal. The international boundaries varies in length, from the shortest (Nigeria/Chad) of 75 km to the longest (Nigeria-Cameroon) of 1,700 km. They also vary both within and between in terms of the terrain and other aspects of physical geography, and the details of their history. These two countries and peoples share common bonds of language, culture and tradition nurtured by centuries of continuous and meaningful interactions. Despite some differences, people in general share the basic similarity of being colonially negotiated boundaries, none of which has been entirely unambiguously defined or satisfactorily demarcated on the ground. The similarities of structure or physical attributes on the ground are complemented by identical functions as limits of a defended

area or territory over which a state exercises sovereign jurisdiction (Asiwaju, 1999:261).

The border region in focus was negotiated by the British and Germans from 1884 to 1913 when the Germans lost the World War-I. The erstwhile German possessions were partitioned, and a Condominium Administration was established between the British and the French. This partition was endorsed by the League of Nations in 1922 and each administered its own portion as the League of Nations Mandate. The partition of German “Kamerun” created two distinct boundary configurations: the original German-British boundary and a new Franco-British Mandate-Cum-Trusteeship divide. France granted independence to its Cameroon Trusteeship Territory under the name “*LA Republique du Cameroon*”. Nigeria became independent in October 1, 1960.

In 1961, the United Nations organized plebiscites in the British Northern and Southern Cameroons. The electorate was asked to choose between going independent by joining Nigeria (integration) or Cameroon (unification). Northern Cameroon opted to integrate with Nigeria while the Southern Cameroon united with Nigeria. This means that the British Cameroons, which was the offspring of partition, was further fragmented. The boundary changed accordingly and the original British–German boundary was modified. Consequently, Cameroon gained a triple boundary heritage, which impacts significantly on the border status (Osuntokin, 1975:7).

The various border mutations mentioned above have compounded the Nigeria–Cameroon border development. It has posed challenges not only to transborder development, but also affects trans-border cooperation. It generates serious security concerns to the border impacted populations. The germinal substance of the ado lies in the fact that the border referent has been mobile. This in turn renders the task of delimitation and demarcation onerous. The two states are still engrossed with sovereignty assertions, territorial claims, militarization of border areas and even litigation culminated in the International Court of Justice (Asiwaju, 1999:4).

The prospects for transborder cooperation and integration between states are irresistibly driven by some interlocking variables. These include border area history, background, ethnic groups, common/contiguous territory, trade, natural resources, sub-regional integration projects and local culture (Bonchuk, 2012: 24). The differences and discontinuities in the legal system and enforcement of common-law tradition (Nigeria) on one side and civil-law (Cameroon) on the other, and the mutual

assertion of sovereignty pose challenges to enforcing the law and order. The difficult terrain or the border environment from the coast to the hilly arid areas in the north provides a kind of border underworld camouflaging the cross-border crimes. The differences in income, livelihood, poverty, unemployment and demographic patterns in these two countries have given rise to illegal cross-border smuggling and prostitution alongside legitimate business and commerce. Since independence, both states have engaged in bilateral agreements to promote trade and cooperation including cultural exchanges; not much has been achieved. The paper suggests therefore that both states should adopt a policy of peaceful co-existence, to maintain the current climate of cooperation and intensify the efforts towards the development of their borderlands and reduce the incidences of insecurity.

The 1,700 km long border is predominantly rugged terrain culminating in high mountains that include Mandera, Mambilla and Bamenda and intervening plateaus and forests (Adejuyigbe, 1989:97). The coastal lowlands in both Nigeria and Cameroon receive heavy rainfall throughout the year as a result of the location near the Atlantic Ocean, and the area is suitable for agriculture. The border infrastructure is poor and the border lacks development. The people who inhabit the border are engaged in agriculture including farming, fishing, cattle rearing, small scale businesses, and trade. Both sides share identical socio-economic problems as a result of the geographical milieu.

Calabar is the headquarters of the eastern naval command, close to the Bakassi Peninsula. It also houses Nigeria's premier Export Processing Zone. Along the Benue segment of the border, Makurdi is the

headquarters of the Nigerian Airforce Tactical Command. The Chad Basin whose waters are of strategic importance to Nigeria is shared between Nigeria, Niger and Chad. It is against this background that both the governments are compelled to engage in transborder cooperation and integration. The concept of the cross-border area offers both states policy options to achieve the objective of border integration.S

FRAMEWORK OF ANALYSIS

The success story of the European construction process since 1945 has introduced a scenario of a borderless Europe. The European Union's efforts at realizing a large single market based on the liberalization not only of the movement of goods and people, but also, of capital and localizing the activities of economic agents have changed borders substantially – both politically and institutionally including socio-economic patterns (Nuhouk, 1984:332-335).

The process implies the breaking down barriers and obstacles bound to create discontinuity in the process of communication and diffusing of people, goods, information or knowledge. Arising from the assertion is the necessity of resorting to theoretical interpretations of various conceptual discourses on frontiers, borders, borderlands, transborder regionalism, regional development, integration and cooperation, aimed at converting barriers to bridges. Barriers could be of different kinds – cultural, linguistic, institutional, physical, political, economic or social. Boundaries could also have either positive meaning for the identity construction of single agents or groups or territorial identities, or negative, when the border is perceived as a hostile factor (Camaghai, 1991: 15).

In certain historical circumstances, a border could be a separating line or a contact area. In spite of the success story of the European Union, Europe cannot be totally boundary less. It is imperative to understand the effects of boundaries on the diffusion process, because any type of communication is important not only for the evaluation and analysis of possible discrimination effects but as a necessity to understand the processes of spatial development in the era of globalization. In studying the spatial impact of communication barriers, it is necessary to locate the process of diffusion as the propagation phenomenon in time and space of specific thing – object institution, idea, individual's groups, or any receiving entity. A communication process implies then (a) an emitting entity, (b) a receiving entity, (c) one or more communication channels, and (d) propagation time specific spatial modalities which will vary following the contents and the communication ways (Shaldom, 1993:38).

In relation to communication barriers with reference to borders and their negative meaning, it is imperative to understand the nature of the obstacles that prevents transfer of information, provoking discontinuity, intensity modification and direction of flows. This would enable the identification and evaluation of those spatial factors that influence in a differential manner the regional development process in specific borderlands. An examination of the socio-economic profile of borderlands has led Button and Rossera (1984) to distinguish between (1) traditional view, i.e. the border area defined as the territory immediately close to a fixed borderline, inside which the socio-economic effects close to the existence of a border are significantly felt and (2) the view of the frontier limit, where the border is not perceived as demarcation

line, but as an external limit, and moreover, as a mobile limit.

Border means those territories immediately close to the divided line between two or more countries. This perspective is that of a border territorially defined in a fixed line. The boundary line is the starting point for analysis with particular reference to the territory close to it. In Hansens (1992:14) analysis, the concept of the border area is a natural territory in which economic and social life is directly and significantly influenced by the proximity to an international boundary. In relation to the border area under examination, the border area extends from the sea littoral in Calabar to Lake Chad in the northern segment of the borderland. House (1980:45) identifies an open border, regional, intermediate and border regions, while Di Tella (1982) perceives borders in economic terms – where marginal costs (agricultural products) are equal to the selling cost. In order words, the economy of the border regions can bring income situations positive or negative for one side of the border. Macgaffery

(1997:13) locate borders as areas where alternative economic systems known various as informal, underground, parallel, unrecorded or second economies thrive alongside the official economies.

Courlet (1988:58), in his analysis submitted that the open border is where contact is predominant and does not function as barrier between two or more socio-economic systems. In the view of House (1980:45), this model should guide our perspective vision. In this context, economic development and integration will no longer be determined by the political institutional differential of belonging to this or that country, but eventually by the comparative advantages of border areas on both sides of the border. According to Ratti and Baggi (1980:194), by surpassing the economic concept of the “bordering” areas and proceeding to that of the “transbordering” economies was the objective of Europe in 1992 - a borderless or open Europe. In view of the EEC (E.U.) objectives, the border effect is no longer that of a barrier or that of a screen, but that of contact.

Figure I: Minimal Borderlands; no cultural or ethnic affinity between country A and B, Borderland space is minimal

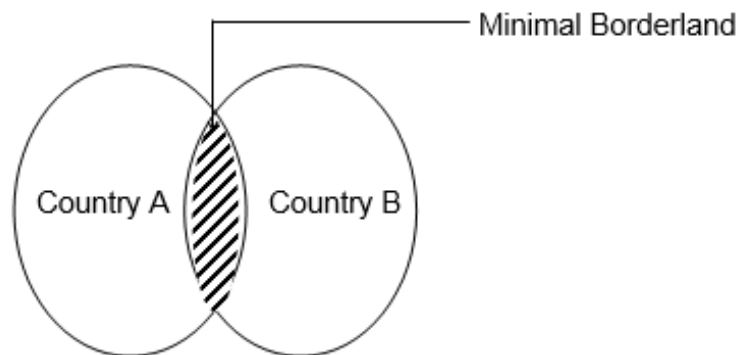


Figure II: Zero Borderland: Country A and B are Ideologically or Religiously opposed

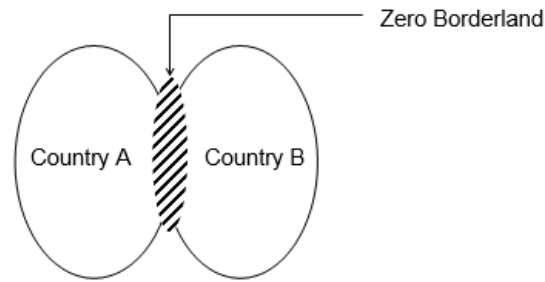
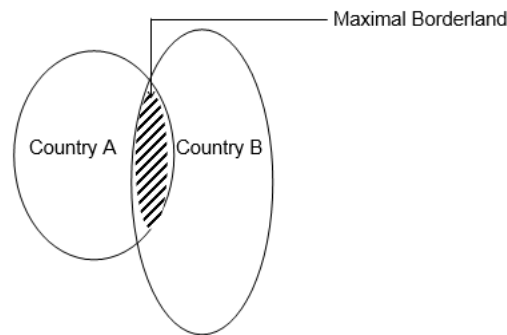


Figure III: Maximal Borderland: Citizens of both Country A and B have Ancestral Ethnic and Linguistic Affinities and Links Spanning Millennia



Borders present ambiguities and the policy orientation could reflect what Lord Curzon said:

“Frontiers (borders) are that razor’s edge on which long suspended the modern issues of war or peace, of life or death to nations.” The choices or policy options of nations are clear, war, or conflict, the African experience reflects this view. Scholars such as Martinez (2010) and Momoh (1983), have classified spatial boundaries/borderlands in terms of the nature of interactions along and astride common borders.

Oscar Martinez (2010) identified following categories of borderland interactions: (1) Alienated borderlands: Such borders are functionally closed and cross-border interaction is absent. Cross-border relations

are marked by tension even though divided groups share a common ancestry. Former communist states and the current North and South Korea border relations fit this category. (2) Co-existent or interdependent borderlands: In both cases border relations are stable and open. Citizens here usually develop closer relationship; independent border-landers also engage in friendly co-operative ventures, both share similarities in economic and social patterns of interactions. Example of co-existent borderlands can be found in North America, Latin America, Asia, U.S. and Canada. (3) Integrated borderlands: These exist where the economies of adjacent states are functionally merged, unrestricted movement of people/goods, across the boundary.

Border landers perceive themselves as “members of one social system”, e.g.

Europe, where the policy of transborder cooperation is pursued to mitigate the problems of the localities and marginal populations (Oscar, 2010: 112). Furthermore, C. S. Momoh's (1983) "Critique of Borderland Theories", divided borderland interaction into: (a) minimal borderland (Figure I), (b) zero borderland (Figure II), and (c) maximal borderland (Figure III). Maximal borderlands fit graphically the context of the Nigeria – Cameroon discourse on the Cross-Border Area. Along and astride the Nigeria – Cameroon borderlands is artificially partitioned ethnic groups – the Boki, Ejagham and Akwaya in the Cross River region with Southwest Cameroon, and the Tiv, Hausa, Fulani, Mandara, Adamawa, Mambil-Vote and the Fali of Mubi, - divided by the 1913 Anglo-German boundary and placed in Nigeria – Cameroon respectively.

Apart from ethnic fragmentation, there is also, closely interrelated manifestation of wide spectrum of transborder resources ranging from land, water, surface and underground, air to liquid and solid minerals, waterfalls, the seabed, flora and fauna, including the inherently indivisible environment and the ecosystem. All these factors are begging for policy articulation for transborder cooperation and integration. Africanist scholars and policy makers are missing the comparative value of comparative analysis with other regions, particularly those of Western Europe and North America that have faced similar problems to those being experienced in post-colonial Africa (Momoh, 1983:68). African states and governments must therefore be persuaded to yield ground and imbibe new approaches of "transborder regionalism", regional economic cooperation and integration as a panacea to their developmental goods. This shift of emphasis is desired because regional economic

cooperation and integration efforts have remained at the official level, i.e. in the context of the organization of African Unity, New African, A. u., and other sub-regional efforts. Adherence to the notion of national sovereignty and the 1964 Cairo Declaration on boundary maintenance, i.e. the adoption of "*uttiss possesdetis*" position of Latin American States which solidified African boundaries present obstacles to regional economic cooperation and integration.

CONCEPT OF CROSS-BORDER AREA

At the attainment of independence, African states started to group together (regionally and at the sub-regions) in order to bring down the barriers erected by the colonialists. The governments required frameworks for consultation and cooperation in order to achieve shared developmental goals. Until the 1990's the idea of building and strengthening mutual solidarity through institutional mechanisms was the central focus of regional and sub-regional cooperation policy. In order to achieve these objectives, regional and sub-regional institutions were created, such as the organization of African Unity Order (now African Union), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU), the Mano River Union, the Senegal River Development Organisation (OMVS), the permanent interstate committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS), the Chad Basin Development Authority, etc. reflected the mode and determination of the West African States to work towards the integration of the region (Raveuhil, 1979:227-246).

Economic integration and cooperation has remained the central theme in their efforts to develop. The Organization of African Unity asserts the principle of inviolability of the inherited borders. These borders continue to

generate conflicts that detract attention from the critical question of border development and integration. The African states desire to put an end to these irritants of conflicts and territorial disputes. The governments also desire to promote peaceful co-existence, to maintain a climate of peace among adjacent neighbors, resulting in the creation of structures for border cooperation. This has resulted in the suggestion by border scholars for the adoption of approaches or paradigms for developing their borders and reducing the security challenges posed by those borders. The European experience in transborder cooperation and integration as manifested in the success story of the European Union, the establishment of European “Euregios” and the transnational perspective are often cited.

Borders and borderlands anywhere in the world share similar “universalism” in spite of “particularisms” or differences in the details of their history and geography. It is against this historical fact that the concept of the “cross-border area” can be located and utilized for the development of the Nigeria – Cameroon borderlands. As detailed in the Sikasso Seminar March, 2002, “the Cross Border Area concept (pays frontiers) raises a number of questions that relate to the development of not only Mali’s borders but borders in Africa in general. The concept desires to overcome boundaries, to make them zones of contact and exchange, rather than lines of confrontation between separate sovereignties. In other words, the concept espouses the negation of the “barrier” function of borders and the acceptance of emerging concept of the borders as “bridges” (Diarrah, 2002:15).

Furthermore, the cross-border area desires to promote a new form of border cooperation based on the process of sub-regional integration and to strengthen

decentralization. This would provide opportunity for the provision of infrastructure and stimulate development in shared borderlands. In line with the basic philosophy of this concept, most governments in Africa, and the sub-region are confronted with the challenge of good governance and maintaining a climate of peaceful co-existence. Border regions are of particular interests because there are areas where internationality meets with locality. Being far removed from their core states, they have been neglected in terms of development. Peoples of different nationalities converge around them. The borderlanders are usually not consulted in the formulation of policies that govern their daily lives, and they in turn have no respect for the lines of demarcation.

Borders are areas of administrative and jurisdictional competence of states. They are areas of interdigitation and overlap of cultures. It is impossible to draw lines of separation particularly, where related ethnic groups are involved. Concepts of integration have emphasized the state-centric perspective, and the top down approach. The border impacted populations are treated as marginal in the conceptualization of integration process. The cross-border area concept emphasizes the relevance of the border impacted populations and decentralization of integration from the bottom up. A cross-border area is a geographical area that overlaps between two or more neighboring states, and whose populations are linked by socio-economic and cultural bonds. The concept recognizes the existence of borders between countries; but refers to a dynamic community united by socio-economic and cultural realities.

This definition fits graphically the Nigeria – Cameroon cross-border area where the Boki, Ejagham, Akwaya, Hausa, Chadic speaking

peoples, the Mandara, Admawa, Manbill-Vote the Fali of Mubi, the Tiv-Batu group, etc. were divided by the 1913 Anglo-German boundary and placed in Nigeria and Cameroon respectively. These divided groups are domiciled along and astride the borderlands in contiguous territory in a coherent cultural dynamic community in constant cross-border interaction with kith and kin across the borders (Bonchuk, 1999:104). The slow pace of institutional integration have led to alternative model building such as market integration, trans-frontier regionalism and the concept of the border area. As a bottom up approach to integration, the idea is to strengthen sub-regional integration zones.

Currently, commercial exchanges that go on across borders are termed illegal or smuggling. The second economy (or unofficial) is very vibrant but unrecorded. The revenue that both governments loose to the “border underworld” is enormous. “Little” is recorded at the official level as the clandestine and unrecorded trade has assumed a frightening dimension (Bonchuk, 2011:67-87). Though socio-cultural, religious and political institutions are still observable and prevalent, the infrastructures of transport and communication are lacking. The indices of modernity peter of at the margin of the borders. Throughout the length and breadth of the 1,700 km boundary, educational institutions, health facilities, energy, industry sports facilities, modern markets, etc at the margin of the borders are non-existent. These border communities have been removed from the “national mind”, and national symbols of their core states. Their economies have decayed leaving them to remain as primitive cultivators of agricultural produce and pastoralist. The border environment, including development, has assumed the status of asylum. It facilitates cross-border

crimes and criminality. In spite of government’s rhetoric of rural development, the borderlands remain neglected as they are left to make up their own way of life. These localities and communities are the most depressed socially and economically. For example, in the northern segment of the borderlands Michika, Mubi, Maiha, Fufore Ganye, Gashaka Sardauna and Takum, there is a dearth of infrastructural facilities such as road linkages, health facilities, electricity, pipe potable drinking water, etc. The difficult terrain, remoteness from the core states capital, cost of developing the area have compounded development efforts. Along Fufore, Ganye, Gashaka and Takum that are tsetse fly areas extending into Cameroon. Rearing of cattle, an important cross-border activity here has been restricted due to the parasite. In the Mambilla Plateau, heavy rains and overgrazing have resulted in serious soil erosion and gullies threatening to render the area unsuitable for farming (Barkindo, 1989:89). The border areas of both Cameroon and Nigeria share similar socio-economic cultural as well as physical characteristics. They are numerous pastoralists who live in border communities of both countries. The cattle rearers move with their animals in search of food without due respect to boundaries. Such transborder movements of cattle make the control of animal diseases like Rinderpest and Trypanosomiasis difficult.

The use of natural resources such as rivers that straddle the two nations could be put to use by the two states. The river Donga, Kastina Ala, Benue, Cross River, the Atlantic sea bed, including are prominent river systems shared by the two nations. In 1980, Cameroon without consulting Nigeria, constructed a dam at Lagdo, near the Nigerian boundary; reducing drastically the amount of water on the Nigerian side of River Benue. The threat of volcanic eruption

from Lake Nyos volcanicity in Cameroon, proximate to Nigeria, and the other pre-disposed natural disasters such as desertification, gully erosion and Rinderpest outbreaks, call for cross-border consultation and management. Along the Benue, and in Turan District, about forty Benue settlements, Cameroonians tend to regard the River Moan (or Danga) as theirs. The shrine on Swem Hill belongs to the Tiv of Nigeria, but is located in Cameroon, also, the Sharshi market is located in Cameroon but the Tiv claim ownership. In the Cross River segment, the Bakassi peninsula conflict generated security problems leading to the militarization of the border. It also became a subject of litigation at the International Court of Justice. In spite of the ICJS's judgement which gave the Bakassi Peninsula to Cameroon, Nigerians are still vexed at the transfer of ownership. The outcome of that judgment still generates ill-feelings and security concerns between the two nations.

In this segment of the borders with Southwest Cameroon, it seems that successive governments had intentionally kept it that way. From the colonial period when the Germans, British and French rivalry resulted into military campaigns, the border has remained militarized. There are no modern high speed automobile expressways, and the endearing extended power grid lines which have helped to warm up the Nigerian - Benin, and Nigeria - Niger border diplomacy in the recent past on the Nigeria - Cameroon sector. Security is a pre-requisite for the development any part of a nation whether core or borderlands. The eastern boundary of Nigeria is very extensive, 1,700 km in addition to the fact that it passes through a very difficult terrain. The boundary has remained permeable and is difficult to police. There are only a few customs and immigration officials posted to

man the areas. Its permeability has encouraged the opening of illegal routes. Generally, borders are noted for their roles as facilitators of crimes and criminality. The border underworld of criminals utilizes the border environment to perpetrate cross-border crimes, human trafficking, smuggling of petroleum products, second hand clothing, piracy, etc. (Makka, 1989:84).

Another serious security concern is that of determining who is a Nigerian among the border communities. The border landers speak Hausa, Fulani, Tiv-virtue, Chadic, Manbila, Boki, Ejagham or Akwaya. Along the Ikom - Ekock segment of the borders with Cross River State of Nigeria, Nigerians view and listen to Cameroonian radio, video cassettes or makossa music. In the northern segment, along former Gongola, Cameroonian programmes are watched and listened to with ease, but cannot receive such signals from Nigeria. This has very serious security implication for Nigeria considering the fact that these areas were part of colonial Nigeria before the plebiscite of 1961 (Bonchuk, 2001:34).

POLICY OBJECTIVES

For Nigeria - Cameroon to resolve the various challenges of their borderlands characteristics the cross-border area could be a driver for public policy. Since Nigeria - Cameroon share a common geographical area with contiguous local government areas and provinces, the cross-border area if formalized will involve local authorities in the grassroots integration process. This view is supported by the current vibrant "sovereignty percolating realities" as evidenced in cross-border interaction in matters of ancestral worship, divinity consultation, magico-religious institutions, attendance at markets, cross-border trade, etc.

The two states can work out a framework by which adjacent local authorities and provincial administrations can establish certain institutions recognized by both with responsibilities to define new development strategies at the grassroots in shared border areas. The establishment of administrative institutions shared by both states would provide opportunities for dialogue between civil society organizations and other groups interested in cross-border integration initiatives at the grassroots. It is also hoped that the cross-border area could strengthen the process of partnership framework and generate synergy between the two states, the local or provincial authorities, the private actors and aid agencies in the collective management of border areas. Joint development plans and generation of rural data become imperative. Currently, planning of border regions is non-existent of both states. Rural data in relation to demography, migratory and settlement patterns, population, trade and commercial activity across-border, control of animal diseases, piracy and criminality, etc are non-existent (Adenihi, 1989:4-33).

The cross-border area could therefore be an effective policy for the harmonizing of cross-border sectoral policies between the two states. More so, with the dearth of modern indices of development at the margin of their borders the cross-border area could lead to cooperation in the regulation of migration, environmental and resource management, establishment of common security through cross-border patrols, education and sports facilities, airports, roads and railways, exploitation and production of fish stock, animal breeding, and management of game reserves and river systems for energy (e.g. the Akpokim water fall). The evolution of the cross-border area would also blunt the currently sharpened borders converting them to bridges, rather

than barriers; as the process of decision making becomes more decentralized as opposed to the current centralized state-centric perspective.

It has been indicated that the cross-border area does not contradict the existence of legally recognized boundaries. The concept, rather, persuades states to yield ground to emerging concepts of transboundary management, security and development of shared borders by negating the barrier function. Security as defined in the context of the cross-border area is not the provision of military hardware for the militarization of the border, but the progressive dimension which aim at the reduction of poverty, hunger, disease, unemployment, illiteracy, provision of health facilities, reduction of crimes, criminality and prostitution.

The critical areas for the intervention of the cross-border area would include:

- Economic infrastructures, e.g. roads, bridges, dams, rural electricity supply, telecommunications, immigration and drainage networks
- Health facilities, drinking water, education, sanitation, environmental protection, micro projects, credit facilities for agricultural produce, fertilizers, insecticides
- Capacity building, institutional support, project identification and management, technical assistance/advisory services
- Promotion of peaceful co-existence
- Establishment of bilingual schools, sports and recreational facilities, cross-border exchanges such as visits by youth groups, traditional leaders, cultural exchanges and historical studies

- Establishment of radio and TV stations, newspapers or letters to promote the idea of both states, etc.
- Encourage investments at the margin of the borders to provide employment and development
- Reverse the status of the borderlands from a military vulnerable border, unsafe and unsecure for investment and development.

In order to sustain the modest achievements so far, both states should:

- revive and institutionalize the Nigeria – Cameroon Joint Border Management Consultation Meeting
- provide a scientific platform for public enlightenment on the issues involved in the handing over of the Bakassi Peninsula to Cameroon by Nigeria on Monday 14, 2006
- inform about the emphasis placed in the text of the ICJ judgement, on the affected populations welfare and especially, the imperative for the parties to respect the local populations fundamental and particular human and people’s rights.
- involve the local officials in the process of establishing the structures, and implementation of the cross-border concept
- speed up the process of demarcating the borders and map out areas for starting infrastructural and industrial layout
- draw up bilateral and multilateral instruments as evidenced by the 1984 European Outline Convention on Territorial Authorities which has assisted the success story of the European Union

- utilize cross-border languages as core ingredient of the cross-border area concept
- harmonise the conflict of laws in order to re-orientate the law enforcement agencies of both states – customs, police, gendarmes, immigration, army, coastal guards, etc.
- create joint border patrols.
- introduce community policing at the local or grassroots level in order to collaborate, share information on cross-border crimes and criminality.

The exploitation of cross-border resources is best approached by joint utilization arrangements as evidenced by the successful establishment of the Onigbolo Cement Company and the Save Sugar Company including College Gaskiya by Nigeria – Benin Republic at the margin of their common borders. The relatively peaceful atmosphere on the border between Nigeria – Niger is instructive. The methods used to take advantage of the potential for integration of the Hausa, Kanuri and Fulani culture across the border is a worthy lesson. Also, the shared environmental concerns about desertification and common understanding of the need for efficient management of transborder waters, both surface and underground resulted in the adoption of the Nigeria – Niger Joint Commission for Cooperation (Barkindo, 1977:27).

At the northern segment of the Nigeria – Cameroon borderlands is the Lake Chad Basin, with similar constellation not only of transborder resources – water in an arid region, hydrocarbon deposits and fisheries, but also, a similar number of interested states – Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria. Between the northern segment and the southern termini boundary with Cameroon,

there are also important resources especially along the Cross River and Benue.

The 1981 European Outline Convention on Transborder Cooperation Between Territorial Communities or Authorities, which outlined the general legal and common basis on which bilateral cooperation would be founded in the framework of national sovereignty of each country and region aimed at the promotion of transboundary cooperation and contributing to economic and social wellbeing of divided peoples and culture area could be adopted. By 1986, the European single Act was initiated and this focused on the primacy of regions as natural choice points for planning and development in Europe. Thus, the concept of “Euregios” or “Europe of the regions in contradistinction to Europe of the nation state” has spread throughout Western Europe and is considered for adoption in North America as a policy in the development of borderlands (Bonchuk, 2002: 27). It is imperative to note that Europe is dissolving the notion of precise boundaries by permitting local authorities to initiate programmes for the development of border regions with supervision and without infringing on state sovereignty. Nigeria – Cameroon as prospective “Afregios” should initiate the concept of the “Cross-border Area” in order to develop their neglected borderlands and reduce the incidence of insecurity between them.

CONCLUSION

This paper has analyzed the concept of cross-border and its suitability for development and integration of the Nigeria – Cameroon boundary. The border areas have been the least developed since the colonial periods. However this paper has given recommendations to improve development in border areas following the models of

Western Europe and North America. The paper concludes that the borderlands share universal characteristics so they may hold the potential to reduce insecurity, promote cooperation, development and socio-economic integration.

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