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Editorial Note

This issue of *AYIKA* brings together a rich and timely collection of scholarship that underscores a central truth: in Africa, environmental questions are deeply political, and political realities are increasingly shaped by environmental change. The contributions in this volume reflect the growing complexity of this relationship, engaging themes that span governance, technology, security, sustainability, and identity across diverse African contexts and beyond.

A defining feature of this issue is its strong engagement with the role of digitalisation in advancing sustainability. From the systematic review on how digitalisation enables decarbonisation, to analyses of agri-tech adoption in Nigeria and South Africa, the volume highlights the transformative potential of technology in addressing environmental challenges. These contributions move beyond optimism, carefully examining the mechanisms and constraints that shape technological uptake. They remind us that digital solutions are not neutral; their effectiveness depends on policy frameworks, institutional capacity, and socio-economic conditions.

Equally prominent is the question of governance, particularly in relation to service delivery and institutional performance. The examination of water service failures in Gauteng Province offers a sobering account of how governance lapses can translate into environmental and public health crises. Similarly, the discussions on public service reform and parliamentary oversight reveal the persistent challenges of accountability and administrative effectiveness across the continent. Together, these studies point to a critical insight: sustainable environmental outcomes are contingent on capable, transparent, and responsive institutions.

The issue also engages deeply with questions of political order, security, and regional cooperation. Analyses of Zimbabwe's political history, hybrid regimes in Central Africa, and border conflicts involving Nigeria reveal how political instability and governance structures shape environmental management and development trajectories. The exploration of indivisible security within the SADC region further highlights the interconnectedness of peace, cooperation, and sustainable development. These contributions reinforce the idea that environmental sustainability cannot be pursued in isolation from broader political and security dynamics.

Another important strand in this volume is the emphasis on economic strategies and livelihoods, particularly in rural contexts. Articles on organic agribusiness, marketing strategies aligned with climate action, and the challenges faced by women in agribusiness illuminate the everyday realities of sustainability. They foreground the experiences of local actors, especially women entrepreneurs, whose resilience and innovation are often overlooked. By examining the socio-economic factors shaping revenue growth and participation, these studies contribute to a more inclusive understanding of development.

The volume also makes a significant intellectual contribution by foregrounding indigenous knowledge systems and alternative epistemologies. The exploration of

Ubuntu as a framework for regional governance offers a human-centred perspective that challenges dominant policy paradigms. Similarly, the critique of epistemic violence in transboundary conservation highlights the marginalisation of local knowledge and agency. These interventions are particularly important in rethinking whose knowledge counts in environmental governance and how more equitable frameworks can be developed. Urban spaces and cultural expressions are not left out of this conversation. Contributions on city branding in Harare and the intersection of art, space, and identity in Durban demonstrate how environmental and political dynamics are experienced and expressed in urban contexts. These studies expand the scope of environmental politics by incorporating cultural and spatial dimensions, offering fresh insights into how cities in the Global South are responding to climate change.

Notably, this issue also extends its analytical reach beyond Africa, with a study on urban climate initiatives in Brazil and a comparative examination of socio-economic vulnerability in Sub-Saharan Africa and the Pacific Islands. These contributions enrich the volume by situating African experiences within a broader global context, encouraging cross-regional learning and dialogue.

Finally, the inclusion of research on language and education, such as the study on tense substitution errors among Tshivenda-speaking students, serves as a reminder of the interconnectedness of knowledge production, communication, and development. It highlights the importance of education in shaping the capacity to engage with complex environmental and political issues.

Taken together, the articles in this issue reflect a vibrant and interdisciplinary field of inquiry. They challenge simplistic narratives and instead offer nuanced analyses that recognise the interconnected nature of environment and politics in Africa. As the continent continues to navigate the pressures of climate change, population growth, and political transformation, the insights presented here are both timely and necessary. This volume invites scholars, policymakers, and practitioners to think more critically and act more collaboratively. It is our hope that the conversations sparked within these pages will contribute to more just, sustainable, and context-sensitive approaches to environmental governance in Africa and beyond.

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NIGERIAN BORDER CONFLICT WITH NEIGHBOURS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR REGIONALISM

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Abstract

Nigerian border history has recorded the rise of the Battle of Kinasara, the legal battle for the authentic owner of the Bakassi Peninsula, international banditry, influx and outflow of terror militants as well as the brutal activities of gendarmes in the Franco-phone border areas. The paper used qualitative methodology to outline the multi-dimensional peace building strategies as the road map to improved border security and politics with the Nigerian neighbours. It found that the Nigerian state has engaged in a number of crisis with neighbouring communities and recommended multidimensional peacebuilding strategies that would promote bilateral and multilateral relations between the country and their neighbours thereby enhancing multilateral relations.

Keywords: Border, conflict, peace, bilateral relations, Nigeria

Introduction

The reality of border politics and contemporary crisis within the Nigerian border areas is traceable to the nature of colonialism in the West African area (Achem & Ani, 2025). The western colonial quest to annex the African land and use it the way they like through a

forceful partition process led to the widespread split of brotherly communities across sovereign African states and that have continued to fuel post-colonial crisis (Ani, Chinonso, Nwachukwu & Ekpo, 2023). For instance:

Germany in order to protect those (colonial) routes on November 15, 1893 met with Britain to define boundaries in Africa. On March 19, 1906 they signed an agreement with boundary running from Yola to Lake Chad. Then at Obokum on April 12, 1913, the Anglo-German Treaty was signed which demarcated from Yola to the Cross River by Hans Detzner representing Germany and W. V. Nugent representing Britain... Aghemelo and Ihasebhor quoted a commissioner and Consul-General in 1914 in a speech to the Royal European Society about how that 1913 boundary was drawn as saying that in those days we took a blue pencil and a rule, and we put it down at Old Calabar, and drew that blue

line to Yola... I recollect thinking when I was sitting, having an audience with the Emir (of Yola), surrounded by His tribe that it was a very good thing that he did not know that I with a blue pencil, had drawn a line through his territory (Isong, 2013).

The scramble and partition of Africa laid the foundation for the reign of both the Anglo-phone and the Franco-phone colonial actors in Africa. These boundaries were developed without proper recourse to historical affinity and relationships between one community and another in their geopolitical space. Gradually, the colonial administrators, especially those in Franco-phone Africa began the process of cultural assimilation, cultural association, indirect rule and the reign of their way of lives, which has led today to the rise of English and French languages as the dominant lingua franca in the West African region.

Ani (2012A), Asiwaju (2001), Asiwaju (1976), Asiwaju (1971) and Anene (1970) have shown how colonialism has affected the geography of states in Sub-Saharan Africa. It is a historical fact that the Yoruba ethnic group were split into Nigeria and Benin Republic, just as the Kanuri are found in Nigeria, Chad and Niger republic. It is worthy of note that Miles (1993) and Miles (1994) never believed that the colonial imposition of colonial boundaries could affect the nature and relations of the Hausa ethnic groups that are living in the Nigerian-Nigerien border as well as in other states.

However, in Miles (2008) study, he acknowledged "that the colonial partition of Hausaland into Nigerian and Nigerien zones set into motion institutional changes that have moulded, to this day, the self-identity of villagers living on either side of the

otherwise invisible boundary" (Miles, 2008: 44). These partitioned people have historically faced one form of plight or another (Asiwaju, 1984: 4). There has been evolutionary changes on the border-zones. For instance, Miles wrote that "I am quite keen to the evolving impacts of this one West African boundary over the span of two decades. While the effect of the boundary on borderlands has certainly evolved over time, it has done so in ways that buttress my original findings. In short, from both sides of the boundary, national control has gradually intensified, reinforcing Hausa villager's consciousness of, and deference to their respective national identities. At the same time, recent changes have also fostered a sense of "shared borderlandness" (Miles, 2008: 45).

Conceptual Analysis

Diplomacy: Diplomacy is one of the major instruments of foreign policy. Different scholars defined diplomacy in different ways. According to Chas W. Freeman, a former US ambassador to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, diplomacy is the established method of influencing the behavior of foreign governments and people through negotiation, dialogue and other peaceful means. It is a method of political interactions across international boundaries and the techniques used to carry out political relations across international boundaries (Onu & Ani, 2025). However, Qin (2020) challenged the

conventional definition of diplomacy as the implementation of foreign policy and argues that diplomacy is a relational practice in the first place which anchors defined practices in order to make, manage and build up relations.

National Interest: National interest is a collection of the things that a state would pursue in its relations with other countries. It is a collection of the factors that a country cannot do without. Thus, national interests are those interest that a country would be ready to go to war in the bid to protect and attain them. Krasner (1978) defines national interest in three components:

- 1) National interests are objectives connected to the general societal goals;
- 2) They persevere over time; and
- 3) They have a consistent ranking of importance.

Based on this definition, if a state is pursuing a certain goal or foreign policy over a long time despite changes in leadership, then they are doing so in the national interest. Griffiths and Callaghan (2002) also reveals that national interest according to the realist school of thought is conceived in terms of certain basic assumption about the nature of international relations and the motivation of states. This includes the fact that anarchy makes the achievement of security an important foreign policy concern of states. National interest also according to Lukpata (2013) is 'what policy makers say it is' and also the interest of its leaders.

Theoretical Basis and Methodology

This work is centred on dependence theory. This approach proceeds from a structuralist paradigm which focuses on the class structure and international capital, and the role of the state in

shaping and managing national, foreign and class forces (Caporaso, (1978) "The dependence orientation seeks to explore the process of integration of the periphery into the international capitalist system and to assess the developmental implications of this peripheral capitalism. It was the quest to promote the African exploitation and dependency that drove colonialism into the continent. Dependence theory focuses on the structural relationship between core and periphery countries, particularly economic exploitation. Unfortunately, one idea that was central to colonialism in Africa was economic exploitation, which made the consideration of historical interconnectedness insignificant during the partition and scramble as well as the sovereign map that followed. While the paper mentions colonialism and neo-colonialism, the primary subject is border conflicts between Nigeria and its neighbours became a product of the partition of the African people and the colonial agreements have always been used to sustain arguments on the right to ownership of a particular boundary. Cameroon presented the colonial agreements to sustain its claim of Bakassi Peninsula in the ICJ, at Hague.

Ani (2012a & 2012b) and Galtung, (1971) have argued that the West maintained their imperial tentacles in the colonized zone through taxation and the exploitation of labour as a means of perpetually exploiting the imperial statuesque, fragmentation of the horizontal economic relationship amongst developing countries and the penetration of educational, cultural and other relationship between local rising elites in the colonized nations and the former metropolitan powers. The fact that colonialism was deeply entrenched

in many parts of Africa and its growing dimension of neo-colonialism therefore calls for developmental reconstruction of the African post-colonial order through economic and technological transformation. The neo-colonial dimension of the partition of Africa has sustained aqua conflict or water wars as those colonial agreement remains the determinants of claims to the water in the ICJ and other courts thereby sustaining African boundary crisis (Onu & Ani, 2025; Ani, Jungodo & Ojakorotu, 2018)..

This study was developed using secondary literature. The literature were collected through a combination of google search and library investigation. Books, book chapters and journal articles were widely sourced from many electronic and print channels. The contents were thematically interpreted and findings analysed below.

Discussion of Findings

The study found that the nature of African colonialism was a fundamental driver of post-colonial boundary conflicts between Nigeria and her neighbours. This remains a factual experience in the Egyptian, Ethiopian, Sudanese boundary on the Nile River and quest for the development of the Grand Renaissance Dam in Ethiopia (Onu & Ani, 2025).

However, there are many conflict dimensions of human factor in African's international boundaries, which existing studies of those boundaries have tended to ignore (Asiwaju, 1984: V). The international migration of terrorists across Nigerian borders with her neighbours, the multiplier effect of the Bakassi Peninsula crisis, inter-state border conflict like the Battle of Kinasara between Nigeria and Chad as well as

the violent gendarmes activities and international robbery have promoted hostilities in the border area, which destroys the traditional harmonious relations amongst the kiths and kiln, hence do not only directly affect bilateral and multilateral diplomacy but also the economic integration and international security in the West Africa sub-region.

Nigerian "frontiers are indeed the razor's edge on which hang suspended the modern issues of war or peace, of life or death" (Curzon, 1907:7). "Recently, Nigeria came under the negative impact of terrorism" (Dada and Ani, 2010:330). The increasing penetration of terrorists from the Nigerian border frontiers to join the Boko Haram sect has being increasingly discussed by scholars (Ani, 2013: 130-144; Musa, 2009; Mgborh, 2009; *The Spectator*, 2009). Another impact of international banditry could be seen from the effect of Chadian armed attack on the Nigerian fishing side of the Lake Chad. The banditry became a national concern, when a contingent of Nigerian Mobile Police Force sent to protect Nigerian citizens in the border towns, were shot at by Chadian gendarmes who killed three Nigerians and wounded three others (Ani, 2012B: 162). The continued infiltration and terrorism by the Chadian gendarmes on Nigerian fishermen, led to the despatch of the then Chief of Staff, Supreme Headquarters, Brigadier Shehu Musa Yar'Adua to Ndjamena on 12th August 1976 to discuss ways and means of ending the incessant clashes and harassment of Nigerians on the Lake Chad Island (Jumare, 1994:70). Shortly after the above meeting, the Nigeria-Chad Joint Patrol Teams were launched at Baga Sola on the Chadian side and

Baga Kauwa on the Nigerian size simultaneously but that has since collapsed due to numerous challenges. The Afro-centric foreign policy of Nigeria and her cultural link with the neighbouring states “caused the leaders of the First Republic not to consider the defence of frontiers as a serious issue since they argued that Nigeria had no aggressive intentions against its neighbours and so expected such neighbours to reciprocate accordingly (Ukpabi, 1987:120)”. Soon, what started as the action of international banditry ended up in the Nigeria-Chad border clashes (Ani, 2012B: 162). Following the 18th-24th April 1983 Battle of Kinasara between Nigeria and Chad over the border issue, the then Nigerian President, Shehu Shagari ordered the reinforcement of Nigerian troops at the border, the closure of

Nigeria-Chad border and the Nigeria-Cameroon border, in as far as it affects communication with Chad (Federal Government of Nigeria, 1987: 2).

Similarly, the gendarmes are influencing the nature and dynamics of geopolitics in some Nigerian Franco-phone borders. The recent increasing cases of loss of lives and properties of Nigerians in the ceded Bakassi Peninsula generated a lot of threat to Nigerian internal security and that of the Cameroonian sovereign state, especially with the rise of the militant-nationalist group, the Bakassi Self Determination Front (BSDF) (See Ani and Aro, 2013). There is need for inter-African peace cooperation. This would be achieved more effectively through the establishment of bilateral and multi-lateral security arrangements.

Even if one cannot guarantee their credibility in the face of more potent external threats, they can be useful as a way of discouraging competitive arms build-up and in meeting lesser emergencies, especially in support of Africa's peace-making efforts. Equally important, is the opportunity they provide not only for sharing military intelligence, but also for joint planning, training and policy harmonisation, especially, in areas of putting up joint economic and diplomatic pressures to bear on common adversaries where the group cannot marshal a credible military force (Imobighe, 2001: 48).

Asiwaju (251-273) has earlier proposed a peaceful means of resolving the border crisis instead of war and litigation. There is need for out-of-court settlement of all border issues as against the use of International Court of Justice in Hague. Such out of court settlement allows for transitional peace building and aborts the multiplier problems that go with legal justice. Saliba and Ani (2010: 8) have agitated for restorative justice instead of retributive justice. This would allow for easy

reconciliation. It will equally help to promote social justice over legal justice. This process attempts to deal with the complex legal and emotional issues associated with human right abuses and ensure that they are properly resolved. It is commonly thought that past injustice must be recognized, and the perpetrators punished if parties wish to achieve reconciliation. Asiwaju (2003:317) recommended that the solution of the dispute must be in steering the events away from the path

of unproductive armed confrontation and vexatious litigation back to the more desirable alternative of trans-border cooperation, peace building policy promotion, including strategic joint-venture efforts for the optimal exploitation of trans-boundary resources, especially hydrocarbon deposits and for the benefit of the local people, fisheries, which are at the heart of the festering dispute over the Bakassi Peninsula. Ani and Aro (2013: 1-17) wrote that there is need for the rise of sustainable Nigeria-Cameroon Bi-national Commission on the Bakassi issues as a way to comprehensively discuss and outline new approaches to the numerous problems hunting the Bakassi people since the signing of the Green Tree Agreement.

Asiwaju (1984:247) has called for the giving of additional power to the frontier local governments to cope with problems arising from their peculiar position along international boundaries. There is the need for a “durable solution to the ever widening and deepening crises that have confronted virtually all of Africa’s post-colonial states presenting mostly as boundary disputes and conflicts within and more especially between adjacent states” (Asiwaju, 2003: xiii). Agbi (1985) on his part, pointed out that giving additional power to a frontier local government would simply gradually turn the local government into a state within a state. Moreover, the cooperation which such an arrangement is expected to facilitate across the border rests largely on goodwill, which in reality “cannot and has never been known to regulate inter-state relations” (Agbi, 1985: 183).

Regional bodies can install confidence in peace processes and add impetus to inter-state peace processes

(Barnes, 2011). The Economic Community of West African States, Lake Chad Basin Commission and the Gulf of Guinea Commission must as a matter of urgency raise a standing peace and conflict management department as well as security task force to check frontier conflicts. *Accord* (2011) has revealed that peace building strategies and capacity need to “think outside the state: beyond it, through regional engagement and below it through cross-border community or trade networks”.

Cross-border trade can provide an entry-point for peace building. But to realise the peace building potential of cross-border trade, peace building needs to be prioritised as a strategic objective. It should be noted that the wrong manipulation of cross-border cooperation can also promote violent conflict, if profits are used to fund conflicts and other violent behaviours in the border region. Hence, cross-border trade initiatives needs to mainstream a peace building objective in order to maximise effectiveness and impact so that increased cross border trade would extend beyond economic activity and address the needs of peace building (Klein, 2011).

Geopolitics deals with the relationship between space and politics which attempts to put geographical knowledge at the service of political leaders (Palmer and Perkins, 2010: 41). It springs from national aspirations, searches out facts and principles which can serve national ends (Williams, 1944: 246). Ironically, the national aspirations of nations are carried by individuals and citizens of a country, whose national culture influences their identity in bilateral and multi-lateral relations. Greene has shown that power, security and order are vital in international relations.

The challenges of border security as it affects the nation building process of a state cannot be neglected in the evolution of any sovereign geopolitical entity (Ani, 2012C:197). Strassoldo (1989: 393) has pointed out that border boundaries can divide and unite, bind the interior and link it with the exterior; they are barriers and junctions, walls and doors, organs of defence and attack... Frontiers can be managed so as to maximize either of such functions. They can be militarized as bulwarks against neighbours, or made into areas of peaceful interchange. "However, while Nigeria is a strong nation, which has and supplies one of the best peace-keeping troops in the world, she has not been able to solve her numerous security problems especially the domestic and frontier-based security challenges. It is equally getting increasingly clear that parts of the Nigerian security problems are emanating from her porous borders (Ani, 2012:198).

The "harmonious management of national boundaries could actually pave the way for regional integration" (Adeboye, 2008: 31). There is the need to come up with strategies of reducing 'terror immigrant forces', prevent 'terror exportation', promote 'terror suppression' as well as enhance 'terror containment', and ultimately pursue 'terror elimination' in our society (Ani, 2013: 140-141). The idea of peace building that could be factored in the management of borderland conflict comprises of strategic conflict prevention, peace-promotion, peace-making, conflict-limitation, conflict-containment, conflict-control and conflict resolution. Unfortunately, the conflict resolution technique, which is expressed in the "Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and

Resolution" which was approved in principle at the Dakar Summit in July, 1992 and finally adopted at the Cairo Summit of July, 1993 is grossly underfunded (Imobighe, 2001:51).

There is the need for African States to go into defence alliances with one another (Akinyeye, 2001: 33) as against the traditional form of alliance between one African State and the Western powers (which in many cases are their former colonial masters). This form of defence alliance could be primarily aimed at checking the ripple effects of conflict, terrorism and other forms of violence. Apart from denying their territories to outside hostile powers, a common security system will enable African States to share security information and effectively monitor the activities of hostile powers in Africa as well as take collective necessary measures to neutralize them (Imobighe, 1987:130). There could equally be the rise of inter-border defence network, made up mainly of the citizenry from the border communities of both countries. This inter-border defence network would work very closely with an inter-state civil society peace group. The inter-state civil society peace groups would be made up of peace groups from the border communities with the primary aim of promoting a holistic peace strategy mapped-out by the sovereign states involved in the peace initiatives. Nigeria could create a free trade zone within the border regions with their neighbours to promote strategic peace building.

Conclusion and Recommendations

A wave of conflict currently ravages Sub-Saharan Africa. In Nigeria, there is a conflict between farmer-herders and secessionist agitations. There is also the Ambazonian secessionist agitation in

Southern Cameroon, the farmer-herders conflict in Ghana, the Tuareg insurgency in Mali, Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria and Chad, as well as armed conflict in Burkina Faso and Niger, to mention just a few. Similarly, there is increasing use of 'good offices' and third-party interventions to quench conflicts in Africa. The United Nations and regional and sub-regional organisations, such as the AU and ECOWAS, are becoming more involved in mediating conflicts in Africa. These conflicts have direct implications for bilateral and multi-lateral relations between Nigeria and her neighbours.

Moreover, what is most worrisome and significant about the nature of contemporary conflict in Sub-Saharan Africa is that it is more intra-national than international. It involves identity groups within a nation-state agitating for national self-determination, state formation or control of the state and having a higher potential for spillover effect.

The artificiality of national boundaries and the cross-border kin relationships that exist between identity groups further make these conflicts more incendiary as weapons and money for

the conflict flow in from neighbouring countries with strong identity links like kin relations. These identity groups cut across clans, ethnicity, religion, geographic and regional affiliations, or a mix of these. Consequently, some of these conflicts emanate from the crises of resource control and competition, marginalisation, ethnic rivalry, economic mismanagement, and failure of governing structures to address fundamental needs (Regehr, 1996). Significantly, these conflicts have drawn a line between identity and group relations, heightened insecurity, political instability, poverty, and colossal loss of life and property in the sub-region. Regehr (1996) argues that identity conflicts emerge with intensity when a community, in response to unmet basic needs for social and economic security, resolves to strengthen its collective influence and to struggle for political recognition (Regehr, 1996). The implication of this kind of conflict, if not checked, will be a further balkanisation of countries in the sub-region and national and regional instability, which will further undermine development in the sub-region.

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