

## **Nigeria-Cameroon Cross-Cultural Co-Operation and Development**

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**Abstract:** The paper examines and analyses cultural interaction between the communities that are domiciled along and astride the Nigeria – Cameroon borderlands. Empirical research shows that patterns of socio-cultural and political institutions that existed prior to the colonial vivisection are still vibrant. It is indicated that given these vibrant micro-integration formalities along and astride the boundaries, they could form the basis for wider macro-integration projects. Cultural integration based on the sovereignty percolating realities could convert the border regime from its present barrier, conflictual profile to bridges for integration and development should policy be predicated on the realities on ground.

**Keywords:** domiciled, Empirical research, macro-integration projects

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Geographically, Nigeria and Cameroon occupy a very strategic and central position in Africa. These neighbouring nations have, from historic times been some of the major cross-roads of Africa, culturally and economically. The boundaries of seven of the major language sub-families of Africa meet within the region, ancient trade routes, political and economic relationship link it with its surrounding areas and across the continent to the outside world. Unfortunately, most scholars who have written on Nigeria – Cameroon relations tend to focus on the state-centric perspective, particularly the boundary regime which is “replete with gory incidents of conflicts, mutual distrust”, militarization of the boundary regime, and litigation.

By comparison to the state-centric perspective, the transnational paradigm is unconventional, and understandingly less known to existing literature and policy making tradition. Nevertheless, the transnational model has been more responsive to the realities on the ground as the border region divided cultural coherent areas, kinship groups, economic zones, the sea bed and the inherently indivisible mineral resources, surface and underground and the ecosystem.

Prior to the vivisection of the region by the colonialists, there was centuries of interaction between the various groups in the region. Thus, these communities were centers of close transactions, interaction, interjection and inter-changes arising from movements and diffusion of cultures and practices which act as the cement that held various culture

communities in the region. Trade and commercial contacts also facilitated the spread of ideas of socio-cultural institutions, marriages and friendship ties. The prevalence of these institutions including similar cosmological orientation especially the belief in gods and spirits gave the region a cultural unity before the colonial impact.

These pre-colonial networks of relations have endured the colonial partition and still oblige loyalty among these extended communities along and astride the Nigeria – Cameroon borderlands. To these groups, kinship ties, religious practices close knit socio-cultural ties, value systems and traditional modes of interaction inherited from their ancestors is seen as superior to the artificial boundary lines which in any case are said not to divide them.

The paper concludes that these vibrant micro-integration formalities at the transnational level can be galvanized for wider macro integration and development should the issues be approached from this perspective as opposed to the state-centric level of analysis which has proved conflictual, antagonistic and nationalistic. The state-centric perspective should therefore be persuaded to yield ground to the new “thinking” of boundary regimes as “bridges” rather than “barriers” for transboundary co-operation, cultural interaction, integration and development of the marginalized borderlands.

### Historical Background

Historically, the colonial purposes which created and erected boundaries that today separate Africa's contemporary sovereign states from one another was selfish exclusivist and for exploitative purpose. The colonial world is "a world cut into two" [1]. According to Tostoy, "the division of Africa into compartments or units, now called states is like a human heart divided into two and can no longer function. The Nigeria – Cameroon boundary reflect this view due to the political survey of 1884-5 that split related ethnic groups, a cultural coherent area, the sea bed into two antagonistic systems.

It should be noted that about two thirds of the entire Nigeria – Cameroon border from the shores of the Lake Chad to the banks of the Benue River were once under the hegemonic influence of the Sultanate of Borno and the Sokoto caliphate north and south respectively. These Muslim states were guided by the tenets of Islam in all their affairs. For example, Tijani[21], (571), submits that long after the Sayfawa rulers of Bornu such as Mai (King) Idris Alooma (Alauma) 1570 – 1616 A.D.), had established the foundation of the Boronoan dynasty over chieftains now to be found in Cameroon, subsequent Bornu rulers Sayfawa and El-kanemi dynasty maintained Borno and Islamic predominance in the areas. Thus, strong Islamic fraternity culture, and political hegemony had wielded the peoples across the Mandara Mountains to one another long before the colonial boundary of 1884-5. Some of the peoples that inhabited the border zone, apart from the Hausa – Fulani, also include the conglomeration known as the Jukun, the Chamba, the Batta, Fudbe, and the Mandara, etc.

The Mandara trace their origin to early 15<sup>th</sup>C. and emerged from various Chadic speaking peoples expanded and dominated their smaller groups. By the 18th C the Mandara embraced Islam and became the dominant political, economic and cultural power in the area.

In his Assessment Report, (Bahanan, 57) indicated that, in the Benue zone are the Tiv (Munchi); who constitute one of the dominant groups in that region. The site of the Tiv ancestral land is in Swem north of Akwaya in Cameroon, a place they still regard as sacred. They still interact with kith and kin in Cameroon across Kwande area.

It is instructive to stress that Muslims, irrespective of what political domain they were subsisting, had unrestricted movement throughout the Muslim world. Thus, pre-colonial Borno, throughout its length and breadth including those areas now in Cameroon, are still regarded as a single domain. Bonchuk (58) stated that in southern borderlands with Cameroon are diverse but related ethnic groups – the

Ejagham, Boki, and Becheve Akwaya who occupy a contiguous territory along and astride the boundary zone in Cross River State and Southwest Cameroon.

In the study of African communities the tendency has been to demarcate groups in terms of political organization. Social anthropologists make a two-fold division. There were communities which lacked a comprehensive political structure and described as "stateless" or acephalous. This kind of classification is historically arbitrary and in any case cannot throw much light on the problem of identifying homogenous African groups. There is no doubt that centralized African states were easily recognized by Europeans during the 19<sup>th</sup>C. Bonchuk (307) argued that the existence of a state structure did not necessarily imply ethnic, cultural or linguistic homogeneity. Also, the absence of "political focus" does not rule out close affinities in respect of culture, religion and language. That these groups were small, fiercely independent did not imply that they lived in perpetual anarchy or warfare.

These village communities were under the control of chiefs, elders, priesthoods, secret societies, juju-priests, rain makers and an array of socio-cultural and religious institutions including age grades and sets that helped to keep societal cohesion necessary for community development, moderated inter-group relations and commercial intercourse.

Thus, all the groups mentioned, constituted, as it were, two extended culture communities or ecumens. In the northern segment of the boundary zone, Yola and Bornu represented the ecumens, while Ogoja – Calabar – Duala – Mamfe represented the ecumens in the Cross River region and Southwest Cameroon. These extended communities were centres of close transaction, interaction, interjection and constant interchange and diffusion of cultures and practices which have outlived the colonial boundary. Because of centuries of interaction, close proximity and population redistribution due to migrations and intermarriages, so much have been exchanged that each community has a substantial infusion of the neighbouring groups in its population.

As a result of this admixture, the traditions of some groups including their languages, religious and political institutions have also been mixed, thus, maintaining ethnic affiliations and relations with neighbouring groups. Most importantly, the groups mentioned above – from the northern segment of the borderlands to the southern segment have related groups in Cameroon and share in common pre-colonial modes of interaction.

Furthermore, the Islamic religion lays the basic tenor for socio-cultural events and activities along the

northern segment of the border zone. Here, not only the three main Muslim festivals of id-al-Malud – Id-al-adt ha, and id-al-fitre – id- to celebrate the prophets birthday; the Greater Beiram, marking the highest point of annual haj pilgrimage, and id – to mark the end of the annual fast of Ramadam respectively celebrated throughout the Muslim “Ulama” community.

Events such as marriages, coronation and ceremonies marking the graduation ceremony of Muslim pupils who have completed memorizing the entire sixty chapters of the Koran and other cultural ceremonies such as children’s circumcision and other rites of passages where all predicated on Islamic principles and practices.

Trade and commercial exchange using ancient trade routes are common features with goods/foodstuff of all descriptions exchanged, e.g. textiles, and simple manufactured goods including livestock, fish, grain, dairy, products crafts, metal, tools, etc.

The leaders of the various communities in the Yola – Borno zone maintained micro-diplomatic relations through annual gift exchanges and this became a social tradition that cemented alliances and friendships with other communities. Interactions through gift exchanges, trade and commercial intercourse, marriages, social customs, religions, magical institutions and material culture were so intensive that there arose an almost infinite number of related groups making that region, like the Southern segment, an ethnic mosaic not easily separated by an international boundary.

Along the South-Eastern Nigeria boundary zone, Old Calabar – Ogoja – Duala – Mamfe were the centres of cultural diffusion. (Northrup, 149), observed that before the advent of European colonization in the region, trade routes and centres developed in the South and North of the region up to the Benue. Calabar as a sea port and capital of the later oil River Protectorate had locational advantage in this trade. Old Calabar proximity to Cameroon sea ports of Duala and Victoria enabled her to play middle man’s role in the trade.

Forde (437) and Nair (27) posited that there were good trade relations that generated economic prosperity and this brightened trade and commercial contacts with the Cameroonian ethnic groups; leading to social interactions and marriages between the Efik, Oron, Issangelle, Ibibio and their Cameroonian counterparts.

Bonchuk [2] analysis indicates that North of the Cross River bend were the northern trade routes that straddled Boki, Ejagham and Akwaya communities. These communities produced palm oil, kernel, salt, ivory, pepper, animal skin, including products of

blacksmiths, such as hoes, knives, cutlasses etc. In return, the Boki, Ejagham and Akwaya bought glasswaves, hats, gun and gun powder, spirits European goods from Efik traders in the coast. From their neighbours, such as the Bayanyi, Bafaw, Bamileke, Esubu, Efut, Bangwa etc. exchanged palm produce, slaves, Ivory, kola nuts, locust beans and cocoyam where exchanged.

Amadi [14; p:28] submitted that the Cross River constituted a commercial and cultural unit which provided an excellent highway for the use of the canoe. The Aro, Efik, Ibibio, Umon, Agwa Agune who had locational advantages in the Cross River and Rio del Rey exchanged goods with the Upper Cross River and Cameroonian communities. By the 19<sup>th</sup> C, both the Cross River and Rio del Rey had been linked in trade with the Cross River becoming the main artery of trade between Old Calabar, Bonny, Duala and Victoria sea ports in Cameroon.

Bonchuk [2] opines that the numerous trade routes facilitated the spread of ideas of socio-cultural and religious institutions. The spread of the Leopard masquerade among groups in the region into Cameroon was in response to economic conditions that existed at that time. The spread leopard masquerade in this region predated the slave trade and palm oil trade provided the catalyst for the adoption and spread of different times in the region. Alongside the spread of the Leopard Society, is the development of a cultural product reduced into writing. Nsibidi is a secret sign writing, decoded only by senior members of the society. The ideography of Nsibidi exploded the motion that Africans do not have a form of writing.

Through Old Calabar sea port where slaves were transported overseas the society spread to Cuba and have become prevalent among Afro-Cubans (Latham:47) observed that by the 19<sup>th</sup>C, the Efik adopted Ekpe in order to meet the challenges of the slave trade and later palm oil trade and concluded that Ekpe was a genuine African capitalist institution of elementary kind [3], observed that before the Western artist began to create art works by placing disparate elements in juxtaposition with each other, the forest peoples of the Nigeria-Cameroon region had created superficially similar effects for their ritual and artistic purposes and displayed in lodges of men’s Leopard society – Ekpe (Efik) Nyangbe (Ejagham) Mgbe (Boki).

Malcom & David [4] studied the nature and spread of this society in the Cross River Region up to Mbum, Mungo River and Bakossi in Cameroon, including the Cameroon grassfield in Bamonda that were on the pre-colonial trade routes and centres. Among the Mambila and Kaka, the society was known as SO.

Bonchuk [5] submits that apart from the Leopard society Ekpe, other socio-cultural and religious institutions cemented inter-group relations up to the Cameroons. For instance the Atam, Kechi Obol, Mfam, Angbu, Ekpa Eja, Ebabim, Atamabi, Agrinya (Ogrinya).

Bapong Kapen, institution of female circumcised (Monikim), divinity consultation, etc. are common to both groups in Nigeria-Cameroon. The prevalence of these socio-cultural and religious institutions including common cosmological orientation and similar political institutions such as Ntufam Emang, Otu Emang and Utsu, assisted by a vibrant gerocratic principle gave this region a strong cultural unity.

The cross-cultural communication problem often referred to between Nigeria-Cameroon, arises as a consequence of an accident of European history in Africa. Cameroon for example is predominantly French speaking as a result of her colonization by France and Nigeria use the English Language as a former British colony. The issue of communication can be perceived for our purpose at two levels, namely the state-centric or official level and the transnational or grassroots (unofficial). At the transnational/grassroots level the same languages or dialects are spoken along and stride the borders from the Atlantic Ocean in the south to Lake Chad Basin the North.

This is because the Anglo-German boundary divided related ethnic groups with the same cultures and traditions, etc. Thus, in the south are Pidgin English, Ejagham, Efik, Boki, Ejagham, Becheve, Akwaya who speak the same language/dialects as Fulfulde (Fulani) and Hausa and other local languages in the north. At the official level, the language of administration and international communication still remain those languages bequeathed by the respective colonizers.

### **Nigeria – Cameroon Cross Cultural Co-operation and Development**

After their independence, Nigeria-Cameroon engaged in some cooperation efforts between 1963-1973, culminating in the signing of some bilateral agreement covering such areas as the movement of persons and goods (1963), social technical and cultural relations (1972); security and legal matters (1972) air transport (1978) trade (1987) and economic scientific and technical cooperation (1983). In 1971, the two countries instituted a Cameroon – Nigeria Joint Commission to work in the interest of cooperation in general with a view to enhancing good neighbor lines and co-operation ties [6].

The Nigeria – Cameroon Joint Meeting of Experts, the first of which held in Abuja in December 1991, and the transborder co-operation workshops are a manifestation of the political will on both sides to

enhance cooperation for development as opposed to a policy of confrontation. It was [7] who defined regional co-operation as any inter-state activity with less than universal participation designed to meet some commonly experienced need. In relation to Nigeria and Cameroon this need has been identified to include numerous and complex variables: close proximity or sheer adjacency, about 700kms of shared boundary, straddled by related and identical ethnic groups and cultures along and stride their borderlands, shared-socio-political-religious-magical institutions, the presence of rich natural resources, surface/land underwater in some segments of the borderlands, the sea bed, the environment with rich flora/fauna, a rich history or common historical experience both in it the pre-colonial and colonial periods.

In spite of these numerous variables both countries have failed to utilized these sovereignty percolating realities along and astride their common borders for larger economic co-operation and development projects.

Onigu [8] defined culture as “a system of symbol which distinguished one group of people, from another, and which when fully decoded, consists of shared strategies for adapting to, and exploiting the social and physical environments for individual and group survival”.

UNESCO’s [12] definition adopted in Mexico 1982, “culture is the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or social group and includes not only the arts and letters but also, models of life, the fundamental rights of human being, value systems traditions and belief” [9] stated that culture or civilization, taken in its wide ethnographic sense is that complex whole which includes knowledge belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society. Culture can be divided into viz. (i) material culture or things which are concrete and visible such as artifacts and, gadgets or implements and appliances, etc., and (ii) non-material culture or invisible acquisitions such as educational and socialization processes, language and philosophy. Other sides of cultures are, also, discernable e.g. a substantial part of our culture is inherited from the past. These include ritual songs, modes of sacrifice at altars and shrines of supernatural being, deities and ancestors.

Secondly, cultures consist of the ongoing changes and creativity as we adopt and exploit our environments, e.g. new inventions and technologies are designed to enable us utilize the resources of our environment, respond to political and economic changes and enrich our cultural baggage. This means that culture is not static. It is imperative to note that culture cannot

remain the same because social struggle occur as a result of political and economic development. Changes in the social structure leads to more complex social differentiation and generates sub-cultures in society.

However, many cultures and societies have now been inextricably encapsulated in new states such as Nigeria-Cameroon by European/colonial powers. They have had to remain with new identities within new artificial boundaries'. Nigeria-Cameroon, like many other African countries are defined by multi-culturalism [10]. Nigeria-Cameroon have a great potential in their multi-culturalism for the evolution of a strategy for sustainable development i.e. both the engagement of cultural and moral capital fur development.

It is imperative to note that though Nigeria-Cameroon has abundant natural resources, this does not in itself guarantee cooperation and development. The paradox of poverty and the designing of development plans which emphasize the core or centre to the detriment of the marginalized and neglected borderlands led Asiwaju to describe the periphery of our borders as the “quintessence of Marginality”. The importance of the human factor in the progress and development of nations has a dialectical relationship with attitudes, the orientation, vision, motivations and the values including behavior and actions not of only of the population but particularly the elites who need to understand the role culture as it relates to development and nation-building.

It must be emphasized that culture encompasses the world view of a people, the cognitive processes which structure their thinking and the mindset of the people; the linguistic forms through which they communicate or express their ideas; the aesthetic manifestation of their feelings and creativity in arts music, dance and other aesthetic forms, the behavioral patterns which shape their actions and the pattern of social structure which govern their ways of interacting with individuals, groups and peoples both within and outside their society. Also, important is the cognitive dimension which relates to skill and knowledge framework for getting things done for inventing and producing tools, implements/appliances which facilitate work, comfort and leissure. Those material accomplishments are much as part of culture as are the customs, traditions, arts, dances and festivals which are often emphasized in discussing cultures. With the strategic and encompassing nature of culture, it is inconceivable to imagine how a society can achieve meaningful development and national integration without a sound cultural base.

It has been asserted that “nations are like apples. They grow from their roofs”. These roots or the foundation for the growth of any nation lie in the cultural heritage of its peoples. Development,

regardless of how it is defined, ultimately entails an attempt to build a better society: a society characterized by improving the quality of life of the people and the ability to use the resources of the environment for the good of the society.

As Salim A. Salim emphasized in his opening remarks at a World Bank International Conference on Culture and Development in Africa (1), a people does not fully commit itself to a development undertaking unless that undertaking correspond to its deeply felt needs. In other words, people should be in a position to derive the means and motivation for their development from their own cultural roots [11].

One of the most profound legacies of colonialism was the inherited tendency towards the suppression, degradation and inferiorisation of Africas indigenous cultures, and deliberates attempt to gradually replace them with Western cultural values. Cultural imperialism enabled both Nigeria – Cameroon governing elites to look for Western models of development, a modernization philosophy of catching up with the west, a euphemism for Westernization.

Impressed by the wests material prosperity, and technological advancements, both countries are wallowing under the illusion of technology transfer but ignore the cultural foundation that nourished and sustained the material and technological imperatives of Western civilization. Rapid economic growth and development is a result of a culture of productivity and efficiency that galvanizes it.

Nnoli[3;p:-21] has argued that Nigerian academics, social, political and military leaders still look at the development their country in terms of seeking to achieve many of the conditions of good life in Western Europe, America, Japan, etc. these include, industrialization, economic, affluence, military hegemony advance technology urbanization and the parliamentary process. The concept of development here is a checklist of artefact, such as cars, roads, hospitals computers, good houses, airways iron and steel complexes, agricultural machinery, cosmetics, wealth accumulation without imbibing the culture of invention.

Sustainable development is impossible without a reasonable level of social and national integration. Two perspective have been used by scholars to analyze cultures and identity in Africa; for example, Nigeria – Cameroon being creations of British-German – French colonialism could be described as mere “geographical expressions”[16]. As artificial creations, they are a desperate array of colonialism, grouping together an array of diverse ethnic nationalities with little in common, except the artificial boundaries within which they were encapsulated. Consequently, their loyalty and

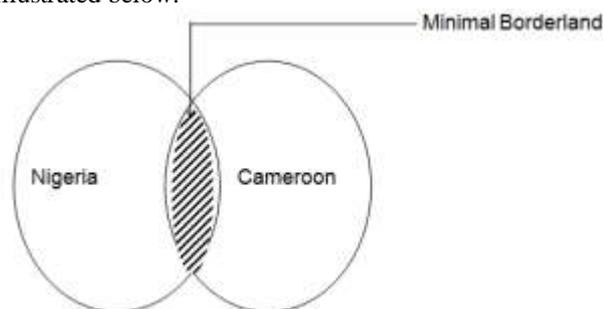
allegiance of the citizens are to their natural primordial ethnic units and not to the artificial entities called Nigeria-Cameroon.

This perspective reveals that the ethnic nationalities or entities are the real social units which make up both nations and which define the culture and identity of their citizens. In other words, one can talk of Nigerian or Cameroon cultures and this carries the perspective of cultural fragmentation and division. This conception would not further the idea of national integration co-operation and development. The second conception argues that Nigeria – Cameroon have a common historical experience, an intricate pattern of economic, cultural, political, inter-relationships between and among the various groups kingdoms, emirates, chiefdoms and empires..

Perhaps, Nwachukwu's assertion give credence to the above:

... in facing the challenge of cooperation we remain meaningful that our two countries and peoples are not strangers to each other. Geography and history have thrust us together as neighbours with a common destiny... our two countries and people share common bonds of language, culture and traditions nurtured by centuries of continuous and meaningful interactions. The long standing links and interactions of our people continue to transcend the artificial barriers imposed by colonialism [13].

Nigeria – Cameroon boundary relations is in tenderm with the concept of a maximal borderland as illustrated below:



National borderlands, Citizens of both countries have ancestral ethnic and linguistic affinities and links spanning millennia [19].

Along and astride the Nigeria-Cameroon borderlands in the Cross River region with Southwest Cameroon are partitioned ethnic groups - the Boki, Ejagham, Becheve, Akwaya, in the north are the TIV, Hausa, Fulani, Mandara-Fali of Mubi in Adamawa, Mambiba divided by the Anglo-German boundary but are still engaged in micro-diplomacy.

Apart from vibrant ethnic relationship across the borders, there is also, closely interrelated manifestation of a wide spectrum of transborder resources. All these factors are begging for policy articulation for transborder cooperation and development.

Asiwaju, has persistently and persuasively underlined the need to steer the discourse on African boundary problems from the prevailing parochial perspective. By viewing African boundary problems as an isolated historical experience, Africanist scholars and policy makers are missing the comparative value of comparative analysis with other regions particularly western Europe and North America that have faced similar problems to those being experienced in post-colonial Africa [15; p-47]. The two countries could benefit from the experience of European trans-boundary regionalism[15].

Transboundary regionalism is a reference to a novel category of internationalism 'forced' on territorially adjacent sovereign states. Such states are compelled to interact for reasons not only of common interests in human and natural resources straddled by a shared international boundary but, also, common concerns about cross border environmental impact of human activities and natural disasters[15; p-47].

Borderlands, in spite of their "particularisms", share certain "universal characteristics". They are locations that are disadvantaged due to their location at the margin of their states territories. This has enabled borderlands to assume the status of "alylum" or creators and facilitators of a culture of cross border crimes and criminality, characterized by the "border" underworld" and the "upper world players", who use border as camouflage for illegitimate transactions.

Transborder regionalism could lead to cross-border co-operation and development using the existing historical realities along and astride the shared borders.

In Europe transboundary regionalism began as informal uncoordinated initiatives by divided transborderlanders across several of the international boundaries in Western Europe. The organization of "European Regions" or "Euregios" evolved and became a well co-ordinated power house of European integration.

The adoption in 1980 of the European Outline Convention on Transborder Cooperation between Territorial Authorities or Communities was intended to outline the general legal and common bases on which bilateral co-operation would be founded in the framework of national sovereignty of each country. It is aimed at promoting transboundary co-operation, integration and development. The local communities across borders were encouraged to interact and promote

cross-cultural, economic, initiate development projects that enhance their wellbeing but within the context of their national laws [2].

Nigeria – Cameroon, as potential “Afregios” must therefore initiate policies that would utilize the “sovereignty percolating realities” along and astride their borders. Given the fact that formal integration processes have been vitiated by conflicts at the state-centric level, the vibrant micro-diplomatic processes as evidenced by cross-cultural interactions could be galvanized for wider macro-co-operation and development.

### Policy Objectives

For Nigeria – Cameroon to resolve the various challenges posed to them certain policy objectives should be pursued.

- Think globally, but act locally and preserve their local cultures that are progressive and development oriented
- A return to a culture of inspiration, culture is not merely a return to the customs of the past; it embodies the attitude of the people to the future of their traditional values faced with the demands of modern technology and progress
- Establishment of ethno-cultural groups through cross-border associations. Encourage cross-border visits, to museums, art galleries, monuments, palaces, historical buildings, archives, etc.
- Traditional rulers should pay visits across borders and establish permanent contacts, establishing council of traditional rulers to discuss issues such as security, community development,
- To encourage cross-border attendance at marriage ceremonies, annual festivals, cultural dances, rites of passage,
- To establish bilingual schools to encourage language pluralism, to teach both French, History, English and selected local languages,
- To encourage youths to engage in cultural displays, football competition, debates on issues that would bring unity
- To re-oriented our scholarship – introduce border studies in schools from the perspective of the boundary as a “bridge” rather than a “barrier”
- To re-orientate policy makers on the idea of the border as not exclusivist – conflictual or nationalistic – i.e. to perceive the boundary not as a “razors edge”, but as “osmotic points” of contact to be used for co-operation/development,
- To imbibe the notion of development of shared resources for the benefit of all,
- Revive and institutionalize the Nigeria – Cameroon Joint Border Management Consultation Meeting,
- Provide a scientific platform for public enlightenment on the issues involved in handing over the Bakassi Peninsula to Cameroon.
- To inform on the emphasis placed in the text of the ICJ judgement on the affected populations fundamental human rights of the people, to translate these texts into local languages/dialects to enable an understanding of the issues,
- Involve local officials in the process of demarcating or maintaining border posts/ and map out areas for starting cross-border markets, infrastructural or industrial layouts to encourage investments at the borders,
- Draw up bilateral and multilateral instruments for the participation of the local population as evidenced by the 1984 Outline Convention on Territorial Authorities which has assisted the success story of the European Union,
- To utilize cross-border languages as core ingredients of co-operation and development,
- Harmonize the conflict of laws in order to reorientate the law enforcement agencies of both states – customs, police, immigration, army, gendarmes, etc.
- To institute a security regime from a “mono-centric” to a “polycentric perspective” as a strategy to handle not only cross-border criminality but insurgency of the Boko Haram.
- To introduce joint patrol, community policing in order to collaborate, share information on cross-border crimes and criminality
- To urgently revise the concept of National Development Plans which emphasize the centre to the neglect of the rural areas.

Development cannot take place where there is insecurity. Security should not be seen in terms of the strategic dimension of safeguarding the territorial integrity of the nation states but must include food and human security.

### CONCLUSION

The paper traced and analyzed the historical relationship between the divided but related ethnic groups along and astride the Nigeria – Cameroon borderlands. It was indicated that prior to the political survey of 1884-5 these groups interacted using the ancient trade routes and river systems at certain segments of their common borders.

This micro-diplomatic sovereignty percolating realities are still vibrant across the borders and could form the basis for co-operation and development of the shared borders. Apart from the divided but related

ethnic groups potentials for co-operation and integration and development abound. The experience of Western European transboundary regionalism was highlighted as boundaries reflect a universal character in spite of their particularisms. It was concluded that given the conflictual nature of cross-border relations at the state-centric level, the transnational or grassroots level is apparently the driver for co-operation and integration should the issues be approached from this perspectives. Policy objectives as vehicles for the actualization of these objectives were indicated.

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