

## NATURAL RESOURCES AND COMMUNITY BOUNDARY DISPUTE: THE ROLE OF THE TRADITIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN CONFLICT PREVENTION AND RESOLUTION IN AFRICA

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Conflict as a continuum that can start from a minor disagreement between two individuals or groups and blossom into a violent display of antagonism has been part of human existence in every part of the world. This disagreement could be tied to the material and non-material benefits each party wants to have. With the monetary benefits derivable from natural resources, ownership of land that bellies such resources attracts contestation and since conflict retards development, its prevention or resolution, becomes necessary. Laws and several forms of governance are thereby formed to aid in the regulation of human interactions and relationships in order to curb conflict. So, this research is to investigate how have natural resources become the pivot for community boundary dispute and violent clashes in Africa. How effective are the existing laws and governing systems in either prevention or resolution of conflict in Africa? What roles have the traditional institutions which are the direct and nearest custodians of community lands and the boundaries been playing in the prevention and resolution of conflict? What is the efficacy of their roles if such exist? These will be examined with Plateau State of Nigeria as the study area. In collecting data, this study intends to use mixed-method by deploying questionnaire and structured interview by adopting the social conflict theory as its theoretical framework and appropriate analysis tools will be used. It is hoped that the findings of this study will strengthen natural resources governance, promotion of peaceful coexistence among others to enhance integration and nation-building as ingredients for sustainable development in Africa.

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