

# NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY FOR SUSTAINING PEACEBUILDING IN NIGERIA

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## ABSTRACT

Competition over the environment and natural resources is frequently a contributing factor to violent conflicts. Although these factors are rarely the only cause of violent conflict, environmental over-use and the exploitation of natural resources can not only increase the severity and duration of conflict, but also make its resolution much more difficult. This paper examined natural resources and environmental security for sustaining peacebuilding in Nigeria. The paper focused on the six geopolitical zones in Nigeria, the natural resources, the environment and an analysis of environmental conflicts within the zones. It was revealed that the zones occupied a common geographical location, they were more likely to have the same natural resource, and share a common economic activity while all the arising conflicts are mostly drawn from environmental issues caused by the government, multinationals, internal and external actors, and others. Similarly, easily exploited natural resources may also change the dynamics of conflict and turn a politically motivated activity into an economic one, for high value extractive resources can sustain a conflict through military financing. In this way individuals or groups which benefit from conditions of conflict through their control of revenues and resource exploitation may work to undermine prospects of peace. But while competition over the environment and natural resources also generate conflicts, successful peacebuilding initiatives that recognize these challenges can help communities design a formidable management process to handle both resources and related conflicts. Properly managed high value natural resources such as oil, gas, land and water can also act as assets for economic recovery, whereby development and employment opportunities become integrated into a participatory and inclusive approach to peacebuilding. The paper concluded that competition over the environment and natural resources is frequently a contributing factor to violent conflicts. Drawing from the conclusion, the study recommended that government should see how to integrate natural resources and environmental factors in conflict prevention, management and peacebuilding in Nigeria.

**Keywords:** Resources, Natural Resources, Environmental Security, Sustaining Peacebuilding.

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## INTRODUCTION

Environmental peacebuilding integrates natural resource management in conflict prevention, mitigation, resolution, and recovery to build resilience in communities affected by conflict. Interest in the environmental dimensions of peacebuilding has emerged from the early 2000s onward due to two developments. Firstly, with an increasing number of peacebuilding interventions by the international community and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), addressing environmental issues in post-conflict contexts has become a major concern. This is especially so as water and land are crucial for (re-)building livelihoods while modern wars (e.g., Russia & Ukraine war) produce considerable environmental damage. Second, an increasing number of scholars and policymakers are expressing concerns about the security implications of global environmental change, with the impact of climate change on violent conflict being a particularly salient topic. A focus on environmental cooperation and its potential peace-enhancing effects provides a complementary analytical perspective that can counter determinist and securitizing environmental conflict narratives. Environmental peacebuilding can be broadly defined as efforts to build more peaceful relations through conflict prevention, resolution, and recovery processes that integrate the management of environmental issues. In this context, peace refers to negative peace (the absence of physical violence) as well as positive peace (the absence of structural violence and the inconceivability of physical violence) (Dresse et al., 2019).

Environmental peacebuilding can take place at the macro level (e.g., between states) as well as on the meso level and the micro level (e.g., between or within local communities). Environmental peacebuilding includes four sets of practices (which are not mutually exclusive): First, with resources like water or land becoming increasingly scarce in some regions and oil or mining projects often being heavily contested, preventing conflicts over natural resources is increasingly important. Secondly, in post-conflict contexts, natural resources must be managed well, for instance to reduce land-related grievances or prevent conflict financing through resource revenues. Thirdly, climate change mitigation, adaptation to environmental change, and disaster risk reduction (DRR) can reduce grievances and promote community coherence. Finally, joint and severe environmental problems can act as entry points for cooperation across political divides, hence supporting processes of trust building and deepening interdependence (the respective set of practices is often termed environmental peacemaking). These practices can also fail, however, implying that they have no impact on environmental problems or peace processes (Ide, 2020).

Most armed conflicts occur in developing countries where people depend substantially on natural resources for subsistence farming and livelihoods. Natural resources are often intertwined with the conflict narrative, with grievances over natural resources and their revenues contributing to the onset of conflict, revenues from natural resources financing conflict, and combatants targeting natural resources and the environment, and peace following resource-related conflicts is fragile: countries with past resource-related conflicts are more likely to relapse, and to do so twice as quickly (Environmental Peacebuilding Association, 2020). In the worst case, environmental peacebuilding practices can even facilitate new forms of exclusion, conflict, and environmental degradation. Over the past two decades, interest in environmental peacebuilding has grown remarkably, not at least due to the intensification of environmental problems and recent trends toward a less peaceful world. As a result of these developments, the literature on environmental peacebuilding has grown dramatically. In comparison to the environmental

security or climate conflict fields, relatively few overviews on environmental peacebuilding are available.

Competition over the environment and natural resources is frequently a contributing factor to violent conflicts. Competition over the environment and natural resources is frequently a contributing factor to violent conflicts. Although these factors are rarely the only cause of violent conflict, environmental over-use and the exploitation of natural resources can not only increase the severity and duration of conflict, but also make its resolution much more difficult. Climate change threatens to exacerbate existing conflicts and create new ones. Many of the countries expected to be worst impacted by climate change are also affected by violence and conflict. The impact of climate change on these societies is likely to place a strain on social and political systems in these already fragile states. If direct access to limited natural resources such as land, forest, water and wildlife is dominated by one specific individual or group, it can lead to outbreaks of violent conflict. In this way, the marginalization or exclusion of certain groups from these resources ensures that they then become easy targets for political manipulation (Peace Insight, n.d).

Similarly, easily exploited natural resources may also change the dynamics of conflict and turn a politically motivated activity into an economic one, for high value extractive resources can sustain a conflict through military financing. In this way individuals or groups which benefit from conditions of conflict through their control of revenues and resource exploitation may work to undermine prospects of peace. But while competition over the environment and natural resources also generate conflicts, successful peacebuilding initiatives that recognize these challenges can help communities construct systems for better management of both resources and related conflicts. Properly managed high value natural resources such as land and water can also act as assets for economic recovery, whereby development and employment opportunities become integrated into a participatory and inclusive approach to peacebuilding. Armed conflicts leave behind a toxic footprint, as certain military materials and practices have the potential to cause environmental damage, with the potential to affect civilian health and interfere with post-conflict recovery. Until now, little attention has been focused on toxic materials released during military activities – in the form of certain chemical constituents of munitions, or indirectly as a result of the bombardment of industrial and civilian infrastructure – that form a hazard to humans and ecosystems (Peace Insight, n.d; Jackson, 2006).

The nature of environmental and natural resource security has changed dramatically since the 1990s. Over the last two decades, the global economy, geared towards exploiting natural resources to serve an exponentially growing population of consumers, has far exceeded the carrying capacity of the planet. The depth of the transformation has been so profound that it has pushed Earth into a new geological epoch, the Anthropocene. Indeed, scientists have identified planetary boundaries that it would be unwise to transgress, and we seem to be in the process of crossing many of them right now. The first is the management of the stock of natural capital. The idea of a natural capital account, alongside the more traditional economic national accounts, is far from new and is part of a push to encourage countries to monitor their wealth, not just their income. But significant challenges still remain in a “natural wealth management” strategy for a country. Natural capital is typically embedded in complex dynamic systems and in real options whose value increases with volatility, making the capital stock variable over time, complicating the valuation of future ecosystem services. The sustainable management of this natural capital requires us to rethink its governance, yet few environmental and natural resource ministries are set up to do so, particularly given the siloed nature of the portfolios they manage, divided by

resource type and therefore unable to address increasingly complex interdependencies and volatility (Castilla-Rubio & Boccaletti, 2017).

The concept of environmental security has been a central issue in this process of deepening the scale and broadening the content of security. The end of the Cold War triggered a proliferation of articles and new research projects on environmental security. Yet, there was another broad change in world affairs that was also important in the development of environmental security as a research and policy issue. The growth of environmental consciousness in developed countries was necessary for environmental problems to be seen as serious enough to warrant calling them a security issue. This began in the 1960s with some high-profile studies of environmental problems and growth in the number of environmental nongovernmental organizations, including the creation of large, international, environmental nongovernmental organizations, such as the World Wildlife Fund, Friends of the Earth, and Greenpeace (Barnett, 2009). Environmental security is the state of protection of vital interests of the individual, society, natural environment from threats resulting from anthropogenic and natural impacts on the environment. In this context, various thematic issues involved in global environmental change are distinguished, such as: land use and land cover change, industrial transformation and energy use, demographic and social dimensions of resource use, social and individual choice mechanisms, institutions, and environmental security.

A main question in all such issues is whether our society has the capability and resilience to adjust itself to stress factors of a socio-political or environmental nature. Furthermore, it is also important to appreciate that adequate scientific knowledge on the nature, backgrounds and directions of environmental change processes should become available to a world-wide audience in order to induce the necessary behavioral and political adjustments (Engelbrecht et al., 2019). A large proportion of Niger Deltan are dependent on natural resources and the environment to subsist. The natural environment is the foundation of livelihoods based on subsistence and commercial farming, animal husbandry, trade and mining. These activities are inextricably linked to the availability of natural resources and the sustainable management of those resources. Factors such as population growth, human movements, current and future land scarcity, rising levels of global consumption and consumerism, climate change and political and social instability all impact on the natural environment and, thereby, on livelihoods. In turn, the allocation, management and exploitation of increasingly limited natural resources can contribute to conflict in Niger Delta.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **Environmentally Responsible Behavior (ERB) Model**

The ERB theory was proposed by Hines, Hungerford and Tomera in 1987 (Akintunde, 2017). Hines, Hungerford, and Tomera (1987) proposed environmental education as a technique to modify behavior among students in terms of responding to and acting on their environment. The model argues that possessing an intention of acting is a major factor influencing ERB. In explaining the theoretical underpin of this study, most theories are also considered fit but because individual or group action directed toward remediation of environmental issues/problems, the residents' Environmentally Responsible Behavior (ERB) is considered most appropriate. ERB is also referred to as pro-environmental behavior or environmentally significant behavior can be defined as any behavior that can contribute to environmental

conservation, and can result in sustainable natural ecosystems and healthy environmental conditions (Sintov et al., 2010). ERB is characterized by a combination of self interest and concern for other people, species, or ecosystems (Bamberg & Moser, 2007). It includes both general actions (talking with others about environmental issues; encouraging family and friends to behave in environmentally responsible ways) and specific actions (recycling; purchasing environmentally friendly & sustainable goods; conservation of energy by turning off lights and using alternate sources of energy, such as solar, hydro, or wind energy; and reduction in fossil fuel dependence by utilizing alternative means of transportation) (Cottrell, 2003; Thogerson, 2007; Vaske & Kobrin, 2007).

Encouraging ERB is the fundamental goal of the discipline of environmental education; as such, research has focused on the precursors of environmentally responsible behaviors in order to successfully cultivate desired behaviors through environmental education programming. By influencing values, attitudes, and behaviors of individuals in positive ways, environmental education ultimately seeks to minimize negative environmental impacts (Giuseffi, 2011). ERB may be thought of as a fundamental step to improving environmental conditions. To improve environmental conditions, a large number of people need to change their behavior to improve environmental conditions (Saunders, 2003). Hence, it is sensible and useful to find an effective way to promote community-wide ERB. Environmentally responsible development is about the delivery of a better quality of life for every one of our citizens, for now and for generations to come. Human will support environmental protection and promote sustainable development. Environment and Behavior includes such as beliefs, meanings, values and attitudes of individuals or groups concerns towards natural resources, environmental security and sustaining peacebuilding thought, and development as well as neighborhoods, cities, transport routes and devices, or recreational areas; evaluation and effectiveness of environments designed to accomplish specific objectives (Lee, 2012).

The environmentally responsible behavior (ERB) model is relevant to this study as individual behavior can either impair or ameliorate environmental problems, it is important for individuals, particularly residents, to engage in environmentally responsible behavior (ERB) as an important step in preserving natural resources and the environment. Identifying important factors that lead to longterm behavioral change can effectively contribute to more environmental conservation. For example, if residents' attitudes toward ERB become more positive, they could reveal more consistent ERB. Thus, it is important to find factors that can lead to more consistent ERB. In the present study, several factors are identified as predictors of ERB, including place attachment, attitudes toward tourism development, place satisfaction, and socio-demographic variables. Pro-environmental behavior is an individual effort to reduce the negative impact due to the destruction of nature by improving and preserving the environment. Pro-environmental behavior becomes very important, especially among adolescents. Theory provides a framework for understanding human behavior towards natural resources, environmental security and sustaining peacebuilding thought, and development. By having a broad base of understanding about the how's and why's of human behavior, we can better understand ourselves and others.

## **CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION**

### **Resources**

Etymologically, ‘resource’ refers to two separate words ‘re’ and ‘source’ that indicate anything or substance that may occur unhindered many more times. The term ‘Resource’ had no special significance till the early part of the twentieth century. A resource is a source or supply from which a benefit is produced and that has some utility. Resources can broadly be classified upon their availability they are classified into renewable and non-renewable resources. As a source of supply, support or aid, especially one that can be readily drawn upon when needed as a resources and collective wealth of a country or its means of producing wealth. Usually, resources as available means afforded by the mind or one's personal capabilities: to have resource against loneliness (Elisha, 2021). The word resource does not refer to a thing or a substance but to a function which a thing or a substance may perform or to an operation in which it may take part, namely, the function or operation of attaining a given end such as satisfying a want. In other words, the word resource is an abstraction reflecting human appraisal and relating to a function or operation. So, resource satisfies individual human wants and also attains social objectives. It is also been refers to the positive interaction between man and nature. Man is of course, the most important and integral part of resource creation, as he is situated in the top of the hierarchy of resource consumption. Only the satisfaction of human beings converts anything or a substance into resource.

Resources are anything that has utility and adds value to your life. Air, water, food, plants, animals, minerals, metals, and everything else that exists in nature and has utility to mankind is a ‘Resource’. The value of each such resource depends on its utility and other factors and the natural resource depletion, such as deforestation, may result in large numbers of environmental refugees (Elisha, 2021) which will bring about environmental problem. For example, metals are gold, silver, copper or bronze have economic value; i.e. they can be exchanged for money. However, mountains, rivers, sea or forests are also resources but they do not have economic value. There are two most important factors that can turn any substance into a resource- time and technology. With the help of technology, innovation humans can transform a natural or man-made substance into a resource. Like, minerals, fish or other marine creatures sourced from the sea can be used for our food and medicines. Similarly, time also adds to the value of a resource. For example, fossil deposits of organisms over hundreds of years can turn into fossil fuels. Resources is a very broad term; it is basically anything that can be considered a valuable addition. Anything from air to gold is all resources. There are two broad types of resources natural resources and man-made resources, but for the context of this paper, natural resources shall be the focal point.

### **Natural Resources**

Natural resources can be defined as the resources that exist (on the planet) independent of human actions. These are the resources that are found in the environment and are developed without the intervention of humans. Common examples of natural resources include air, sunlight, water, soil, stone, plants, animals and fossil fuels. Natural resources are naturally occurring materials that are useful to man or could be useful under conceivable technological, economic or social circumstances or supplies drawn from the earth, supplies such as food, building and clothing

materials, fertilizers, metals, water and geothermal power. For a long time, natural resources were the domain of the natural sciences. Natural resources are useful raw materials that we get from the Earth. They occur naturally, which means that humans cannot make natural resources. Instead, we use and modify natural resources in ways that are beneficial to us. The materials used in human-made objects are natural resources. Natural resources are those resources that occur within the environment in their original and natural form, undisturbed by humanity. They take years to form without the intervention of humans. The Mother Earth is abundant with natural resources that develop on this planet using its surrounding environment.

Natural resources are materials from the Earth that are used to support life and meet people's needs. Any natural substance that humans use can be considered a natural resource. Oil, coal, natural gas, metals, stone and sand are natural resources. Other natural resources are air, sunlight, soil and water. Animals, birds, fish and plants are natural resources as well. Natural resources are used to make food, fuel and raw materials for the production of goods. All of the food that people eat comes from plants or animals. Natural resources such as coal, natural gas and oil provide heat, light and power. Natural resources also are the raw materials for making products that we use every day from our toothbrush and lunch box to our clothes, cars, televisions, computers and refrigerators. There are two types of natural resources viz; renewable and nonrenewable resources. Renewable resources are those natural resources such as trees, water, sun and wind that can be replenished at about the same rate at which they are used. Renewable resources, however, can be depleted if not properly managed or conserved. Nonrenewable resources are those natural resources that are depleted more quickly than they can regenerate. Fossil fuels like oil and natural gas were formed over millions of years. Once mined and used completely, nonrenewable resources are gone forever. With the world's population fast approaching almost 8 billion, the issue becomes one of resource management as well. It is one thing to practice conservation, but we must understand that as the population grows, the demand grows as well and strong dependent on the environment and it blessed natural resources.

## **Environmental Security**

The plurality of meanings of environmental security can be categorized into six principal interpretations. First, environmental security can be seen as being about the impacts of human activities on the environment. Second, environmental security can be seen to be about the impacts of the military-industrial complex, including war, on the environment. Third, environmental change can be seen as a security problem common to all states, therefore requiring collective action. Fourth, environmental change can be seen as a threat to national security. Fifth, environmental change has been identified as a possible cause of violent conflict. Sixth, environmental change can be seen as a risk to human security. The following discussion focuses only on the last three of these interpretations, as they have been the most prominent in terms of research and their influence on policy (Barnett, 2009). Environmental security is the state of human-environment dynamics that includes restoration of the environment damaged by military actions, and amelioration of resource scarcities, environmental degradation, and biological threats that could lead to social disorder and conflict.

Environmental security is an element of regional and national security. It encompasses the mitigation and prevention of energy threats, including threats to sources and supply lines, and environmental risks and related stresses that directly contribute to political and economic instability or conflict in foreign countries or regions of importance to the most developing

nations. Moreover, it addresses selected energy, environmental, and related national security concerns that pose a direct conflict with United States foreign policy. Although environmental security threats may not necessarily directly harm territory, they may still threaten national security because of potential harm to the territories of U.S. allies and other nations where the U.S. has strategic interests or due to indirect, adverse effects to the global economic system. Environmental security concerns include those from nuclear contamination, spent fuel, and waste; threats to energy resources; contamination, degradation or depletion of essential environmental resources; or environmental problems from failing infrastructure as may threaten U.S. security or undermine foreign regional stability (U.S. Department of State, 2001).

Global environmental changes are, above all, still driven by the spread and intensification of the unsustainable use of fossil fuels. Today, however, the formerly more subordinate processes of globalization and its consequences have become equally important for sustained environmental change. What has not changed is the fact that people influence the properties of environmental systems much more than the natural fluctuations intrinsic to those systems do (Dalby, 2015). The concept of environmental security has stabilized. It attempts to describe possible links between environmental change caused by human activity and the threats to security which can be inferred from that. Environmental scarcity means, in this respect, disturbance or interference, which arises as a result of overuse, overexploitation or pollution of a renewable resource by people (Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung, 2015).

## **Environmental Peacebuilding**

Natural resources are one of a country's most critical assets for peacebuilding. Land, forests, minerals, oil, water, and other resources are the foundations for rebuilding livelihoods and national economies. They provide jobs for reintegrating former combatants. And efforts to address corruption and improve governance often focus on natural resources and their revenues. Environmental peacebuilding incorporates natural resource management into peacebuilding activities and strategies to support security, humanitarian, and development objectives. Peacebuilding is the development of constructive personal, group, and political relationships across ethnic, religious, class, national, and racial boundaries. It aims to resolve injustice in nonviolent ways and to transform the structural conditions that generate deadly conflict. Peacebuilding is an activity that aims to resolve injustice in nonviolent ways and to transform the cultural and structural conditions that generate deadly or destructive conflict. It revolves around developing constructive personal, group, and political relationships across ethnic, religious, class, national, and racial boundaries. The process includes violence prevention; conflict management, resolution, or transformation; and post-conflict reconciliation or trauma healing before, during, and after any given case of violence (Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies, 2018).

The methods included in peacebuilding vary depending on the situation and the agent of peacebuilding. Successful peacebuilding activities create an environment supportive of self-sustaining, durable peace; reconcile opponents; prevent conflict from restarting; integrate civil society; create rule of law mechanisms; and address underlying structural and societal issues. Of course, the exact definition of peacebuilding varies depending on the actor, with some definitions specifying what activities fall within the scope of peacebuilding or restricting peacebuilding to post-conflict interventions. Even if peacebuilding has remained a largely amorphous concept without clear guidelines or goals (Chapman et al., 2009) common to all definitions is the



agreement that improving human security is the central task of peacebuilding. In this sense, peacebuilding includes a wide range of efforts by diverse actors in government and civil society at the community, national, and international levels to address the root causes of violence and ensure civilians have freedom from fear (negative peace), freedom from want (positive peace) and freedom from humiliation before, during, and after violent conflict. Although many of peacebuilding's aims overlap with those of peacemaking, peacekeeping and conflict resolution, it is a distinct idea.

Peacemaking involves stopping an ongoing conflict, whereas peacebuilding happens before a conflict starts or once it ends. Peacekeeping prevents the resumption of fighting following a conflict; it does not address the underlying causes of violence or work to create societal change, as peacebuilding does. Peacekeeping also differs from peacebuilding in that it only occurs after conflict ends, not before it begins. Conflict resolution does not include some components of peacebuilding, such as state building and socioeconomic development. While some use the term to refer to only post-conflict or post-war contexts, most use the term more broadly to refer to any stage of conflict. Before conflict becomes violent, preventive peacebuilding efforts, such as diplomatic, economic development, social, educational, health, legal and security sector reform programs, address potential sources of instability and violence. This is also termed conflict prevention. Peacebuilding efforts aim to manage, mitigate, resolve and transform central aspects of the conflict through official diplomacy; as well as through civil society peace processes and informal dialogue, negotiation, and mediation (John & Kew, 2008).

Peacebuilding addresses economic, social and political root causes of violence and fosters reconciliation to prevent the return of structural and direct violence. Peacebuilding efforts aim to change beliefs, attitudes and behaviors to transform the short- and long-term dynamics between individuals and groups toward a more stable, peaceful coexistence. Peacebuilding is an approach to an entire set of interrelated efforts that support peace. Peace-building is a term of more recent origin that, as used in the report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (2000), defines "activities undertaken on the far side of conflict to reassemble the foundations of peace and provide the tools for building on those foundations something that is more than just the absence of war (Lakhdar, 2000). In 2007, the UN Secretary-General's Policy Committee defined peacebuilding as follows: "Peacebuilding involves a range of measures targeted to reduce the risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict by strengthening national capacities at all levels for conflict management, and to lay the foundations for sustainable peace and sustainable development. Peacebuilding strategies must be coherent and tailored to specific needs of the country concerned, based on national ownership, and should comprise a carefully prioritized, sequenced, and therefore relatively narrow set of activities aimed at achieving the above objectives (United Nations, 2012).

## **Causes of Environmental Conflicts in Nigeria over Natural Resources and the Environment**

Nigeria is confronted by multiple security challenges, notably the resilient Boko Haram Islamist insurgency in the north east, long-running discontent and militancy in the Niger Delta, increasing violence between herders and farming communities spreading from the central belt southward, and separatist Biafra agitation. More specifically, some have argued that wars are fought primarily for economic, religious, and political reasons. Others have claimed that most wars today are fought for ideological reasons while for this paper the followings are also considered:

**Horizontal Inequality of National Cake:** Horizontal inequality in access to or control over scarce land, water or other environmental endowments can be exacerbated when inequalities are based on ethnicity, religion, race or class (Nafziger et al., 2000). Poor environmental management on a local and national government level can also lead to conflict, such as in Burundi (Gahama et al., 1999) especially where policies are skewed to favour particular groups, or where there is a lack of transparency.

**Greed and Grievance for Economic Gain:** Conceptually, “greed” is often associated with the economic motivations of competition for natural resources, thus leading to conflict, or where conflict is used as a strategic tool so the resources can be unlawfully extracted with impunity. Importantly, natural resources do not always play a primary role in starting armed violence. Conflict erupts for a variety of inter-related reasons, but they can be perpetuated by greed when a state is weak and unable to protect its porous borders from state and non-state armed combatants (Fearon, 2004; UN, 2001a). Grievance tends to focus on horizontal inequalities, power and group perceptions of injustices that may cause or drive conflicts. On the whole, concerns about political and economic governance – displayed on the outer rim – apply to all types of conflict. Finally, the diagram considers that conflicts and the factors that may fuel them can play out at local, national, regional or international levels

**Territorial Gain:** Historically, the pursuit of territory and resources has been one of the most prominent secondary reasons for conflict. The increase in land and the subsequent resources on that land directly correlates to a state's power, thus increasing the invading states security.

**Corruption and Inept Leadership:** Corruption and unqualified leaders cause ethnic conflict in Nigeria. Gross mismanagement of national resources and misrule by unqualified leaders, have impoverished and denied opportunities to majority of Nigerians since independence which has led to agitations by citizens. Clear inequality exists in the way Nigeria shares its federal positions and allocation of infrastructure projects among the federating states. To create a sense of balance and share appointments and projects fairly, Government established Federal Character Commission but this has not stopped protests since government sometimes fail to use federal character for all appointments, hence the clamor for resource control among other demands (Usifo, 2019).

**Resource Control:** This is one of the causes of ethnic conflict in Nigeria. From 1966, when Isaac Adaka Boro formed a militia group to fight for resource control till date, this issue has been a contentious one in the country. Resource control is a hot issue which has refused to go away due to environmental degradation of the area and lack of real development in the Niger Delta which makes over 90% of federal revenue for running the economy of the nation. We should all condemn this extreme stance but the cause is partly due to marginalization of some ethnic groups in the country and wish for more development from the center (Usifo, 2019).

**Disputes over Ownership of Land:** History has shown that ethnic wars had broken out among people of the same states such as Brass and Nembe communities of Bayelsa and Aguleri and Umuleri of Anambra State. In these land disputes kith and kin kill themselves cheaply because of tussle over ownership of land. In 1981, International Boundary dispute erupted when Cameroonian Gendarmes gunned down some Nigerian Soldiers patrolling the Bakassi peninsula.

This could have gone into full-scale war but for Nigeria's maturity, magnanimity and playing the big brother role by not retaliating (Usifo, 2019).

### **Natural Resource and Environmental Factors and Conflict Analysis in Nigeria**

Nigeria is the most populated nation on the African continent. The country is also made up of approximately 400 ethnic groups and 450 languages. Owing to this diversity, there was a need for the government to merge similar groups/states for effective and fair allocation of resources. And, thus the six geopolitical zones which are the major constitutional division in Nigeria. In this grouping system, Nigeria's economic, political and educational resources are shared among the zones. Because each of the states in the zones occupied a common geographical location, they were more likely to have the same natural resource, and share a common economic activity. It has a total land area of 923,773 square Kilometres and is richly endowed with abundant and diverse resources, both renewable and non-renewable. Nigeria is endowed with vast reserves of mineral resources like, crude oil, natural gas, solid minerals, forests including tin, iron ore, coal, limestone, niobium. The country's solid mineral deposits include talc, gypsum, lead/zinc, bentonite and baryte, gold, bitumen, coal, rock salt, gemstones, and kaolin. The environment provides all life support systems in the air, on water and on land as well as the materials for fulfilling all developmental aspirations. In the context of this paper, natural resource factors and environmental factors will be discussed within the six geopolitical zones;

#### **North-Central Geopolitical Zone (Natural Resource Factors)**

The North Central geopolitical zone (Nigeria) where broadly identified i.e Kwara state, Kogi state, Nassarawa state, and Plateau state, Niger state and Benue state. Consequently, farming is the common traditional occupation across state in the south west region. The are known as the middle belt, who are occupying a land area stretching across central Nigeria longitudinally and forming a transition zone between Northern and Southern Nigeria. Agricultural activities like farming and fishing are prevalent in the North-central, and agricultural produce like yam, guinea corn, cassava, rice, soya bean, etcetera, are also abundant (Above, 2001). The region is well blessed with a mineral resource, as well as mineral deposits in tin, marble, coal, barytes, aquamarine, semi-precious stones, iron ore, mica, marble, limestone, coal, crude oil. Others include; gold, kaolin, cassiterite, columbite, tantalite, feldspar and dolomite, etcetera. While, with Nassarawa is popularly known as the home of solid minerals.

#### **North-Central Geopolitical Zone (Environmental Factor)**

The zone is agrarian as the main employer of labour is agriculture with few commercial centers in form of modern and local markets. Crops produced in the zone include yam, rice, sorghum, maize, acha, beeniseed, fruits, vegetables, etc. Distinctly, Plateau state is known to be the major producer of Irish Potatoes in the country as well as the main supplier of poultry products to major cities in northern Nigeria. Every state in the zone is endowed with abundant solid minerals.

### **North-East Geopolitical Zone (Natural Resources Factor)**

The North-east geopolitical zone of Nigeria or the North Eastern part of Nigeria comprises of six member states; Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba, and Yobe. This region occupies less than one-third of Nigeria's total land area, and as of 2011, had an estimated population of 23,558,674, which is 13.5% of the country's total population. Economically, the ethnic/religious centrality also affects the region, as its people are actively involved in livestock and crop production. The North-East geo-political zone in particular, is endowed with a variety of mineral resources comprising clay, coal (lignite), kaolin, marble, limestone, barite, bentonite and lead/zinc ores, among others.

### **North-East Geopolitical Zone (Environmental Factor)**

Political and ecological instabilities in the country's Borno and Yobe states present integrated, existential challenges for millions of Nigerian farmers, fishers, and pastoralists. These threats are not new. Their cumulative cost in economic terms alone is staggering. Stabilizing and rebuilding livelihoods in the region must be a central focus for public and private sector actors (Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2020). Since 2009, the Boko Haram insurgency along with military operations conducted by the Government of Nigeria have had a devastating impact on the north-east region of Nigeria (and specifically the states of Borno, Adamawa, Yobe, Bauchi, Gombe and Taraba). Armed conflict, direct violence against civilians, and widespread insecurity all of which escalated significantly following 2014 has resulted in over 20,000 deaths, the forced displacement of over 2 million people, and the widespread loss of livelihoods and access to essential social services. At present, the humanitarian situation is rapidly approaching famine levels and is characterized by extreme levels of food insecurity, malnutrition and exposure to disease. Fourteen million people across the six states (out of a total population of 18 million) are estimated to have been affected by the conflict, with 8.5 million people in need of humanitarian assistance.

The crisis in northeast Nigeria owes its origins mostly to the insurgency of Boko Haram, a terrorist group responsible for attacks on local communities across Nigeria, Chad, Cameroon, and Niger (UNHCHR, 2015). The activities of this terrorist group and the counter-insurgency by the Nigerian state caused the worse humanitarian crisis in the history of Nigeria (Hamid et al, 2017). The precarious socio-economic conditions of this region caused by its sensitive climate conditions and neglect by the central government are suspected to have created a fertile ground for Boko Haram to prosper (Rizzo, 2015). The debates on the underlying causes of the rebellion have revolved around climate and environmental issues, poverty, Islam, community allegiance, poor governance, and corruption (Magrin & de Montclos, 2018), this implies that crisis in northeast Nigeria can be attributed to natural resources and environmental issues.

### **North West Geopolitical Zone (Natural Resources Factor)**

Nigeria's North West, one of the country's six geopolitical zones, comprises seven of the country's 36 states. These are Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto and Zamfara. It covers an area of 216,065 sq km or 25.75 per cent of the country's total land mass. Its major ethnic groups are the Hausa and Fulani, who historically share strong cultural ties and are very much intermixed, with other smaller groups especially in Kaduna state. The region's estimated

population of 33 million (based on figures from the contentious 2006 census) is predominantly Muslim (Sunni). Most of the population (about 80 per cent) are farmers, pastoralists, agro-pastoralists or small-scale entrepreneurs. The region has substantial solid mineral deposits, including gold exploited by artisanal miners in open pit mines (Mengistu, 2015; International Crisi Group, 2020).

### **North West Geopolitical Zone (Environmental Factor)**

Insecurity is plaguing north-western Nigeria, due to persistent herder-farmer tensions, rising crime and infiltration by Islamist militant over failed efforts in addressing environmental and economic issues. The region's security crisis, the Federal and state authorities should focus on resolving conflict between agrarian and pastoralist communities, through dialogue and resource-sharing agreements, while also stepping up law enforcement. The violence is rooted in competition over resources between predominantly Fulani herders and mostly Hausa farmers. It has escalated amid a boom in organized crime, including cattle rustling, kidnapping for ransom and village raids. Jihadist groups are now stepping in to take advantage of the security crisis.

The causes of violence in the North West are complex and inter-related. At its root, the region's security crisis derives from long-running competition over land and water resources between predominantly Fulani herders and mainly Hausa farmers, both of whom have over time mobilized armed groups (referred to by the authorities as “bandits” and “vigilantes”, respectively) for protection. Climate change-related environmental degradation and high population growth have intensified this struggle. Amid a boom in the trade of small arms and light weapons in the region, organised gangs operating from ungoverned forests have proliferated, engaging in cattle rustling, kidnapping for ransom and armed robbery, including of miners and traders in the largely unregulated gold mining sector, as well as pillage of communities. Having originated in Zamfara state, gang violence has since spread to five other nearby states, namely Kaduna, Katsina, Sokoto, Kebbi and Niger, the last of which is in North Central Nigeria. As security has deteriorated, the region has steadily come under the renewed influence of jihadist groups, which have sometimes attacked security forces (International Crisi Group, 2020).

### **South-East Geopolitical Zone (Natural Resources Factor)**

The South-East geopolitical zone is blessed with abundant natural resources. These include crude oil, lead, zinc, white clay, fine sand, limestone and natural gas in commercial quantities. The state also produces agricultural produce such as palm produce, cocoa and rubber. These include gold, bitumen and bauxite in parts of Ebonyi State; salt, alluvial gold, gravel and bauxite in parts of Aniomia; tin, lead, zinc and columbite in Enugu State; feldspar, bauxite, granite and iron ore in Anambra State; while Imo is believed to have reserves of lead-zinc, Rivers-Igbo with coal and Abia with bitumen (Mordi, 2017).

### **South-East Geopolitical Zone (Environmental Factor)**

The South Eastern Nigeria is of the wet tropical type climate with mean annual temperature in the range of between 27 °C and 34 °C. The temperature of the area as observed by is highest around March–April when the overhead Sun passes through Nigeria latitude (Uchechukwu et al.,

2018). The frequent clashes between herdsmen and farmers in Nigeria have resulted in the destruction of several lives and farmlands, and become a major threat to national security. However, due to Boko Haram insurgency in the north as well environmental challenges of desertification which have great impact on arable lands herdsmen have been pushed down south in search of pasture and fresh water. This southward movement has pitted them against the farming communities degenerating into deadly clashes with increased death tolls and many other criminal activities recorded periodically (Ebisi, 2020). The farmer-herder conflict has become Nigeria's gravest security challenge, now claiming more lives than Boko Haram insurgency. It has displaced thousands and sharpened ethnic, regional and ad religious polarization, if not checked can lead to another civil war. The root causes of the farmers-herders conflict in Nigeria lie in climate-induced degradation of pastoral land and Boko Haram incidences in the far north, thereby forcing herdsmen down south. The escalation of this conflict has continued on the increase as a result of lack of available grazing settlements due to farm lands and the groups' traditional nomadic lifestyle, forcing passages through farms across the various states with severe damages to the crops (Ebisi, 2020).

However, regardless of the remote causes of these conflicts especially with the current deterioration of relationships between farmers and herdsmen, caused by open grazing with its severe impact on crops and arable lands; the problem now is that conflicts resurfaced in another dimension, widely increasing by day; the farmer now seeks to protect their farmlands, and herdsmen adopt violent mechanisms in safe guarding the cattle during grazing (Genyi, 2004). Reports on the increasing farmer-herder conflict in Nigeria by Akerjir (2018), on cattle rustling and criminal impostors as Fulani herdsmen revealed that there have been several cases of cattle theft in a nearby village to Nimbo community called Aku where over 300 cows were stolen. This allegation of cattle rustling was the major reason the Ukpabi Nimbo community came under attack by the Fulani herdsmen. Cattle rustling have always taken the shape of organized crime with a huge criminal tendency (Okoli & Okpaleke; 2014). These conflicts have caused a lot of environmental damages ranging from contamination of the stream by herds, indiscriminate defecation on roads, scarcity of land and increase in criminal activities.

### **South-South Geopolitical Zone (Natural Resources Factor)**

The south-south geopolitical zone comprises Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo and Rivers states. The zone occupies approximately 85,303 square kilometers. The principal mineral resources include crude oil, natural gas, clay chalk, and marbles. Limestone, titanium, tin ore, ceramic raw materials and hard stone. Consequently, fish farming is the common traditional occupation across state in the south-south region. The area is blessed with mineral resources and blue economy, there extraction as well as complex industrial activities found in the geopolitical zone. The South-South geopolitical zone is the economic mainstream of Nigeria, as it is the site of the country's number one resource Crude oil. It is located strategically at the point where the Y tail of the river Niger joins the Atlantic Ocean, through the Gulf of Guinea. Also, in addition to oil and gas, the region also provides significant natural resources such as silver nitrate, coal, glass sand, timber, kaolin, quartzite, etcetera. It also has huge potential in agriculture and tourism (Victor, 2019).

### **South-South Geopolitical Zone (Environmental Factor)**

The South-South geopolitical zone in Nigeria is the home of Nigeria's crude oil resource, and as such is the major economic hub of the nation. Although relatively untapped, it also has huge potential for agricultural and tourism investments. Nigeria is a blessed nation ethnically and naturally, and the South-South geopolitical zone of the country showcases this. The region is blessed with oil and gas which contributes approximately 80 percent of the Federal Government's revenue and 90 percent of Nigeria's export earnings. Nigeria's petroleum sector GDP contribution must be compared with other oil-based economies (countries that actually deserve the description). The impact of crude oil in the Nigerian economy has a paradoxical effect in the sense that it should have only positive impact on the economy and the population, but this is not the case. Wealth generated by oil revenues has not passed down to the citizens of Nigeria: around 70% of the population still lives below the poverty line (Gruenewaelde, 2013).

Because of the careless nature of oil operations in the Delta, People in the affected areas complain about health issues including breathing problems and skin lesions; many have lost basic human rights such as health, access to food, clean water, and an ability to work. Niger Delta most conflicts are as a result of environmental devastation, property right, faulty land use decree, poor government and operational companies' non-commitment, oppression by internal and external actors, and others across the region. In the Niger Delta's coastal communities, oil pollution of the marine environment has depleted the fishing and water resources that people have traditionally depended on for their livelihoods. This has led to a complex pattern of conflicts in the region since the late 1990s. More also, the resultant environmental degradation from gas flaring, dredging of larger rivers, oil spillage and reclamation of land due to oil and gas extraction across the Niger Delta region costs about US\$758 million every year is also causing a lot of conflict among Niger Deltans.

The current conflict in the Niger Delta first arose in the early 1990s over tensions between foreign oil corporations and a number of the Niger Delta's minority ethnic groups who feel they are being exploited, particularly the Ogoni and the Ijaw. Ethnic and political unrest continued throughout the 1990s despite the return to democracy (Ehiguelua, 2007) and the election of the Obasanjo government in 1999. Struggle for oil wealth has fueled violence between ethnic groups, causing the militarization of nearly the entire region by ethnic militia groups, Nigerian military and police forces, notably the Nigerian Mobile Police (Koos & Pierskalla, 2015). The violence has contributed to Nigeria's ongoing energy supply crisis by discouraging foreign investment in new power generation plants in the region (Human Rights Watch, 2002).

Ogoniland is a 1,050-square-kilometre (404-square-mile) region in the southeast of the Niger Delta basin. Economically viable petroleum was discovered in Ogoniland in 1957, just one year after the discovery of Nigeria's first commercial petroleum deposit. Royal Dutch Shell and Chevron Corporation set up shop there throughout the next two decades. The 1970s and 1980s saw government promised benefits for the Niger Delta peoples fall through and fail to materialize, with the Ogoni growing increasingly dissatisfied and their environmental, social, and economic apparatus rapidly deteriorating. Beginning in December 1992, the conflict between the Ogoni and the oil companies escalated to a level of greater seriousness and intensity on both sides. With the government of the day and the company failure to meet the demand of the Ogonis' the oil wells were shut down. Instead of the government resulting to bargaining, they

applied force by bring in military which escalated and four Ogoni chiefs brutally murdered while nine activists were arrested and later murdered including Saro-Wiwa (Mathiason, 2009).

The December 1998 All Ijaw Youths Conference crystallized the Ijaws' struggle for petroleum resource control with the formation of the Ijaw Youth Council (IYC) and the issuing of the Kaiama Declaration. In it, long-held Ijaw concerns about the loss of control over their homeland and their own lives to the oil companies were joined with a commitment to direct action. In the declaration, and in a letter to the companies, the Ijaws called for oil companies to suspend operations and withdraw from Ijaw territory. The IYC pledged "to struggle peacefully for freedom, self-determination and ecological justice," and prepared a campaign of celebration, prayer, and direct action, Operation Climate Change, beginning December 28. In December 1998, two warships and 10–15,000 Nigerian troops occupied Bayelsa and Delta states as the Ijaw Youth Congress (IYC) mobilized for Operation Climate Change. Soldiers entered the Bayelsa, the state capital of Yenagoa, announced they had come because youths trying to stop the oil companies. Nonetheless, Operation Climate Change continued, and disrupted Nigerian oil supplies through much of 1999 by turning off valves through Ijaw territory. In the context of high conflict between the Ijaw and the Nigerian Federal Government (and its police and army), the military carried out the Odi massacre, killing scores if not hundreds of Ijaws. Subsequent actions by Ijaws against the oil industry included both renewed efforts at nonviolent action and attacks on oil installations and foreign oil workers (Aghadiuno, 1999).

In the year 2013, the Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force (NDPVF) group with the explicit goal of acquiring control of regional petroleum resources. Nigeria was the world's tenth largest oil exporter. The abundant oil reserves resulted in widespread exploitation. The Niger Delta region encompasses about 8% of Nigeria's landmass and is the largest wetlands region on the African continent. Oil drilling in the region began in the 1950s. In the beginning, the oil drilling in the region really stimulated Nigeria's economy and was extremely beneficial to the country. Numerous multinational corporations established oil operations in the region and made a conscious effort to not violate any environmental or human rights regulations. Shell began drilling in the Niger Delta region in 1956. Over time, Shell's presence in Nigeria has been very detrimental (Pigrau, 2013). These negative consequences are the result of thousands of oil spills, human rights violations, environmental destruction, and corruption. Over the past half century, Nigeria has become a plutocracy; political power is concentrated solely in the hands of the socioeconomic elite (Obi & Rustad, 2011).

In the year 2001, the people of Bille Kingdom where in war with the people of Ke (Kalabari) as the intrude into Bille territory to make claim over an oil field under the operation of Shell Petroleum Development Company who Bille are host (Landlord). The Bille Tribe (Bile, Bille) of the Ijaw people lives in central Rivers State, Nigeria as one of the Ancient Ijaw Kingdoms in the Eastern Niger Delta regions. During the report to the judicial commission of enquiry into the Bille/Ke communal conflict in Degema Local Government, Rivers State, the chairman of the commission, Justice Iche Ndu, told the state governor, Dr. Peter Odili, that the root cause of the clash was the struggle over ownership of a flow station belonging Bille people who SPDC are tenant to. Shell Petroleum Development Company has been indicted in a communal clash in Rivers State over failure to recognize the people Bille as its original landlord, rather than bring in rule and divide rule which resulted in the loss of several lives and the destruction of property worth millions of naira (Dakoru, 2001).



### **South-West Geopolitical Zone (Natural Resources)**

South-West geopolitical zone (Nigeria) where broadly identified as Oyo state, Osun state, Ondo state, Ekiti state, Lagos state and Ogun state. Farming is the common traditional occupation across states in the south west region. The area is blessed with numerous solid minerals and natural resources with rich deposits such as, granite, crude oil, sand stone, lignite, kaoline, clay, coal, tin, etc. an extensive fertile soil suitable for agriculture and their extraction as well as complex industrial activities found in the geopolitical zone.

### **South-West geopolitical zone (Environmental Factor)**

One central aspect of the national question within the discourse on Nigeria concerns the conflicts and disputes historically driven by struggles over land-based resources. The climate of southwestern Nigeria is tropical in nature and it is characterized by wet and dry seasons. The temperature ranged between 21 and 34°C while the annual rainfall ranged between 150 and 3000mm. Drawing on primary data generated from focus group discussions and oral interviews between October 2009 and March 2015 across locations with pronounced incidents of land-based conflicts in Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun, and Oyo States in southwestern Nigeria. In southwestern Nigeria, disputed access to land by natives and settlers has served as a basis for violent conflicts among members of the two major ethnic groups in the region. To the Yoruba indigenes, the Hausa-Fulani are migrant settlers who should neither own nor lay any claim to land rights in any part of their communities, which the Hausa-Fulani see differently. The resulting tension created by the opposing frameworks and perceptions of land ownership among members of these groups is at the root of the violent conflicts experienced in the region, especially between 1999 and 2015 (Arowosegbe, 2017).

Violent ethnic conflicts driven mainly by land-based disputes have occurred among members of the Arogbo-Ijaw and Ilaje communities in Ondo State, the Ife-Modakeke in Osun State, and the Saki-Iseyin and Hausa-Fulani in Oyo State. Other conflict areas include Ajegunle and Ketu Mile 12 within the Lagos metropolis as well as Bodija in Oyo State. Between 1999 and 2015, a total of twenty-one violent ethnic clashes due to land disputes occurred in Sagamu, a metropolitan city in the Ijebu Remo Local Government Area of Ogun State. Various accounts exist regarding the number of violent conflicts between Hausa-Fulani pastoralists and Yoruba farmers in southwestern Nigeria (Arowosegbe, 2017).

A wealth of academic and policy research seeks to understand the role that natural resources and environmental factors play in conflicts in Africa. Because of the complexity of conflicts whether they take place on an interstate or an intrastate level theoretical and conceptual scholarship in this field is inherently multidisciplinary and complex. Informed by a broad academic and policy literature, this report makes the distinction between natural resource factors and environmental factors or endowments. Natural resource factors are defined in the analysis as non-renewable extractable resources such as minerals, oil and diamonds. Environmental factors are categorised as renewable sources of livelihood that allow a person to make a living. Environmental factors such as land, water, fish stocks and timber may not be accessible to all people in a geographical area, and may be degraded by use or mismanagement. While environmental conflicts are closely linked with population growth, movement or competition over scarce or degraded resources, such as water.

## **How Conflict Harms Natural Resources and the Environment in Nigeria**

The environmental impact of wars begins long before they do. Building and sustaining military forces consumes vast quantities of resources. Weapons and military materiel used during conflicts also leave environmental legacies. Land mines, cluster munitions and other explosive remnants of war can restrict access to agricultural land and pollute soils and water sources with metals and toxic energetic materials. In major conflicts, large volumes of military scrap may be produced or abandoned, this can contain a range of polluting materials, contaminating soils and groundwater, whilst exposing those who work on it to acute and chronic health risks. Wrecked or damaged ships, submarines and offshore oil infrastructure can cause marine pollution (Conflict and Environment Observatory, 2020). The environmental impact of conflicts themselves vary greatly. Some armed conflicts may be brief but highly destructive. Some civil wars may last for decades but be fought at low intensity. Many contemporary conflicts have blurred the lines, lasting years but with sustained periods of high intensity warfare. Who is fighting, where they are fighting and how they are fighting, all strongly influence natural resources and the environmental impact of a conflict as highlighted below:

**Deforestation:** this often increases during and after conflicts. Much of the time this is due to overharvesting by communities who are suddenly reliant on wood and charcoal for fuel and heating. But it can also be as a result of armed or criminal gangs taking advantage of the collapse of management systems. Civilian coping strategies can also lead to the overharvesting of other natural resources or to environmentally damaging practices such as artisanal oil refining. And in some cases, community systems of sustainable resource management may be disrupted.

**Environmental Degradation and Community Displacement:** In the South-South region of Nigeria for instance, the people of Niger Delta region, are a coastal habitat, that are situated around continental edges, biologically productive and easily accessible, facing the Atlantic Ocean, forming approximately seven per cent of the country's land mass. For millennia, this has made them hubs of human activity. Coastal ecosystems provide a diverse range of goods and services, including hosting the world's primary ports of commerce, primary producers of fish, shellfish, and seaweed for human and animal consumption, and significant sources of fertiliser, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, household products, and construction materials (Elisha & Felix, 2021). Since the successful discovery of an oil well in Oloibiri in 1956, the Delta has been eyed and explored by various multinational petroleum companies. The oil industry is responsible for over 80 per cent of Nigeria's wealth. Despite such huge earnings, it is said that much of these proceed go to only one per cent of the population. In addition to the environmental degradation and community displacement caused by the oil companies in the region, the corruption over oil revenues has been the source of various conflicts over the years. (Amnesty International, 2009). People displaced by conflict may also move internally to urban areas, swelling the population and placing local environmental services under strain.

**Increased Rates of Waste Dumping and Burning:** One basic need common to displacement camps and to urban areas experiencing conflict is waste management. Systems often break down during conflict leading to increased rates of waste dumping and burning, improper management and less waste segregation. Waste management systems are just one element of environmental governance that may collapse during conflicts. Local environmental laws and regulations may be

ignored, and local and national administrations may lose their capacity to monitor, assess or respond to environmental problems (Conflict and Environment Observatory, 2020).

**Natural Resource Depletion:** It refers to the situation where the consumption of natural resources is faster than it can be replenished. The natural resources of a nation can be divided as renewable resources and non-renewable resources.

**Break in Environmental Governance:** The damage that conflicts due to environmental governance can have implications for environmental protection for years. This can set back progress on issues as diverse as pollution control, resource and protected area management, climate change adaptation and biodiversity protection. Finally, the environmental costs of recovery may be significant. Massive urban rebuilding projects can require huge volumes of resources.

**Loss of Biological diversity:** Biodiversity loss is the extinction of species (plant or animal) worldwide, and also the local reduction or loss of species in a certain habitat. The ecological effects of biodiversity are usually counteracted by its loss (Elisha, 2021). Elisha further added that entire ecosystems in coastal and marine areas, inland watersheds, forests, and drylands (i.e. deserts, grasslands, and savannahs) are being destroyed by pollution, land conversion, and climate change could occur as a result of environmental conflicts caused by human activities. Over 99% of species currently extinction-threatened are so because of human activity. Biodiversity loss is a planetary scandal and a damning shame on us as a species. However, the loss of biodiversity is caused by the following drivers (UNEP, 2020; Elisha, 2021).

High intensity conflicts require and consume vast quantities of fuel, leading to massive CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and contributing to climate change. Large scale vehicle movements can lead to widespread physical damage to sensitive landscapes and geodiversity, as can the intensive use of explosive ordnance. The use of explosive weapons in urban areas creates vast quantities of debris and rubble, which can cause air and soil pollution. Pollution can also be caused by damage to light industry and environmentally sensitive infrastructure such as water treatment plants. The loss of energy supplies can have reverberating effects that are detrimental to the environment, shutting down treatment plants or pumping systems, or can lead to the use of more polluting fuels or domestic generators (Conflict and Environment Observatory, 2020).

### **How to Promotes Peace owning to Natural Resources and the Environment in Nigeria**

The solutions to avert future occurrence includes the development of all parts of the country, and practice of justice and equity in the land. Finally, the use of ethnic and religious sentiments to cause division and conflicts will lose its appeal when you amend the constitution, and government starts fiscal federalism and devolution of power to the states and local government councils. Conflicts do not do us any good so let us shun them and fight for peace and progress instead. While armed conflicts and military activities can cause or facilitate many different forms of environmental harm, addressing the environment during and after conflicts can also create opportunities for building and sustaining peace, and for helping to transform societies through sustainable recovery.

**Equality in Natural Resources Distribution:** Shared natural resources can provide the basis for dialogue between warring parties, as can common environmental threats that extend across human boundaries and borders. Unpredictable energy supplies during conflicts can encourage a transition to solar power, while the devastation conflicts cause can be an opportunity to build back greener, or to create new domestic legal frameworks to sustainably manage resources. It is a reality that some regions within the Federal Republic of Nigeria are more populated than others, some have more natural resources than others, some are more educated than others but all together form the entity called Nigeria. Each region should be treated as equals and the government should provide resources and support necessary for their individual development.

**Judicious Use of Natural Resources:** Nigeria is blessed with abundance of natural resources, especially crude oil and natural gas. Our economy over the years was built on proceeds from oil sale. However, the economic turnout does not translate into real value for Nigerians. The poverty level has not become a history and the irony of plenty still resides with us, what happens to the people on whose land the resources are got, they are not happy to be called Nigerians, their belief is that some unknown people feast on their resources while they couldn't feel the heat of development. When the government makes judicious use of the natural resources and there is an even level of development across the regions, national unity will be promoted (Ibanga, 2018).

**States Autonomy over Natural Resources:** Natural resources found on any land in any state belongs to the Federal government and only the Federal government has the autonomous right to explore and produce such resources. Section 44(3) of the 1999 Constitution provides that notwithstanding the foregoing provisions of this section, the entire property in and control of all minerals, mineral oils and natural gas in under or upon any land in Nigeria or in, under or upon the territorial waters and the Exclusive Economic Zone of Nigeria shall vest in the Government of the Federation and shall be managed in such manner as may be prescribed by the National Assembly. Similarly, according to Petroleum Act 1969, the entire ownership and control of all petroleum in, under, or upon any land is vested in the state. The states in Nigeria have not been given powers to explore their own natural resources, therefore they could not obtain direct and maximum advantages of having those resources. The control of natural resources by the states will minimize some conflicts that are now matters of national concern and thus resulting in national discord. Let us take the Niger Delta crisis for an instance, if the resources are managed by the state, of course the government will not leave its people at the mercy of oil spillages and pollution. It will further empower individual states to create easy lives for its people (Ibanga, 2018).

If the argument presented here is true, then what options are left for peacemakers wanting to stop violence in Nigeria? As environmental factors such as climate change, land degradation and resource scarcity continue to take the forefront on the generation of organized violence, it is essential for decision-makers to reconceptualize the very idea of why individuals decide to take arms. Conventional streams of thought that typically phrase causal rationales for war in terms of economic, social or political variables fail to recognize the increasingly crucial role of environmental phenomena in conflict situations. What is perhaps more pressing is the yet-to-be institutionalized belief that we may no longer disassociate the economic, social and political conceptions of life from the environment. If this status quo remains, so will our collective path towards violence.

## CONCLUSION

The paper concluded that competition over the environment and natural resources is frequently a contributing factor to violent conflicts. Competition over the environment and natural resources is frequently a contributing factor to violent conflicts. Although these factors are rarely the only cause of violent conflict, environmental over-use and the exploitation of natural resources can not only increase the severity and duration of conflict, but also make its resolution much more difficult. Climate change threatens to exacerbate existing conflicts and create new ones. Many of the state across the Nigeria state are expected to be worst impacted by climate change are also affected by violence and conflict. The impact of climate change on these societies is likely to place a strain on social and political systems in these already fragile states. If direct access to limited natural resources such as land, forest, water and wildlife is dominated by one specific individual or group, it can lead to outbreaks of environmental conflict. In this way, the marginalization or exclusion of certain groups from these resources ensures that they then become easy targets for political manipulation. Similarly, easily exploited natural resources may also change the dynamics of conflict and turn a politically motivated activity into an economic one, for high value extractive resources can sustain a conflict through military financing. In this way individuals or groups which benefit from conditions of conflict through their control of revenues and resource exploitation may work to undermine prospects of peace. But while competition over the environment and natural resources can generate conflicts, successful peacebuilding initiatives that recognize these challenges and help communities construct systems for better management of both resources and related conflicts. Properly managed high value natural resources such as oil, gas, land and water can also act as assets for economic recovery, whereby development and employment opportunities become integrated into a participatory and inclusive approach to peacebuilding.

## Recommendation

Drawing from the conclusion, the following recommendations were made:

- Government should see how to integrate natural resources and environmental factors in conflict prevention, management and peacebuilding in Nigeria;
- Governments, civil society, development partners and the private sector should see how to strengthen a long-term strategic planning;
- There need to address the role of external actors and resource extraction;
- National cake should be shared equally among the geopolitical zone; and
- Government, civil society, development partners and the private sector should stop playing politics with issues of environmental concerns as well as environmental conflicts.

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