

Causal Factors and the Dynamics of Resources Conflicts in Africa: A Comparative Analysis of Niger Delta and Marikana

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ABSTRACT: Africa as a continent is endowed with various natural resources which have made the world attention to be directed to the continent, not for its economic benefit alone but also because of the unmanaged resource conflicts and wars in the continent. Authors, used Nigeria and South Africa which can be consider as the continent's superpower because of their role both in the continent and world at large as case study for their analysis. The authors adopt some theories to conceptualize salient factors considered to be conflict motivator in the resource endowed countries of the continent. In view of the contradictions about resource curse in the continent, the authors take an overview of the resources in the continent in other to situate the veracity of much debated resource curse in the continent. Also, the dynamics of resource conflict in the affected countries were examined to know the actors, their benefits and the implications. Based on the findings of the study, recommendations were made for natural resource conflict prevention and even for resolution when it could not be prevented before it degenerated to violent conflict and even war is some cases. The study therefore concludes that the resource curse in the continent is not directly resource triggered, rather a product of leadership failure.

KEYWORDS: Resource course, Niger Delta, Marikana, Natural resources and Africa.

I. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The continent of Africa is endowed with numerous natural resources in such that it acts as the sub-structure upon which the world's economy is presently resting. The irony of natural resource endowment of the continent is the environmental degradation as a result of exploration has hamper the agricultural occupation of the resource bearing communities, and conflict of resource revenue sharing among the benefactors has made Africa the focus of international attention in the resent period. Of similar view is the former Secretary General of the United Nations (UN), Kofi Annan when he submits that "environmental degeneration in forms such as desertification, resource depletion and demographic pressure exacerbates tensions and instability" (United Nations Expert Group Meeting Conference Report, 2006:7). Natural resources in Africa have been playing a key role in the conflicts that have overwhelmed a number of countries in the continent in the last decade. Hence, this development have become obstacle to peace in all ramifications as the leadership in the continent are greedy with revenue from resource exploration in one hand, the resource producing communities are agitating for a fair share of the revenue from the extracted natural resource in their communities on the other hand in other to enjoy good and affordable standard of living. In an argument by Gordon Brown a former British Chancellor after assessing the natural resource crisis in Africa, he submits that "I would like to see the oil producing states, the countries that have done well out of the rise in oil prices, being willing to make a contribution ... to debt relief and international aid" (2005). In the context of this paper, our submission of natural resource is not limited to oil, but applicable to other natural resources in Africa.

Natural resources have been revealed to play a key role in the conflicts that have plagued a number of African countries over the last decade, as a factor that motivates and fuels armed violent conflicts. Corroborating this is the submission in the United Nation's Expert Group Meeting that, the revenue from the exploration of natural resources are not only used for sustaining armies but also for personal enrichment and building political support (United Nations Expert Group Meeting Conference Report, 2006:7). It is further stated in the report that, even when conflict gives way to a fragile peace, control over natural resources and their revenues often stays in the hands of a small elite and is not used for broader development of the country (United Nations Expert Group Meeting Conference Report, 2006:7). This submission capture the dimension of resource agitation in the Niger Delta, while that of the resent Marikana conflict was a product of workers agitation for good condition of service, which bordered on increment in workers monthly wages. Therefore, natural resources have played a major role in positioning much of African societies in terms of interaction in political and economic resource allocation.

In Africa natural resource have provided a parallel financial resource for fuelling crisis and conflicts, hence natural resources have become a major and dominant variable propelling violent conflicts that mostly snowballed into war when not properly managed. For the purpose of contextualizing the thesis of this study, it is important to understand the dynamics of resource conflict in the continent, the ambivalent significance of natural resources, their management and distribution, and their effort on welfare delivery and social reactions. This paper is divided into five parts. The first part focuses on theoretical overview of both conflicts. The second section dwells on overview of resources in Africa. The third part is on comparative study of resource conflict in Nigeria and South Africa, while the fourth part examines resource and dynamics of crisis in Nigeria and South Africa, and section five focuses on natural resource conflict prevention and resolution. The paper ends with recommendation and conclusion.

Theoretical Frameworks

It has become an academic exercise to anchor research of this nature with framework upon which to build its explanation, consequence on this, we shall be exploring resource curse theory and grievance mechanism for the explanation of this work. Before then, it will be of significance to theoretically situate the ownership of the resources in both countries, considering the importance of natural resource to peaceful co-existence of the people in both countries. The appropriate theory for this is the National Ownership Theory.

This theory is applicable to most of the natural resource endowed developing countries currently. The theory advocates the vesting of complete and total ownership of natural resources in the government of the state. It is an effectiveness theory in terms of attracting foreign direct investment to such countries. According to (Iwere, 2013) countries which are largely dependent on their resources (mineral, and hydrocarbons) have created legislations which devolve ownership of these resources from the hands of citizens in whose lands they are found and place them in the care of the government. He further explains that the rationale behind this is basically to secure and ensure that sure resources are used in a sustainable which is beneficial not only to those in whose lands the resources are found, but also their future generation at large.

Countries such as Nigeria, South Africa, Bolivia, Venezuela and China are examples of countries that are utilizing the National Ownership Theory for their natural resources. The 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, which replaced the 1979 constitution, in section 44(3); the equivalent of section 40 (3) of the 1979 constitution, provides that "Notwithstanding the foregoing provision of this section, the entire property in the control of all mineral oil and natural gas in, under or upon any land in Nigeria, under or upon the territorial waters and the exclusive economic zones of Nigeria shall be vested in the government of the federation and shall be managed in such manner as may be prescribed by the national assembly". Also in the same vein, the Nigeria petroleum Act of 1972 provides for the control of petroleum within, upon or underlying all lands in Nigeria and the subsoil of Nigeria's territorial waters and her continental shelf by the federal government. The act makes the federal government the sole, absolute and /or exclusive owner of all petroleum extracted in Nigeria as well as its proceeds, although the proceeds exempts a 13% requirement by section 162(2) of the 1999 constitution, which is granted to the producing state from which the minerals are extracted (Nigeria Constitution, 1999).

In South African mineral law has always been based on the Roman and Roman-Dutch law premise that the landowner is also the owner of the minerals embedded in and under the soil of the land he owned (Trojan Exploration Co v Rustenburg Platinum Mines Ltd, 1996, (4), SA 499 (A), p. 537C quoted by Schyff, 2012: 132). The underlying basis for this premise differed through the ages with the early Romans regarding minerals as the fruits of the land (Schyff, 2012: 132). While the South African mineral law (South Africa Mineral Law, 2002) provides that "Mineral resources are the common heritage of all the peoples of South Africa and the State is the custodian thereof for the benefit of all South Africans". This therefore reflects that control of the minerals is solely in the hands of the government. This was due to the fact that access to the country's mineral treasures in the pre-1994 South Africa was intrinsically bound to ownership of land, therefore mining right was a product of unequal distribution of wealth. In an effort to bring about equitable reform, the Mineral and Petroleum Resources Development Act, 28 of 2002 [MPRDA] was promulgated, (Schyff, 2012: 132). However, with all promulgations on mineral and petroleum resources development as the common heritage of all the people of South Africa, the people of Royal Bafokeng Nation holds exception to this law because they have legal ownership and control of mining industries in their community but only pays royalty to the central government.

Grievance Mechanism:

The assumption of this mechanism is that natural resource conflict could be associated with grievances rather than greed. According to Humphreys (2005: 511), there are at least four variants of this mechanism- first is that countries with middling levels of dependence on natural resources may be experiencing transitory inequality as part of the development process. Second, economies that are dependent on natural resources may be vulnerable to terms of trade shock. Third, the process of extraction may produce grievances. The last is that natural resource wealth may be seen as more unjustly distributed than other wealth. The third grievance mechanism process of extraction can best explain the Marikana crisis in that, lack of good welfare package and condition of service was the remote reason for violent conflict that claimed 47 lives and left several others mine workers wounded. The complaints over poor condition of service have been on for a period of time without it receiving a meaningful attention, and these have in turn gave room to accumulated grievances which later busted into confrontation when the mine workers could not contain the poor condition any longer.

Resource Curse

The resource curse theory is of the view that nations which have rich, yet limited, natural resources may fail to develop in other sectors, ultimately bringing about financial problems, because of their concentration on only one commodity. Most of the African nations with numerous natural resources serve as excellent example of the proposition of resource curse thesis. The concept of resource curse began to emerge in the 1980s when the idea that natural resources might be more of economic curse than blessing. The thesis was first articulated and used by Richard Anty in (1994) to describe how countries are rich in natural resources were unable to use their wealth to boost their economy and how, counter-intuitively, these countries have lower economic growth than countries without an abundance of natural resources (Jerry, 2003). Studies by Jeffrey Sachs and Andrew Warner, (1995, 1997 & 1999) have empirically demonstrated that countries which were heavily reliant on natural resources achieved worse growth than their counterparts that have diverse source of revenue.

The discussion of natural resource curse thesis focus on the paradox of plenty in that countries, regions and continent with abundance of natural resources such as mineral and fuels, tend to have less economic growth and worse development outcomes than countries with fewer natural resources or mono economy as means of generating revenue. This idea is only hypothesis and not a law which is stone or iron casted and permanent. Hence its relevance in the countries of Africa is as a result of bad leadership and as soon as the continent surmount the challenge of leadership there is likelihood of the thesis not applicable in the continent. In a similar vein, Sachs and Warner (2001:833) submit that a complete answer to what is behind the curse of natural resources therefore awaits a better answer to the question about what ultimately drives growth. The resource curse thesis practically demonstrates the situation of the resource bearing community and natural resource revenue in Nigeria Niger Delta while the situation of South Africa miner that resulted in Marikana conflict is situated within grievances mechanism.

An Overview of Natural Resources in Africa

The continent of Africa is grouped into Northern, Southern, Western and Eastern regions respectively, and all the regions are endowed with numerous natural resources that are capable of generating huge amount of revenue for each of the countries in the continent, and therefore make life comfortable for the people in the continent if well managed. There are approximately 58 countries in Africa in which only two (Nigeria and South Africa) can be referred to as 'regional/continent superpowers' based on their Gross Domestic Product (GDP). According to Custers & Matthysen (2009:12), South Africa is ranked 28 and Nigeria is 41 on the list of Africa GDP. Angola and Egypt, from the North-Africa Zone, are ranked 49 and 52 respectively. They further submit that an objective handicap for the development of many African countries is that 48% of the African population lives in landlocked countries, which is against 23% in East and Central Asia (Africa bio-resource, 2012).

Africa has a large quality and quantity of natural resources that include crude oil, gold, diamond, copper, uranium, iron, silver, cocoa, and coffee, among others. Much of the natural resources in the continent are not discovered, hence they are not yet harnessed. The irony of the harnessed resources is that it has put the continent under serious pressures and tensions which has for decades causing violent conflicts, wars, displacement, environmental degradation and slow pace of development in the continent. With the foreign domination of the exploration of Africa natural resources, it seems the Western countries still controls the economy of the continent by being production and market determinant. Therefore, Africa's development depends to a large extent on the rest of the world which is today defining the opportunities and limits of development in the continent. Despite the abundance of natural resources, claims suggest that many Western

Nations like the United States of America, United Kingdom, Canada, China, and France are exploiting Africa's natural resources currently, causing most of the value money from the natural resources to go to the West rather than Africa, which is further causing poverty in Africa (Africa bio-resource, 2012).

Africa is rich in natural resources, but the extent varies from region to region and country to country, there is no region or nation in the continent that does not have resources that can meet its needs if properly managed by focused leaders. For the purpose of this study, natural resources in Africa will be categorized into the following: land and agricultural products, water and water resources, oil, solid minerals, animal-husbandry, and energy resources.

- (i) Land and agricultural products: This is the most undoubtedly important natural resource in Africa because of its interconnectivity with other resources. Every society in Africa sees land as a natural resource that is held in trust for future generation, and it is also abode of most other natural resources (Conference Report, 2006: 13). The richness and topography of the land in Africa makes agriculture the dominant preoccupation in the continent, the agricultural products in the continent are for both local consumption and export for foreign earnings. Yam, maize, beans cassava, cocoyam, potato among others are crops for subsistence farming, while orange, cocoa, coffee, rubber, timber are arable crops for agricultural farming. Many of these agricultural commodities are exported to the United States of America and European countries on one hand; the multinational corporations which are majorly from the Western world are based in most of African countries to maximize opportunities created by the availability of these commodities for their benefits.
- (ii) Water and water resources: Africa is endowed with very rich rivers and lakes holding one of the largest areas of wetlands in the world. The waters have served several purposes, which include fish farming, irrigation for subsistence farming and hydro-electric power generation for some countries. Water is essential commodity required by any living being for continuous existence and growth.
- (iii) Oil and gas: The two primary sources of fuel are oil (petroleum) – a flammable liquid that can be refined into gasoline – and natural gas used for fuel and lighting (United States Institute of Peace, 2007:5). Oil as a natural resource and its management has focused the international attention to Africa. The continent has a significant amount of oil and gas reserve both discovered and yet to be discovered, the seventh largest petroleum producer country in the world and the largest producer in the continent is Nigeria, this is followed by Angola. Oil in Africa has been more of curse than blessing to the continent because the only evidence of its abundance is the violent conflicts and even wars that are always fought in countries that are endowed with natural resources in the continent; hence, this is associated with greed and grievances from the government and governed respectively.
- (iv) Solid minerals: There are many minerals deposited in the continent, both exploited and yet to be exploited. The quantity of these minerals varies from county to country in the continent. Among the solid minerals in Africa are gold, diamond, silver, uranium, lead, copper, and many others. Many of these minerals when exploited are exported to Western countries for further processing on one hand, and on the other hand multinational corporations from the same Western world are based in their choice countries for exploitation and processing of solid minerals, depending on the mineral that interest them for better profit.
- (v) Animal husbandry: This is an aspect of agricultural farming that involves trading in livestock. Livestock trading is mostly practice in the northern parts of the countries in West Africa, but it is predominant in East and South African countries where it serves as a major occupation.
- (vi) Energy resources: East Africa is endowed with verities of energy resources requisite for sustainable development, and they are widely distributed throughout the region- hydro, wind, biomass, solar, geothermal, peat and fossil fuels (http://energypedia.info/wiki/East_Africa). In spite of these numerous potentials, the energy sector in the region remains largely undeveloped and is characterized by extremely low level of modern energy access, low per capita consumption and heavy reliance on biomass energy, which account for over 90% of total energy consumption across the region. Despite the abundant energy resources in the region, access to electricity in the rural communities is less than 1%, this also accounts for the resource curse in the region.

As the continent is blessed with abundant of natural and mineral resources on one hand, the continent is facing severe water problem on the other hand. This manifests in the high demand for water, related to population growth and economic development, which generates an increasingly strong pressure on the resource of the continent where water plays an essential role in animal husbandry, food production, industry development, provision of social infrastructure and portable water. In Africa, economic factor addresses the diversity of demands that are made of natural resources by different sectors of the society according to their

major needs. All the countries in Africa are endowed with wealth of natural resources and industrial capacities. This implies that the natural resource base remains the most significant source of wealth for the people and countries in the continent. Hence, the government of Africa looks to these resources as the capital upon which the development process depends, also the private sector seeks to exploit the same natural resource base to create wealth and make profits. Yet the same resources comprise the homes and the basis of livelihoods for the vast majority of the rural people in Africa (Odhiambo, 1996:13).

Comparative Study of Resources in Nigeria and South Africa

To engage in a comparative study of resource in both Nigeria and South Africa, it has become necessary to begin the comparison of resource in Nigeria and South Africa from ownership, management and control of the resources. The two countries are majorly exploring non-renewable natural resources. The non-renewable natural resources are mineral substance that is obtained through mining and drilling- this implies that they are produced through the activities of extractive industries, and they are vital important minerals that are supplementary used for production of essential appliances and also for further creation and maintenance of new technologies. It has severally show in the continent with the various resource conflicts that countries that solely depend on a particular natural resources for economic sustenance are prone to violent conflicts than those exploiting more than one resource for its economic development.

Nigeria is a mixed economy country and endowed with many natural resources among which are, crude oil, gold, iron-ore, marble, coal limestone, zinc lead, arable land among others. The irony is that the federal government has the ownership right and control over the natural resources in the country regardless of where they are deposited. This is in contradiction with the submission that, ownership of resources has been given international recognition in a vast set of international regimes from the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) Resolution 1803 of 1962 to the Rio Declaration on environment and development of 1992 (Brief summary of UN Resolution). UNGA 1803 of 1962 in Article 1 provides that “the right of the peoples and nations to the permanent sovereignty over their natural wealth and resources must be exercised in the interest of their national development and of the well-being of the people of the state concerned (Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, 1982). This is United Nation’s article which Nigerian government never considered to; consequently it is not binding on it for its operations in the natural resource industries.

South Africa is well known throughout the world for its diamonds, coal and platinum industries, but beside the listed minerals, the country mines a number of other minerals. In addition to these the country has a range of mineral resources that are not well known, such as timber, sugar, maize and other agricultural products. The national government of South Africa has the ownership of all the natural resources as promulgated in the country’s constitution as submitted earlier in this work. South Africa has a mixed economy and by the United Nations taxonomy is a middle-income country with an ample supply of resources, with developed financial institutions, reliable legal arm of government, good communication system, energy, and transport sectors and the stock exchange ranks in the top twenty globally. Corroborating this is the submission in the South Africa Economic Profile of (2012) that south Africa is a middle-income, emerging market with an abundant supply of natural resources; well-developed financial, legal, communications, energy, and transport sectors; a stock exchange that is the 18th largest in the world; and modern infrastructure supporting a relatively efficient distribution of goods to major urban centers throughout the region.

Resource and the dynamics of the Crisis in Nigeria and South Africa

A close look at the resource conflicts in Africa shows that, natural resources in Africa has been more of curse than blessing to the continent, considering the monumental waste in terms of human lives, displacement of the human population of resource producing community, environmental degradation, unabated violent conflicts over natural resource revenue sharing among others. In view of this, we shall examine the dynamics of resource conflict on Nigeria and South Africa, knowing that petroleum and mining are the bedrock of the two countries economy, and yet the abject poverty and squalor surrounding these commodities remain a matter of deep concern that deserves urgent attention.

The Niger Delta Crisis in Nigeria

Lack of policy framework by government from the beginning of resource exploration, and the influx of all the powerful multinationals companies, the lobbyist tendencies of these corporations coupled with Nigeria factor of lawlessness by both government officials and community leaders laid a strong foundation for the entire crisis emanating from resources today.

The Niger Delta is a diverse region of 70,000 square kilometers (Tamuno 1999:51) with over 20 different ethnic groups which practice fishing, hunting, trading, farming and salt-making are the traditional occupations before the discovery of oil in commercial quantity in the region in the early 1960s. With the exploration of oil spilling and gas flaring constitute the most serious forms of environmental degradation in the Niger Delta, because they pose a serious threat to the livelihoods of the communities (2007: 12). According to (Gbadegesin 1998 cited in *ibid*), Oil spills usually inflict human, environmental, and socio-economic hardships on the affected communities with long-term or permanent damage to fish farms, farmlands, soil, and water. As a result of the deprivation from use of land for agricultural activities and revenue from oil explorations, the people in the oil bearing communities began to agitate for resource control in order to have access to revenue from the natural resource in their area.

The Niger Delta violent conflict started after the declaration of Niger Delta republic in 1966 by Jasper Isaac Adaka Boro, an Ijaw nationalist who led an armed campaign for greater Niger Delta autonomy, resource control and self-determination for the inhabitant of the region. While justifying his action, Boro argues that “most of the youths were so frustrated with the general neglect that they were ready for any action led by an outstanding leader to gain liberty... we were clenched in tyrannical chains and led through a dark alley of perpetual political and social deprivation” (Nairaland Forum, 2012:1). This conviction led him with the assistance of Samuel Owonaru and comrade Nottingham Private to recruiting of young men to their cause under the umbrella of Niger Delta Volunteer Force (NDVF) which eventually led to establishment of a military camp at Taylor Creek. Their recruits numbering 150 men were given training in the use of firearms and explosives in the creeks and bushes (Nairaland Forum, 2012:2). In a related view, Sampson (2009: 31), argues that the militancy in the Niger Delta is not a new phenomenon, “as early as 1966, Isaac Jasper Adaka Boro, a former police officer from the Delta, led a rebellion against the Nigerian state with the aim of achieving liberation for the Niger Delta people.

On 23 February 1966, NDVF under the leadership of Boro, Onwonaru and Privates attacked a police station in Yenagoa, raided the armoury and kidnapped some officers in the police station; they blew pipelines, engaged the police in a gunfight and announced the independent of Niger Delta republic, but in a swift response their action was suppressed by the federal troop, Boro was arrested and subsequently put on trial on a 9 count charge of treason by the federal government. The deed had been done by instilling into the mind of Niger Delta people the consciousness that the region was being marginalized, oppressed, victimized, and deprived of the control of their natural resources, before the suppression of NDVF. Hence, this arise the need for their struggle and agitation for self-determination.

The Niger Delta crisis was internationalized by Ken Saro-Wiwa through his publicities and the issue of the murder of Ogoni four that led to the hanging of Ogoni nine and execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa in October 1995. Saro-Wiwa not only succeeded in directing the attention of the international community to the plight of the people in the Niger Delta but also – through his advocacy – paved the way for robust international / civil society engagement with the issues at the core of the crisis in the region (Ojakorotu, 2009:3). He argues further that his submitted fact has been illustrated by the intervention of organizations such as Amnesty International, Green Peace Movement, Rainforest Action Group, the Commonwealth of Nations and the United Nations interventions in the Niger Delta crisis.

The 1998 Kaiama Declaration after the resolution of a meeting of the Ijaw Youths Conference (IYC) held in Kaiama, Bayelsa State, the resolution order all the oil producing companies to vacate the region latest December 1998. This was an attempt by the Ijaw Youth Council (IYC) to reassert their rights over their land and resources. The Kaiama Declaration was sign by several thousands of Ijaw youths and marked the starting point of every radical demands and subsequent military operations against youth protests that followed (Ibaba and Ikelegbe, 2010: 226)

The involvement of Movement for Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND), added a new dimension which include, illegal bunkering, cultism, militancy, sea piracy, hijacking of vessels, hostage taking and kidnapping. The crisis assumed dimension of kidnapping in 2006 in which over 300 foreign oil workers have been recorded kidnapped in a venture which began in January 2006. In a similar view, Ojakorotu (2009:3) remarks that “the crisis has taken a new turn with increasing criminalization of the conflict, leading to questions as to why the problem is seemingly spiraling out of control”. The crisis has created a weird booming business of hostage taking for money and storming of banks (Dike, 2001:3), in a related submission, Isele (22 Feb 2006), submits that “hostage taking has become a lucrative business providing a means of spending money without proper accountability”.

This can as well be summarized thus: between 1950 and 1965 there was civil agitation for special development attention; militant insurgence of Adaka Boro in 23 February to 6 March 1966. In 1970 to 1982 there were agitations by the oil-bearing communities against transnational corporations, in another related development; in 1983 to 1990 the agitations of oil-bearing communities degenerated to violent conflict over non-payment of adequate compensation for damages and for development projects. After the violent conflict, in 1990 through 1996 there were peaceful demonstrations, but when the demonstrations were not yielding the expected results there were formation of ethnic militants between 1997 and 2009 that engaged both the government and the oil corporation in violent confrontations. The entire violent agitation in the region was necessitated by the spate of injustice in the Niger Delta by the Nigerian government on one hand and by the oil multinationals on the other hand, which bordered good condition of living by the oil producing communities.

The Marikana Crisis in South Africa

Over the years there have been agitations by the mine workers for improve living and working conditions. In view of this Furter, (2012) submits, “root causes of the Lonmin Marikana mine strike massacre, as in all fatal incidents, lie much deeper and wider than fixing blame on the few people who pulled triggers or pushed the wrong buttons”. The August massacre actually had its remote cause from the crisis that led to the establishment of Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union (AMCU), AMCU was conceived in bitterness and born in dissension by Joseph Mathunjwawho was the chairman of the NUM branch at the Douglas Colliery in Mpumalanga before his dismissal which led to a two week wildcat strike that was resolved only when he was reappointed in 1999 (Steward, 2012). AMCU had its first conflict with Lonmin was at the company’s Karee mine in May 2011 over an internal disagreement which resulted in a wildcat strike that led to the death of three people and stop of production at the mine for almost a month. After the mine workers resumption at work, most of them immediately resign their membership from NUM and join AMCU.

In late January to February 2012, there was tensions between the traditional miners’ union, the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) and the younger AMCU over strikes and call for pay rises at the Impala platinum mine in Rustenburg in which AMCU was accused of using violent tactics and of trying to impede negotiations to further its own membership drive by unions such as NUM which has been losing support (Steward, 2012). On the other hand Paulin (2012) submits that NUM has also been accused of having too close a relationship to both South Africa’s ruling African National Congress party (ANC) and Lonmin. Meanwhile, NUM is the largest union in the Congress of South Africa Trade Unions (COSATU) which is allied to the ANC. Paulin further submits that the August massacre began when the Marikana miners walked away from their posts in defiance of their employers, their unions and law. They demanded better treatment as a result of dangerous conditions in mines, miners’ insufficient wages, rising inequality, and the failure of both unions and political leaders to speak up for the working poor hence they are fed up with their poor treatment.

The AMCU disagreement and subsequently challenged NUM’s dominating position at Marikana led directly to the confrontations of August 2012. Sacks (2012) put this in perspective when he submits that on Wednesday, the 8th of August, some rock-drill operators (RDOs) from various Lonmin mines had a mass meeting demanding a significant salary increase. He further asserts that the NUM leaders present at the meeting categorically refused to support the strike despite the union’s stated mission to promote and represent the interests of its members. Sacks explains further that, “on the morning of Friday the 10th, workers assembled and marched to the office of Lonmin management, but the management refused to speak to the workers who were assembled peacefully, and told them to go back to the NUM leadership”. Also, he submits that upon mines meeting the NUM, they were reprimanded and told them that they will not get anything without going through their union (NUM).

At about 7am on Saturday August 11, 2012, workers primarily RDOs went to the main offices of NUM in Wonderkop and present a memorandum to their union leaders. The memorandum demanded NUM to represent them in their agitation for a 12,500 Rand minimum wage for all mines, but when the striking workers were about 100-150 meters away from the NUM office, around Wonderkop taxi rank, approximately 15-20 NUM ‘top five’ leaders and other shop-stewards came out of the office and began shooting at the protesting strikers and in the process two of the striking mine workers lost their lives (Sacks, 2012). The protest was peaceful until NUM leaders in Wonderkop allegedly killed two of their members, but in a swift reaction to this, the striking miners went home to fetch ‘muthi’ their traditional weapons in self-defence. Sacks further observes that from Sunday 12th August until Tuesday the 16th of August the death continue to increase until it got to climax which draws the world attention on 16th of August 2012 when the number of dead which include striking workers, policemen and Lonmin securities was put at 47 with over 78 additional workers wounded (BBC News, October 5th 2012).

However, Marikana massacre was likened to the 1960 Sharpeville massacre in which 69 anti-apartheid protesters were killed by police, and also a long line of violent labour disputes in the mining sector across the globe, such as Ludlow, Colorado, where in 1914 miners when on strike for nearly identical reasons as the Marikana miners. He further elucidates that 19 women and children encamped with the striking miners were burned to death in their tent by the Colorado National Guard, and in Serene, Colorado, 6 strikers were gunned down at the Columbine mine by the Colorado National Guard in 1927, also in Hazelton, Pennsylvania, the police killed 19 strikers marching in support of their newly formed union at the Lattimer mine in 1927. Paulin reference is similar to the agitation of Marikana mine workers that lead to death of 47 miners and at least 78 additional injured on 16th of August 2012 (Paulin, 2012; Richard, 2012; Monde and Natsha, 2012).

Natural Resource Conflict Prevention and Resolution

Conflict is an unavoidable phenomenon in any human society that strives for development, because development itself is a process that is conflict oriented. Hence, development is always confronted with challenges which mostly results into conflict because of human nature that naturally restricts change.

A key element of conflict prevention is to ensure that the wealth generated through resource extraction is utilized to improve living conditions of workers on one hand and the natural resource communities in the affected countries on the other hand. This necessitates transparent and equitable distribution of revenues from the resource sector (Stiftung, 2012:3). Despite the afflictions highlighted by the violence surrounding competition for natural resources in Africa, all hope is not lost for its prevention and resolution in a continent that was peacefully co-existing before the Western invasion and subsequent exploration of its natural resources. The first step is the establishment of agreements, and efforts at cooperation, co-management, and conservation of the natural resources. This implies that all the stakeholders – government, resource bearing community, natural resource workers and multinational corporations have to be in agreement over the terms of their interactions in natural resource exploration such that they will all benefit in a way that will guard against preventable natural resource conflict. In an attempt to do this, the workers and the resource bearing communities are to be adequately represented in all decision-making process that affects their lives.

Secondly, there is need to ensure that the wealth generated through natural resource extraction is utilized to improve the living conditions for communities that are endowed with the resources in the affected countries. This can include the following but not limited to provision of portable water, good road, electricity, hospital among others. If these are provided for the natural resource endowed communities it will prevent undue tension, frustration, agitation/ aggressions, which will make the communities' view the resources from natural resource sector as transparently and equitably distributed among stakeholders.

Third is the need for democratic peace building institution. It has now become evidence that countries endowed with natural resources in Africa are more prone to violent conflicts that have potential of degenerating to war if not properly managed like the case of Angola, Liberia, Sierra Leone and others. The purpose of this institution is to investigate issues that normally propel conflict in natural resource countries in the affected countries; formulate policies on how to resolve and prevent such from future occurrence; and recommend practicable policies for revenue sharing formula that will be embraced and acceptable by the stakeholders. The institute is to actively investigate the appalling conditions under which the resource workers work; under which communities near site of resource exploration live; and strive to reduce the number of slum areas in line with Millennium Development Goal (Bench Mark Foundation, 2012:2).

Fourth is the need for transparency and accountability. The leadership failure in the continent has made resource utilization and management the most contentious issues in the natural resource bearing countries in the continent, because of the issues like national question, functionality of the institutions of government, leadership greed, conflict and violent between and among resource bearing communities and adherent to principles of democracy which will guarantee its sustainability.

Fifth is the diversification of the economy in a way that the affected countries will stop relying on only one source of revenue for the economic development of their various countries. The revenue generated from the natural resources are to be re-invest in other sectors, such as agriculture, education, manufacturing industries that can use local resources for its production and sustainability. Hence, this will create more employment, reduce unnecessary tension and conflict on natural resources and its revenue, encourage peaceful co-existence among the natural resource stakeholders, and stable government.

II. CONCLUSION

It has been established that Africa is endowed with divers natural resources, and that the resources in the continent are more of curse than blessing, as a result of the unabated resource violent conflict leading to loss of millions of lives, destruction of property worth billions of dollars, displacement of people and the emergence of refugee camps in the continent instead of enjoying the endowed resources. The leadership failure, greed, grievances, growing demand for natural resource benefit and the increasing complexity of resource conflicts in the continent has made its management and resolution more challenging. The study therefore submits that if the recommendations for resource conflict could be adopted for resource conflict ridden countries in the continent, there will be hope for peaceful co-existence of the countries in the continent again.

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