Dynamics of Resource Mobilization, Utilization, Conflicts and Management

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Abstract: *Previous literature has explored the link between natural resource mobilization, utilization, conflicts and management. Scholars have however, rarely reached a univocal agreement and a common theoretical understanding on this interrelation. In this thematic paper, we reconsider the connections between natural resources, mobilization, utilization, management and conflict. This paper provides a systematic analysis of sources of conflicts over natural resources and management strategies that should be incorporated in resource mobilization in order to mitigate global resource conflicts.*
Key words: *Resource, Resource mobilization; Resource management, Utilization, Conflicts.*

I.   Introduction

According to Wallensteen and Margareta (2001) an armed conflict is defined as a contested incompatibility which affects the government and or territory where there is use of armed force between two parties of which one is the government and this results into 25 battle-related deaths per incompatibility. This definition is widely used even though it does not take cognizance of other effects of armed conflicts other than death such as the destruction of natural resources amongst others.

There is a complex relationship between natural resources and violent conflicts. Countries with revenue producing natural resources have more problems and less economic growth than those that do not have (United States Institute of Peace, 2007). Research has shown that wars are lasting much longer than before the 1980s because it is now easier to fund and sustain them (Collier, 2003 and Ross, 2004). In most cases, disagreements over sharing resources often aggravate the already existing differences based on ethnicity, religion, political ideology, culture and geographic differences in as far as natural resource availability is concerned (Wilson and Tisdell, 2003). These conflicts have been worsened by terrorist attacks. The following work builds on the work of Humphreys (2005) on the sources of conflicts and thereafter examines how different resources can lead to conflicts.

Sources of Conflicts
According to Humphreys (2005), the following are the main sources of conflicts:

The greedy rebels' mechanism has three variants. The first is that different criminal groups plunder resources independent of the state. The second variant argues that the presence of natural resources increases the need for capturing the state as in the case of Chad where there is oil. Finally, the third variant argues that if resources are concentrated in a certain state or province, then dissenting groups will push for secession as in the case of Biafra in Nigeria, Katanga in Congo, Casamance in Senegal, Cabinda in Angola and Bougainville in Papua New Guinea amongst others.

The greedy outsiders' mechanism examines other actors who may be states or corporations that are engaged in fostering conflict. For example, the secessionist proposition of Katanga in Congo is believed to have been instigated by a Belgian Firm Union Miniere du Haunt Katanga

The grievance mechanism posits that conflicts could be associated with grievances rather than greed. However, there are four variants to this strand of thought. Firstly, countries highly dependent on natural resources may be experiencing inequalities in development based on the location of the resources. Secondly, countries overly dependent on primary commodities are susceptible to trade shocks. Thirdly, extraction of natural resources may lead to grievances such as forced migration. Finally, the natural resource wealth may be distributed in a skewed manner more often to the disadvantage of the locals. For example the extraction of uranium in Niger and oil in Chad.

The feasibility mechanism contends that natural resources could be used to support rebellions that have been started for other reasons. This can be achieved through controlling the production process or the sales.

The weak states mechanism has two variants. One claims that when citizens are not taxed by the government, they do not have the ability to call their governments to accountability and the government does not feel compelled to meet the demands of the citizens. This assertion has also been reiterated by David and Gagne (2007). The second argument is that governments that rely heavily on natural resources rather than taxation have weak structures because they don't have to aggressively raise revenue. This is the case mostly for oil producing states.

The sparse networks mechanism argues that natural resource dependent countries tend to have weak manufacturing sectors thereby weakening internal trade and increasing the possibility of having a conflict.

Types of Conflicts in relation to the resources
According to the World Bank Glossary, natural resources are "materials that occur in nature and are essential or useful to humans such as water, air, land, forests, fish and wildlife; topsoil and minerals". Tensions, conflicts and disputes arise from various natural resources such as oil, gas, minerals, exploitation of water and marine resources and logging of forests amongst others (Wilson and Tisdell, 2003). Some conflicts occur within countries while others are trans boundary in nature.

Drinkable Water
Water is life and is used for different purposes such as cooking, washing, agriculture and industry amongst others. According to the United Nations (2013), about 780 million people have no access to clean drinking water whereas another 2.5 million people have no access to proper sanitation. About six to eight million people die annually from water-borne diseases (Ibid). Indeed, there is a water- stress globally that will get worse as populations continue to grow. Water scarcity has therefore contributed to major conflicts in the world. They include: inter-ethnic clashes over water and pasture between the Somali and Samburu in Oldonyiro and Isiolo Central Division (IRIN, 2014) and between Pokomo and Orma in Tana Delta amongst others (Onyango, 2012). Other countries where there have been water conflicts include: Ethiopia (2006), India (2004), Yemen (1999), China (Shandong and Guangdong Provinces 2000) (Gleick, 2006 as in United States Institute of Peace, 2007).

Bodies of Water
Bodies of water include oceans, seas, lakes and rivers. These bodies are important for transportation, trade, tourism and fisheries amongst others. Countries tend to have conflicts in cases where the water body is a source of income for their livelihoods. For example there have been tension between Kenya and Uganda over Migingo Island which falls under Kenya but Uganda disputes this. This is because the island has plenty of fish stocks. Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, Sudan and South Sudan have recently been calling for the revocation of the 1959 Treaty organized by the United Kingdom that gave Egypt and to a lesser extent Sudan historical rights to the river Nile's resources (Onyango, 2012). There is also a territorial dispute over 200 islands, shoals, atolls and reefs in the South China Sea which are claimed in whole or in part by six different countries i.e. Vietnam, Brunei, Malaysia, China, Taiwan and the Philippines (Magno, 1997 as in Wilson and Tisdell, 2003).

Land
Land is an important resource upon which other developments can be done. Land can be used for industrial, agricultural purposes, tourism and trade amongst others. Land is also a key commodity because it gives one access to oil, minerals, water and timber amongst others. In addition, communities tend to have strong attachments to land and therefore when provoked can easily fight for their land. For example in Kenya, we have had land clashes which mostly occur during elections as was the case during the 1992,1997 and worst of all 2007 elections where there was ethnic cleansing especially in some parts of Rift valley. More recently, the Lamu killings have also been associated with land. Other countries that have had conflicts revolving around land include: Kosovo, Rwanda, Tajikistan, East Timor and China amongst others (United States Institute of Peace, 2007).

Timber
Some of the world's top most timber producing countries include: United States of America, India, China, Brazil, Canada, Russia, Democratic Republic of Congo and Nigeria amongst others. Timber is a useful natural resource that is important for construction, paper production and other forms of development. Forests

cover 31 percent of the total land area (FAO Forest Resources Assessment, 2010). Due to population growth and industrialization, lots of forests have been cleared to create room for habitation and agriculture. Conflicts over timber have been experienced in Democratic Republic of Congo, Cambodia, Liberia and Burma amongst others.

Oil and Gas

Oil (petroleum) can be refined to gasoline which is the gas used for fuel and lighting. Fuel scarcity is one of the greatest challenges facing both the developed and developing countries today. This has led some countries to look for alternative sources of energy e.g. solar, wind, nuclear and electrical energy. Many oil producing countries have had conflicts over a long period of time. They include: Nigeria, Iraq, Iran, Sudan and Venezuela. These conflicts have had an impact on the global economy because the prices of commodities are dependent on the price of oil. Oil pipelines cutting through borders can also cause tension e.g. between East Timor and Indonesia over oil and gas in the Timor Sea (United States Institute of Peace, 2007).

Minerals

Minerals are naturally occurring substances on the ground. They include gold in Indonesia, amber in Russia, and diamonds in West Africa. Unfortunately, minerals have been used to generate income for rebel groups and certain powerful governments and therefore have ended up being referred to as conflict minerals. For example, diamonds have been used by rebel groups in Sierra Leone and Angola. Other minerals that have led to conflicts include copper in Papua New Guinea and Coltan in Democratic Republic of Congo.

Management Strategies for Mitigation of Global Resource Conflicts

As the global population continues to increase, there is a growing need for renewable and non-renewable resources. There has also been the discovery of resources in areas of the globe that are conflict – prone. Due to environmental degradation and over exploitation of resources, many communities are experiencing the continued reduction in the availability of resources such as water, pasture and firewood. This increases the probability of conflict between various communities for the scarce resources. This has results in increased conflict between pastoral and sedentary communities or between pastoral communities. Such conflicts lead to the loss of resources crucial to the livelihoods of the communities involved. Due to these conflicts, resources such as livestock, crops, land and life are lost. As mentioned above, there has been an increase in the discovery of resources in conflict – prone areas. This is especially evident in the discovery and exploitation of crucial minerals and hydrocarbons in countries such as the Democratic Republic of Congo and Liberia. This has led to the coining of the term 'conflict minerals'. The sale and exchange of these minerals has been blamed for the continued fuelling of conflict. Scholars and other experts postulate that the funds procured are used to acquire weapons and other resources that prolong conflict.

As we focus on these types of conflict, it is imperative that strategies are developed and adopted to mitigate conflict. This brings to the fore the need for local as well as global solutions to the problems that are being experienced. In adopting these strategies, it is essential to cascade solutions that will provide contextualised and nuanced solutions that take in to account the fact that they directly affect the way of life of varying types of communities. As we grapple with the depletion of finite resources and growing strain on non – finite resources, there must be a clear understanding on the rationale behind the protection of these resources.

The Rationale for the Protection of Resources

Conflict has both positive and negative effects and therefore cannot be fully eliminated through resolution but it should be managed so that it does not lead to violence but it should be managed to achieve change (Brown, 1983).Natural resource conflicts arise when parties disagree about the management, distribution and protection of natural resources and related ecosystems. Their protection is premised on the fact that they are found in shared spaces. They are also found in shared social spaces with complex and unequal relations that are established among a wide range of actors. It is important that these resources are protected to mitigate against any instances of destruction (Homer – Dixon and Blitt, 1998). The importance of these resources to livelihoods makes it imperative to protect them in a sustainable manner. The protection of these resources is necessary for the sustainable utilisation and preservation of these resources. This ensures the creation of anunderstanding of the uniqueness and continued need for these resources. Also, these resources are key for the process of development – the right to live as the various communities' desire- and therefore their sustainable utilisation and preservation is of local and global significance. Natural resources are used by people in ways that are defined symbolically. They are a part of a particular way of life (Buckles and Rusnak, 2005).

Scholars who study conflict postulate that it has value for positive social change. It is an intense communication experience that is latent with transformative potential. Various stakeholders who are part of the process and seek sustainable solutions for arising conflict must consider certain factors. These factors are important in the process of identifying the most practical strategy for mitigating global resource- based conflicts.

Warner (2000) presents a table that depicts the manner in which he opines that the most practicable strategy can be achieved in dealing with a conflict.

- Whether 'doing nothing' is likely to result in the conflict resolving itself without violence, e.g. because some customary process of conflict management is effective, or because the parties loss or divert their interest.
- The time and resources available to those parties interested in co-ordinating the process of conflict management:
- The extent to which 'structural' conflicts are:
- Likely to magnify the immediate dispute; able to be resolved or managed.
- The power of the different parties, e.g. to force through their agenda, or to be manipulated during a process of mediation.
- The strength of feeling between the conflicting parties towards each other; and towards achieving their own goals.
- The importance of building or maintaining good relationships between the parties.
- The consequences if the conflict continues, such as its escalation towards violence.
- The effectiveness of the existing customary, institutional and legal approaches to conflict management.
- Those components within the existing customary, institutional or legal approaches that could be readily strengthened using one or more conflict management strategies (force, withdrawal, compromise, accommodation, etc.).
- Consensus-building approaches are to be used, the principal of the best alternative to a negotiated agreement (BATNA) – the fall back position if consensual negotiation is not effective.

Factors to Consider when Identifying the Most Practicable Strategy for the Process of Conflict Management (Warner, 2000)

Consideration of these factors is essential for the process of conflict management because they serve as an aid in selecting the most appropriate choice that will address a specific type of conflict. The factors in this table seek to address all the arising issues that could affect the process of conflict mitigation. The proactiveness of the process of identifying factors affecting the choice of a strategy to adopt is essential because it ensures that the most appropriate response to the arising conflict is picked from the array of mitigation choices.

Strategies for Conflict Management

One of the key strategies promoted for conflict management is consensus – building. It is viewed as an alternative to the inequalities inherent in the confrontational/adversarial forms of stakeholder negotiation. It seeks to build the capacity of the people to develop a dialogue directly or indirectly to find a way forward based on consensus which generates mutual gains for all parties with a minimum of compromise or trade off. Other descriptions of processes of negotiation based on the principle of mutual gain include: alternative dispute resolution, alternative conflict management and conflict transformation (Warner, 2000). The increasing threat of violence in many developing countries has led to the growing use of community – based consensus building and mediation processes to prevent disputes escalating into armed violence and to provide reconstruction of society in post - conflict situations (Ndelu 1998; OECD, 1998). This approach has a particular role to play in protecting and enhancing social and human capital within rural populations and between community groups and other external actors.

There is no perfect strategy for managing conflict. The adopted strategy needs to be the most practicable; given the available resources and the capabilities of the conflicting parties and local implementing agencies; issues of safety and security and the availability of conflict mitigation options. The use of the key strategies of conflict management will differ depending on the extent to which a conflicting party values the continuance of good relations with other parties and the importance each party places on achieving its own goals.

Chupp (1991) argues that although consensus building between multiple stakeholders can lead to mutually acceptable terms which are more sustainable, it may not be the most viable option. It may also not be effective on its own and will require support either concurrently or sequentially from one or more of the other strategies. What is required is the most feasible strategy or mix of strategies for managing a particular conflict situation. Customary forms of consensus - building have a long history in developing countries o especially in rural areas. They primarily target family, labour and civil disputes with environmental disputes the new growth area. These forms of consensus – building fail when development pressures generate or awaken conflicts which overwhelm the capabilities of these mechanisms to cope. The communities can then modify the customary approach   or develop completely new conflict management mechanisms.

The table below represents a summary of the key strategies for conflict management that can be adopted to mitigate resource conflicts.

1. Force: Conflict can be managed through force, where one party has the means and inclination to win regardless of whether the other party losses, and whether or not the process of winning causes damage to personal relationships. Not all parties will be able to use force – its use will largely depend upon the power that one party holds relative to another. Some of the more obvious uses of force in CBNRM include physical violence, threat of physical violence, exertion of economic dominance (including buying-out opponents), corruption of government officials and blackmail. In some cases recourse to the legal system is also a form of force in that one party can use their superior resources to 'buy' better advice or raise the stakes (for example, by taking a lost case to an appeal court). Some less obvious but often no less powerful forms of 'force' include adversarial (i.e. uncompromising) negotiation tactics, political expediency, manipulation of the electoral system, use of the media to rally public support, public protest, 'witch hunts', slander and the threat of withdrawal.

2. Withdrawal: This is an approach to conflict management suited to those parties whose desire to avoid confrontation outweighs the goals they are trying to achieve. The power (either positive or negative) of withdrawal should not be underestimated, not least since it can be used as a threat to force reluctant and sometimes more powerful parties to negotiate in a more consensual fashion. Types of withdrawal include withdrawal of funding; avoidance of volatile locations within a wider project area by NGOs; certain stakeholders opting out of a project or a negotiation process; deployment of delaying tactics; postponing project decisions; temporary boycotts; and strikes (i.e. withdrawal of labour).

3. Accommodation: There are occasions when one party in a conflict situation values a strong and continuing relationship with one or more of the other parties above the attainment of its own specific goals. In these cases, a party may elect to accommodate the other parties' goals, conceding to all or most of their demands. Although such outcomes may look as though they have been the result of force, the difference is that rather than losing outright, the accommodating party perceives itself to have gained by way of securing good relations, accompanied perhaps by an element of good will and the option to achieve some greater goal at a future date. Common examples are where an NGO gives in to demands for additional services in order to keep a project from collapsing.

4. Compromise: It is often confused with consensus. To compromise in a negotiation may sound positive, but it means that at least one of the parties perceives that it has had to forgo something. In planning CBNRM projects, compromise – and in particular the notion of trade-offs – is now prevalent, based on the need to make rational resource allocation decisions. For example, Stakeholder Analysis – an analytical tool often used to help design CBNRM – requires planners to analyse the distributional impacts of a project between the various stakeholder groups. The process identifies where the objectives of the different stakeholders are contradictory and where they share elements. From this, an optimal trade-off is constructed comprising the minimum 'win-loss' outcome.

5. Consensus: Although processes of consensus-building sometimes contain elements of compromise within the final agreement, there are some key differences between the two approaches. Consensus-building explicitly sets out to avoid trade-offs altogether, seeking instead to achieve a 'win-win' outcome. In contrast, a compromise approach seeks to minimise what are considered to be inevitable trade-offs. The fundamental principles of consensus- building are to steer conflicting parties away from:
- negotiating over their immediate demands and hostile positions, towards addressing those underlying needs which are the true motivating factors behind the each sides perception of the conflict;
- thinking about only one solution, towards considering the widest possible and most creative range of options for meeting the parties' underlying needs;
- personalised and often exaggerated demands, towards clarity and precision in describing parties' 'underlying needs' and the range of proposed options.

Box 2: Key Conflict Management Strategies - Warner (2000)
Conflicts over resources need to be viewed in the context of a complex web of demographic change, sensitive natural environments, new development pressures, structural economic and legal inequalities, personal and ethnic differences and multiple interests of different individuals, groups and organisations (Warner, 2000). Therefore, the process of conflict management is undertaken to meet specific objectives. It can be said that it is done to transform or mitigate conflicts brought about by developmental, environmental or demographic pressures. Also, it contains structural conflicts so that they do not interfere with the equitable, efficient and sustainable management of project activities.

The Conflict Management Process
This is an iterative process that seeks to arrive at the most feasible and sustainable solution to the conflict over resources. It begins with the analysis of secondary data that has already been documented. This provides a historical background of the existing conflict and the actors involved in the conflict. It is also details the attempted solutions to the conflict and the reasons why it/they could have failed to provide the expected outcome. The second step is the analysis of the conflict with the relevant stakeholders. The data gathered during these sessions of participatory analysis is then used to revise the conflict management plan. The conflict management plan describes the overall strategy for managing conflict combined with the process of proposed consensus building and an initial set of conflict mitigation or prevention options. This plan is inclusive of some form of capacity building which is essential for developing a level playing field. This allows less powerful stakeholders to participate equitably in the process.

Conflict Management in Kenya
The regulatory regime at the national level comprises of laws that establish formal adjudicatory processes that seek to administer justice in all civil and criminal matters, to empower the security forces and other administrative agencies to respond to crisis caused by conflict (Adan and Pkalya, 2006). Dispute resolution processes have been established under sectoral laws for particular sectors. These are independent of other existing mechanisms constituted under other laws and have no regard for the existence of mechanisms at local community levels. These institutions and processes reflect an adversarial tradition where the goal is not to resolve the dispute amicably with reference to the social context of the problem. However, over time, there is increasing reliance on informal conflict management mechanisms due in part to lack of faith in the judiciary and the high cost of court procedures. For example, traditional mechanisms have been infused in the modern conflict management system in the Council of Elders under the Land Disputes Tribunals Act, 1990.
Mburugu and Hussein (2002) conducted a study among the Turkana, Borana and Somali communities and established that the primary indigenous conflict resolution institution is the Council of Elders. It serves as the premier institution charged with the responsibility of managing and resolving conflict. Among the pastoralist who inhabit the arid and semi-arid areas of Kenya (ASALs), the practice of inter-ethnic marriages also used as a tool for the same.
This can prove to be effective in some instances since it is believed to be taboo to fight with one's in – laws. It therefore provide a good avenue for reducing the instances of conflict over resources. Such communities also enter into what are known as Resource Management Agreements. The scarcity of natural resources requires that community agree on the best way to utilise the limited resources. The elders meet and negotiate the movement of herds of livestock during dry periods. The visiting herders use pasture and water before moving back to their original homes when the situation improves. This establishes the fact that in the traditional context, conflicts were managed through a progressive process influenced by the social context of the society. The involvement of the whole community in the process of arriving at decisions was important as it led to a greater understanding of the conflict.

Challenges Facing Conflict Management Policy Formulation and Implementation
Although scholars reiterate the importance of conflict management processes for the preservation of natural resources, the process of embedding its tenets is daunting. The challenges include issues such as the extent to which the participatory process is inclusive. It is important to note that public issues and spaces are bounded by the inequalities of power. In most instances, the most vulnerable segments of the population are unable to fairly negotiate for the protection of their rights and access to resources they require. Also, the lack of sustained political will to formulate policy and ensure implementation through the enactment of relevant legislation. Many legislators who constituencies lie in areas that face minimal conflict over resources do not feel inclined to take part in such debates. However, it is important to note that globally, the effects of climate change will continue to affect populations and change the established weather patterns and in turn, the sustained quantities of required resources.
The capacity of the participants to grasp the issues under consideration will also affect the process of policy formulation and implementation. The participants will also be affected by their understanding of their role and function in the formulation process. Their capacity and understanding of the issues a hand will provide the impetus for consolidation of ideas. The partisan interests and the lack of shared vision of the various actors is also challenging as it will affect the direction of policy formulation and implementation. The diverse interests also prove problematic when consolidating the ideas to arrive at a required consensus.

II.   Conclusion

In summary, this paper postulates that resource conflict has both positive and negative connotations. It is important to note that conflict cannot be completely eliminated but requires effective management to mitigate its harmful effects and to leverage the gains resulting from the change it brings about. Conflict management is crucial for sustainable development as it ensure that a way forward and consensus is established in the utilisation of limited resources. Resource loss and conflict have immense effects on the way of life of communities which makes the management of conflict important.

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