

Changing Legislation and Neglect of Local Government's Role in the Management of Farmer-Grazier Conflicts as Rational for the Degeneration of Crises in the Bamenda Grasslands of Cameroon

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Abstract: Farmer-grazier conflicts remain one of the greatest factors that have impeded peaceful coexistence between farmers and graziers in the Bamenda Grasslands of Cameroon. In spite of attempts made by the colonial and post-colonial governments in arresting the problem, the hitch has persisted over the years. Though the re-occurrence of these conflicts has been attributed to corruption perpetuated by those involved in the management of these crises, the paper argues that the termination of local government's role in the management of these conflicts in 1978 instead intensified skirmishes. Drawing allusion from colonial legislation where local governments had the final authority, outbursts was uncommon. However, the granting of authority to central government officials after independence instead fanned these conflicts and greatly worked against its mitigation. The paper concludes that, for the effective eradication of these conflicts, local government's involvement is necessary since they understand local realities in their communities than appointed civil servants or central authority agents.

Keywords: Local Government, Farmer-Grazier Conflicts, Bamenda Grasslands and Cameroon.

I. INTRODUCTION

The West African Region is noted for the recurrence of conflicts between farmers and graziers for decades (Olaniyan, Francis, and Okeke-Uzodike, 2015). This situation is not different for the Bamenda Grasslands of Cameroon which has recorded a number of clashes between farmers and graziers. This state of affairs or problems have been provoked by competition over land which is a scarce economic resource as farmers and graziers struggle to get hold of space for the cultivation of crops and grazing of cattle respectively (Kaunganya, 1992; De Haan, 2002; Baye 2002). The increase in Population and livestock in the area over the years has made matters worse as the demand for water and pasture for cropping and grazing has also increased leading to frequent outbursts between farmers and graziers (Manu, Bime, Fon and Ajaga, 2014; Baye, 2002; Ingwa, Ega and Erhabor, 1999). This struggle has led to constant encroachments on farming and grazing lands by graziers and farmers respectively and the outcome has been the destruction of crops (Haan, 2002; Baye, 2002). Furthermore, there exist distinct cultures between the Fulani and indigenes and the struggle for cultural dominance

has greatly contributed to the entrenchment of these crises in the region. The indigenes believe that they owned the land and see the Fulani as foreigners without any right to ownership of this scarce resource (Ami-Nyo and Lang, 2016; Ngalim 2015).

Such a view has been supported by Nzeh (2015) who holds that "by their culture, tradition and occupation, they remained an itinerant race who neither owned lands nor any permanent abode. In fact they cared less about ownership because they are always on the move". He further opines that they were ready to settle with their cattle wherever tsetse flies were absent and fodder abundant. This therefore means that they often settled down for some time in certain areas and when better spots with hay, water and void of tsetse flies were discovered they moved on and these became their new abodes. Their inability to successfully inhabit a settlement for long durations made them to be viewed as strangers by indigenes in the lands where they settled (Ibid). The resultant effect of this conflict was/has been the loss of cattle by graziers as their cattle are often attacked with spears, guns and poisoned by farmers. This outrage from farmers usually happens when their crops are destroyed by cattle (Fisiy, 1992; Haman, 2002). Constant clashes between farmers and graziers also breeds insecurity and loss of lives, property, misery and hard ship and this has greatly affected the development of the region as well as survival and economic wellbeing of its inhabitants (Nzeh, 2015; Kometa and Ebot, 2012). Added to these, it leads to the depletion of the primary assets of farmers and grazers as this is often used in hiring lawyers to defend them in court. This ignites poverty among them, farmers and grazers. As if that is not enough, the rent seeking attitudes of administrators, security and judicial officials are also very instrumental in the intensification of the conflict. These stakeholders complicate matters by not finding lasting solutions to the crises. This is because any permanent or durable negotiated solution will be harmful to their rent seeking ventures and bribes that often accrued from their involvement in the conflict will no longer be available. Besides, the fervent believe by farmers that the Fulani sell their cattle and money used in corrupting officials to twist

judgments in their favour makes it difficult for them to accept decisions arrived at by the authorities and feelings of bias often roam their minds (Baye, 2002). Such developments are a characteristic lineament of the Bamenda Grasslands.

The area is found in the Western part of Cameroon and can be located between longitudes 9°00', 11°00' East of the Greenwich Meridian and latitudes 5°00', 7°00' North of the equator (Nformi, Mary-Juliet, Engwali and Nji, 2014). It was made an administrative unit (Bamenda Division) by the British in 1916 and in 1949; it was raised to a Province and comprised of Bamenda, Wum and Nkambe Divisions (Chilver and P. M. Kaberry, 1967). Upon independence, in 1961, it maintained its statute as a Province in the Cameroon Federation and in 1968 re-baptised the North West Region though its territory remained unaltered. After the enactment of the 1996 constitution which turned provinces into regions in Cameroon in 2008, it was renamed the North West Region. It is inhabited by the Fulani, Widikum, Tikar, Mbembe, Chamba and Munchi extractions. The ancestral origin of the Fulani has been traced to the Jos Plateau in Nigeria in the nineteenth century when migrants from these areas moved into the Bamenda Grasslands. Their movement into the territory which began in 1919 was entrenched in the 1940s as many of them settled in the Bamenda Highlands (Pelican, 2008:542; Njei, 2010). They met the Widikum, Tikar, Mbembe, Chamba and the Munchi already settled in the area and were bound to live with them (Kwi, 1987:15; Njeuma and Awasom, 1989:459).

The Fulani preference for the Bamenda Grassfields was because of the presence of grassland and favourable conditions for the rearing of cattle. This grassy highlands and excellent geography features (escarpments, hills and mountains) were ideal for cattle rearing and too tempting for the Fulani to ignore (Hickey, 2002). The presence of Fulani and their cattle in the region also raised the interest of indigenes in grazing cattle as this activity came to improve on the meat, hide and skin provisions of the area. This activity in the area became an important financial asset to local governments as jangali tax was levied and collected from cattle. In some local government units, revenue from jangali tax provided over half of their annual budgets. It was because of these budgetary contributions that the colonial governments promoted not only crop cultivation but also the grazing of cattle in the territory (Diduk, 1989).

Though important to the people and economy of the region, the struggle over land and water sources led to conflict between farmers and graziers and warranted local government's involvement and laws were enacted to minimise such problems (Chilver, 1988). It was in line with this motive that the British colonial authorities enacted the 1949 Native Authority Ordinance on Cattle Control Rules. The reason behind this development was to control the movement of cattle and put an end to trespass and damage of crops caused by cattle. Before then, hedging was promoted by the colonial authorities and remained the only rule in force with regards to the prevention of farmer grazier conflicts (Chilver, 1988).

However, the hedging practices and 1949 law never eroded these conflicts and problems between farmers and graziers continued unabated right up to the end of British rule. The inability of the 1949 Native Authority Ordinance on Cattle Control Rules in solving these problems led to subsequent amendments by the Government of the Federal Republic of Cameroon after independence. The colonial laws were repealed and new ones enacted in 1962 (NAB, Qs /1962/9, farmer grazing in west Cameroon in 1962). As per this law, local governments continued playing important roles in the managements of these conflicts and their involvement greatly minimised the outbreak of confrontations. Though they understood local realities on the ground and worked hard to salvage the situation, activities of the federal government's appointed officials became a serious stumbling block.

In spite the negative role played by appointed officials and their dominance over local government officials, another law was enacted by the United Republic of Cameroon in 1978 and these institutions were given little or no say in the management of these conflicts. The management of farmer-grazier clashes no longer fell under the direct jurisdiction of these institutions as a seven man committee, made up of the district administration officials, local chiefs, elders and Ardoen, was put in place. Though the 1962 Law was disbanded with the hope that the new law will eradicate these problems, the reverse is true as skirmishes between farmers and graziers continued unabated and there have been violent outbursts when compared to the period before 1978. For instance, agitations in Wum by farmers against the administration in relation to the poor management of the conflict resulted to the gunning down of seven farmers and wounding of others in 1981, just a few years after the passing of this new law (Nkwi 1985; Chilver 1989). Similar confrontations also occurred in 2003 when women in Wum took seven chiefs and the paramount Fon of the Aghem hostage for forty eight days in protest of their role in the poor management and exacerbation of these conflicts in their fondom (Ngalim, 2015). This is also common in Esu which has recorded a number of outbursts between farmers and graziers since 1990. In Kedjom Keku, the Fon was accused of improper handling and fomenting conflicts between farmers and grazier. The people of Kedjom Keku could no longer entertain this state of affairs that had taken the community hostage for more than two decades and banished their fon (Fochingong, Vobu and Baseng, 2008). These outbursts are not particular to these communities but have been common in other communities where graziers are present in the region.

The recurrence of these problems with severity after 1978, when compared to the period before then, gives the impression that this law has not addressed the situation squarely. The ineffectiveness of this law therefore casts doubts on the intentions of the government and whether it was necessary to disband the 1962 law. It is because of these worries that the paper revisits legislation carried out by both the colonial and post-colonial governments and their

implementations. This is to find out whether the institution of a new law in 1978 and the neglect of local governments' involvement in the management of farmer-grazier conflicts was called for. It is hoped that the findings of this paper may influence authorities in designing new laws which take into consideration the important role played by local governments in the management of local conflicts in a bid to minimise the incessant outbreak of farmer-grazier conflicts in the Bamenda Grasslands of Cameroon.

II. CONCEPTUAL EXPLANATIONS: LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN FARMER-GRAZIER CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

For a perfect understanding on the role of local government in the management of farmer-grazier conflicts, it suffices for a conceptualisation of the term 'conflict' in relation to farmer-grazier problems and management. Clifford and Robinson (2010) and Gultang (1969) have described conflict as competition over the incompatible goals and attempts between parties at eliminating the other from benefiting from the same goal or resource. This view has been supported by Francis (2002), who also posits that it is a struggle over the same goals or resources. He further postulates that when two groups with compatible goals or scarce resources interfere with one another's vision of achieving maximum benefit, then can we talk of conflict. While they are of the opinion that competition over scarce resource is the bedrock of conflict, Terry (1983) and Klein and Ritti (1980) believe that it is the disagreement between institutions, groups and individuals over interests, beliefs and values, attitudes or better still, opposition or dispute over the control of scarce resources. In a similar vein, Shmidt and Kochan (1972) do not deny the opinions of the other authors (incompatibility of goals), mentioned above, but goes further to add that the interdependence of their activities and differences in task, values and extent to which they share the same resources can lead to conflict. Babygeya (2002) brings in another dimension and holds that it is the breakdown in communication where decisions are not well understood by parties with the same interest or goal. To Nzeh (2015), the issue of exploitation is of utmost importance in describing conflict when he argues that differences in opinion and the deliberate attempt to exploit can easily lead to conflict

From the above schools of thought, it is clear that conflict simply means the struggle or competition over the same or incompatible scarce resources of common interest between groups, institutions and individuals, differences over beliefs and values as well as breakdown in communication. These attributes are true in describing the relations between farmers and graziers as the quarrel over land and water sources, which are scarce resources, as well as the quest for cultural domination (values, beliefs customs and traditions) have greatly pull the Fulani and indigenes apart. Hence, competition overland and water sources, cattle trespass, leadership struggle and conflict of culture has remained one of the greatest hurdles to the peaceful coexistence between farmers and graziers. True to the general characteristics of

conflict, relations between the two groups have been marked by the absence of social cohesion, tensions, division, hostility, dissension and disintegration. The constant occurrence of these conflicts has led the intervention of some actors in an attempt to mitigate outbursts and among which are local governments. Before discussing the role of these institutions in the management of conflict, it is proper for the meaning of conflict management to be highlighted.

It can be described as the putting in place or the creation of appropriate institutions that structure and guide existing conflicts in such a way that all parties involved in it can be accommodated. Furthermore, it can also be qualified as the handling of differences and divergences in constructive and positive manners (Schelnberger, 2005; Haris and Reilly, 1998). Hence, it is not concern with the elimination of conflicts totally but aimed at instituting constructive means of bringing the conflicting groups together in order to minimise their differences. This can best be done through bargaining, negotiation, mediation and arbitration (Torington and Hall, 1987). These approaches can be applied to farmer-grazier conflicts by local governments which are the lowest tiers of government and best adapted to manage local conflicts in general and the one under focus in particular. This explains why the role of local governments in the effective management of conflicts remains indispensable and has preoccupied current debates on peace and security in general and effective conflict management in particular, thereby reinvigorating the growing role of these institutions in the exercise of this important aspect of governance (Adabo, Salmon, Venancio and Keuleers, 2017).

This is because local governments play very critical roles in the economic and social development of their communities (Ayale, 2014) in general, and one of the most conspicuous responsibilities that have not been addressed adequately by scholars is the management of conflicts as few publications have been made in that direction (Jackson and Scott, 2008). Though the decentralisation or devolving of power is to encourage development, empower locals in the management of their affairs, enhanced participation in governance and democratisation as well as good governance, (Crook and Manor, 1998, 2) many central governments have failed to understand that conflict management is an embodiment of all these factors and have attributed minimal powers to these institutions in this direction. In spite of this neglect by central governments, local governments remain veritable instruments in the management of conflicts. This explains why some schools of thought are preoccupied with reasons for its creation in general and its role in that direction. Though it has just won attention recently its activities cannot be disassociated with conflict management (Reilly, 1998), reasons why some countries in the world have enacted legislation empowering local governments to manage conflicts within their areas of jurisdictions. A good example is the Nepal Local Self Government Act of 1998. It has specified a number of areas within its jurisdiction under the judicial

rights of local bodies. Local governments have been given authority over the management of land related conflicts, distribution of water for irrigation, drinking water, crop destruction of cattle, pasture, fodder and trespassers among others.

This authority granted to these institutions has won scholarship because, decentralised authorities enjoy political, social and financial autonomy to a certain degree and can deflate intergroup conflicts especially in diverse ethno-cultural, religious and language communities (Diprose and Ukiwo, 2008). The proximity enjoyed by these units brings the government closer to the people as it gives them not only increase control over their resources or opportunities but also the political, social and economic matters as aforementioned (Brancati, 2006). In this relation, Reilly (1998) further justifies the important role local government plays in conflict management when he postulates that the integration of groups or communities into these units with distinct identities and their distinctive identities and self-governance enjoyed by these institutions can ensure minorities a measure of state power and opportunities to preserve their cultures and increased integration. They thus become important ingredients and facilitators of the various roles played by other agents such as traditional councils, agricultural agents, land commissions and other technical agents of the administration which are often part and parcel of local government administration and co-opted into the conflict resolution mechanisms of this level of government.

Besides, since local governments are closer to the people and acquainted with local problems, they can best handle conflicts which have local starting points (Mehler, 2001; Cook and Manor, 1998; Reilly 1998; and Steinich, 2000). This is especially true on land issues, water allocation and cattle or better still problems between farmers and graziers. Decentralisation further minimises the fear of outbursts or persecutions because of differences in local customs and religious beliefs as well as the risk of inter-group strife in ethnically diverse societies because of the social interactions between them in everyday life. It therefore means that these institutions do not only understand local realities but are also versed with local problems and best suited to solving them than any other tier of government or agency (Siegle and O'mahony).

Schou and Haug, 2005; Bigdon and Hettige, (2003), believe that local governments can effectively manage intergroup conflicts. This can be through the increase political participation in decision making and its mission for the provision of services to their peoples and may reduce conflict through this service provision role. Ways through which local government can mitigate conflict has also been highlighted by Jackson and Scott (2008) when they opine that this can be through non-violent platforms discussions on issues affecting communities in their jurisdictions and better still issues concerning resources allocations. This may also be through representations as minority groups may be accorded

representation in order to imbue them with the spirit of and confidence or hope that problems faced by them would not be overlooked by the majority. Through this integration approach, tensions may be reduced. Since they understand local affairs, resources may be directed towards conflict based avenues or sources and this may garner confidence and support to state policies. It may also bring in stability, improved participation and enhances state authority. Elected officials can effectively play reconciliation roles in their communities. The important roles local government play in conflict management seemed to have been understood by the British colonial authorities and federal government of Cameroon as efforts were made to embrace these institutions into the conflict resolution structures of the colonial and post-colonial states especially on farmer-grazer related concerns.

III. COLONIAL LEGISLATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

The introduction of cattle in the Bamenda Division in 1919 by the Fulani and the benefits that goes along with its rearing could not leave the British colonial authorities indifferent to the sector. Even though it contributed enormously to the revenue of local governments, the frequent outbursts between farmers and graziers led to the institutions of rules that were to help reduce clashes and tensions between farmers and graziers. Between 1919 and 1949, an understanding between farmers and graziers was initiated and encouraged by native authorities. They encouraged the alternation of farming and grazing lands. That is, land was cultivated for a number of years and abandoned to graziers by farmers under the guidance of traditional authorities. After grazing for a number of years, the land was returned to farmers and in this way community land was rotated between farmers and graziers. During the dry season, agreements were also reached with local authorities and graziers given access to lowlands and in the rainy season, they returned to the highlands. Farmers also constructed fences round their farms to avoid destruction from cattle and this at times was done by the entire community. The Fulani also fenced in their cattle to avoid stray movements and damage to crops. Where damages were done to crops by cattle, traditional rulers under the guidance of their native authorities were there to levy charges or penalties on the cattle owner and damages paid to the farmer. It is through this means that peace was kept between farmers and graziers following the introduction of cattle rearing in the area (Chilver, 1988).

The increased in the number of cattle in the region and inability of farmers and graziers to effectively manage land and water resources led to the genesis of conflicts between them. For instance, by 1949, the number of cattle in the Province stood at 1,79,034 and this increase necessitated increased intervention of not only the native authorities but also the divisional or local governments (federated native authorities) which were created in 1948 but took effect in 1949 (National Archives Buea (NAB): Cb/1949/1.No. 141). It was because of their intentions to limit these conflicts that the Native Authority Ordinance on cattle control became one of

the first ordinances passed by the colonial authorities after these institutions went operational in 1949. By this law, native authorities reserved the right to allocate land for grazing and determine the number of cattle that could be grazed in their area of jurisdiction. With this, they were determined to receive cattle from other divisions in the wet and dry seasons and could order for their departure. They also demarcated lands and could fund the construction of fences to avoid damages. They could also institute fines on defaulters of cattle control rules and it was hoped that these would bring sanity between farmers and graziers.

To implement this ordinance, local governments instituted the Agricultural and Livestock Committees which dealt with issues relating to agriculture and livestock. They equally made proposals to the divisional councils or local governments and implemented decisions in that direction. It was in line with this that they could impose fines on defaulters of the 1949 Ordinance up to the tune of five pounds. Some of these institutions also instituted other control rules to complement the 1949 Ordinance. For instance, seventy five cattle was entitled or had to be managed by one herdman and stray cattle impounded also attracted a fine up to five pounds. They also forbade the construction of houses and cultivation on cattle trails by farmers. Though well intentioned, cattle owners found it difficult in respecting these rules. If some did so during the day, the situation was reversed in the night (as most destruction of crops took place in the night) and the rift between farmers and graziers became entrenched.

The five pounds levied as fine for trespass proved inadequate in deterring graziers. Most often than not, they preferred paying these amounts in the native courts than confining their cattle. Besides, the standards of living had increased over the years and this amount did not reflect the realities on the ground. The compensation proved inadequate in relations to destruction made. It was because of these that some local governments decided to revise the 1949 rule. They thus increased the 1949 rates in 1959 to the tune of twenty five pounds on cattle impounded and for destruction or other faults reported. Hence by 1960, these new rates had been implemented and worked so well in limiting trespass cases in the courts of the Province especially when defaulters could also serve imprisonment terms of up to three months. This deterrence greatly reduced destruction caused by cattle on farms (NAB, Ja/g/1959/2: 18 and NAB, E/1949/2. No. 23230A Vol. 1; NAB, LPG691/S.1; NAB, N0 LGP 691/1959; NAB, LGP 691/51 /1960; and NAB, LGP 691/5.2 /1960).

Though the revision greatly reduced these conflicts in the Province, it did not completely wipe them out and upon independence; this had escalated in some areas especially in Wum Division (NAB, Ja/g/1959/1). It was because of the escalation of these problems in some areas and the helplessness of existing legislation in tackling them that the President of the Federal Republic of Cameroon enacted the Farming and Grazing Law of 1962. This was applicable to the

Bamenda Province and Mamfe Division of Cameroons Province.

IV. FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S GRAZING LEGAL INSTRUMENTS AND APPLICATION

As aforementioned, the federal government decided to change the colonial legislation on farmer-grazier conflicts. The 1962 law, which replaced colonial legislation, handled issues related to boundaries between farming and grazing and issuance of penalties. Penalties ranged from ten thousand to thirty four thousand six hundred francs. Defaulters could also face imprisonment for up to six months. Just like in the colonial period, local governments still enjoyed some authority in the management of farmer-grazier conflicts as native courts still heard farmer grazier cases. To effectively implement this law, personnel were needed and local government did much in training and recruiting these officials. This explains why the Jakiri Livestock Training Centre became a destination for the training of livestock experts. Training was not limited to formal education but informal training was also offered locally through practical training. This was under the tutorship and supervision of trained personnel that were employed by local governments in the Province. It was only after such training that they were deployed to the various ardoates of the Province (Ja/g/196/1. No. LG2236/S.1). They also had to carry out vaccination campaigns that were sponsored by local governments and above all also make sure that farmer-grazier conflicts were a thing of the pass.

It was because of the zeal to end these conflicts that cattle control assistants were appointed by local governments to areas of need and by 1963, each ardoate where these conflicts were recurrent had at least one veterinary assistant (NAB, E/1950/1; Sb/a/1959/10. No. LG1970; Ja/g/1959/2 and Ja/g/1957/1. No. WD/1A Vol. 4). This was in line with the Southern Cameroons Five Year Development Plan that had envisaged an increase of the number of these officials in the territory in order to boost agricultural and livestock production. The efforts of veterinary assistants did not only help promote livestock production but also brought frosty relations between farmers and graziers to minimal levels. It was because of the activities of these cattle assistants that cattle started moving in greater numbers into the region. Local governments areas where graziers had been scared away because of the presence of these conflicts greatly benefited from this new development like the case of the Wum local government area which started receiving more cattle, thanks to the activities of cattle assistants.

Where it was difficult to bring peace between farmers and graziers, by these authorities, local governments encouraged the fencing-in of grazing lands by graziers. In severe cases, were graziers were unable to do so immediately, local governments carried out the exercise and graziers were obliged to return expenditures incurred after a reasonable period of time. Similarly, where it was difficult to get kraals in the

fencing-in process, local governments provided barbed wires and the money spent was refunded by graziers later. Failure to refund the money spent on fencing-in resulted to the seizure of the Graziers' licences and expulsion from the local government area concerned (NAB, Ja/g/1958/2). In order to prevent problems of trespass on farmlands, local governments constructed cattle troughs in areas that were accessible to graziers without passing through farms. By 1966, areas like atone, Mmen, Fundong, Achain, Fujua and Ijin among others were enjoying from these facilities. These were joint ventures between local governments and the veterinary departments. Local governments provided cement, stones and unskilled labour for the construction of these troughs and the veterinary department made skilled labour available. This endeavour greatly helped in the provision of better salt consumption points for cattle and minimised trespass on farms and the destruction of crops (NAB, Ci/1955/1: 12 and NAB, Ja/g/1964/1. No. CI554, 64).

Where the efforts of the veterinary officers, fencing-in and the construction of troughs could not offset clashes, the reallocation of land was done by the local governments to mend battered relations. This argument could be sustained with the case of Buba of Achain and Manu of Ijim. Ardo Buba's grazing lands proved small leading to constant conflicts with farmer in Achain. In order to avoid recurrent destruction of crops on farms, the Wum Divisional Council thought it wise to increase his grazing land. This was extended to cover areas in Ajung, and Achain. This was a welcome and wise decision as problems between him and farmers in the area came under control. Manu on his part was given more land in Abu. Though his cattle were constantly under control and problems between him and farmers absent, it was necessary to avoid such occurrences in future. Just like the case of Buba of Achain, he was given more lands for grazing (Ibid). Such steps taken by local governments greatly reduced problems between farmers and graziers. It was because of the above practices that the problem was greatly minimised in the entire Province and the only major ones recorded was that of Wum in 1973.

Even if local government officials were judicious in the management of these conflicts and greatly contained them, the presidential decree of 3rd October 1963 (Farmer-Grazier Law) never completely wiped off or settled the problems. Unlike before (in the colonial period and immediate post-independence period, 1961-62) it brought a dual control management system between appointed federal officials and Local Governments. Inspectors were appointed by the federal government to manage these problems in synergy with local government officials. They manned divisional boards created for this purpose. They had to coordinate activities related to the demarcation and allocation of farming and grazing lands according to the needs of farmers and graziers.

Instead of making sure that these problems were minimised, inspectors instead fanned them. They were not dedicated in their activities especially when most of them were not origins

of the areas where they were assigned. A good example was that of Mmen who was never present in his area of command and preferred living in Bamenda, the provincial capital. Out of fifty days only about 15 were spent in Mmen and problems ensued. The efforts of the divisional administration and local governments as well as chiefs and ardoen in settling problems here all went in vain. The inspector frowned at their activities and argued that they were intruding in his area and prerogatives and would not entertain any interference. Inspectors even made the Fulani understand that they were the only ones competent in settling such matters. Even when they (inspectors) went to the affected sides for solutions to be sought, local government officials, chiefs, Ardoen and local leaders who knew the local realities on the ground were sidelined. They offered land to Fulani without informing the farmers, chiefs, Ardeon, local elite and above all local government officials. In such situations, local governments were powerless (Tem, 2005) and this state of affairs only exacerbated the problems.

However, local governments had worked hard in containing the crises and few outbursts with limited consequences were recorded. In spite of the successes achieved by increased local governments' involvement in the management of the conflict, the government of the United Republic of Cameroon instituted a new law that gave local governments little or no role in the management of these conflicts in 1978. Though they understood local affairs better than government officials posted to the areas, the government disregarded them and their absence resulted to the escalation of these crises in the region.

V. 1978 LAW AND DISREGARD OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

The 1978 law created district or sub divisional committees to manage farmer-grazier conflicts within the various districts of the Province. As per the law, a District or Sub Divisional Commission was instituted and was made up of seven members; the assistant divisional officer, sub divisional delegates of agriculture and rural development, that of ministry of livestock production and the Ardo who represented the Fulani in the area where the problem occurred. There was also the chief and two notables from the village concerned or where the problem took place. When a compliant was made to the divisional officer, summons were issued to both the complainant and accused and after this, attempts were made by the divisional officer to bring the two together for an amicable resolution of the conflict. Where one or all of them were not satisfied with the endeavours of the divisional officer, the sub commission was sent to the area of conflict to ascertain the facts of the case and made recommendations to the divisional officer who issues directives on what must be done to solve the conflict.

Common measures usually taken to solve the conflicts include; an injunction order, the demarcation of grazing and farm land, payment of compensation for damages among

others. Where one of the parties is not satisfied with the decision of the divisional officer, in consultation with the sub commission, they have the right to appeal and this time around, it is handled by the full commission. The divisional officer acted as chairpersons and the secretary to the committee was drawn from the divisional delegations of the ministry of lands. Just like in the case of the sub commission, representative of the divisional delegations of surveys and agriculture were also represented. Local communities (mostly farmers) were also represented on the committee as well as a chief and two members/elders from any village affected were also members. This was also extended to the grazing communities with the Ardo given a place in the committee to represent the interest of graziers (Decree N° 78-263 of July 3, 1978). It should be noted that these committees were purely consultative. Members could only make proposals that had to be endorsed by the senior divisional officer or governor. Competence therefore lied not with the committee but with these authorities. Besides, punishments or penalties did not accompany the decree. It therefore meant that farmers and graziers could refuse adhering to the decisions of the committee except the governor or senior divisional officers endorsed them. Though this legal framework is supported by traditional authorities or customary laws that are also used in the management of these conflicts, the above shortcoming did not arrest the conflicts.

The degeneration of these conflicts after 1978 is a clear indication that these regulatory frameworks have failed in arresting the conflicts and there has been an escalation of the crises in the region especially in Wum, Big Babanki Kedjum Keku, Esu, Binshu among others. See Table I for a full list of areas greatly affected by the conflict in the North West Region.

Table I: Hotspots of Farmer Grazer conflicts in the North West Region of Cameroon after

Division	Sub Division	Villages/ Communities
Mezam	Santa	Piyinin, Akum, Njong, Baba II and Alatening
	Tubah	Bambili, Kedjom-Keku, Kedjem-Ketungo
	Bali	Koppin, Bosa and Wosing
Momo	Njikwa	Oshie, Ngwo
	Mbengwi	Fregant, Sang, Guneku, Acha-Tugi, Njah-Etu
	Batibo	Upper-Ashong
Bui	Mbiame	Mbo-Nso, Njaanawa
	Kumbo	Tadu, Kingomen, Nkuv, Dzeng
	Tatum	Mbam Song
	Jakiri	Barare, Ntan, Jirim-Nyam
	Noni	Lassin, Nkor, Nkowe
Ngoketunjia	Ndop Central	Bamunka, Bamali, Bamesing, Bambalang
	Babessi	Bangulan, Babungo, Babessi

	Balikumbat	Bamukumbit, Balikumbat
Donga Mantung	Ndu	Ntumbaw, Njirong, Sop, Mbongong, Mboya, Luh, Ngarum, (Njipnchati)
	Nwa	Mfute, Ntem , Ngomkol
	Mesaje	Dumbu, Akweto
	Nkambe Central:	Meyinty, Saah, Jirt, Kungi, Binshua, Konchep, Bih, Mbacam, Binka
Boyo	Bum	Mungom, Konene, Ngunavisi
	Fundong	Ajung, Akeh, Achain, Bainjong, Mentang, Mbam, Mual , Mbongkiso and Mbengkas
	Njinikom	Yang, Iso
	Belo	Djichami, Afua, Njinikijem Mbingo II
Menchum	Fungom	Bafmen, Kumfutu, Tchah hill, Kuk, Esu, Weh
	Wum Central	Upkwa, Naikom, Kesu

Source: Kanjo, Shei William and Michael, Fon Nsoh, Farmer-Grazer Conflicts in the North West Region of Cameroon: Evolution and Current Context, 6.

Though the recurrence of these conflicts especially after 1990, has been attributed to the corruption perpetuated by administrators, chiefs, security officials and local authorities or better still all those involved in the management of the crises (Ndikintum 2010; Nformi et al., 2014 & Valentine, Juliana and Martin, 2014), I firmly believed that the termination of the important role played by local governments have remained a catalyst. This is sustained by the arguments that if local governments were maintained as legitimate arbiters of farmer grazer conflicts, the situation would not have degenerated since they understand local affairs. Their disregard in bringing them into the spectacle even as members of the committee in 1978 eroded the experiences gathered over the years and gave room for amateurs (majority members of the committee) who were not indigenes and understood little or nothing about farmer grazer problems. Besides, most of them were civil servants who were not dedicated to the complete erosion of the conflict and could easily receive bribes. They could request or pick up transfers to other administrative regions when conflicts escalated or became engraved, leaving the people of the area to continue in their disagreeing situations without remorse.

The argument that the neglect of local governments' role, in the 1978 law, made the commission ineffective can be justified by the constant replacement of the farmer grazer committees with temporary commissions of inquiry which are often charged with the responsibility of probing into the matter and proposing solutions. This was uncommon in the colonial period and immediate post-independence period. This only came to the fold when the crises escalated in the region. Even the recommendations often proposed are seldom implemented. Added to these Commissions, the failure of the 1978 law has also led to the development of civil society organisations as alternative management bodies in bringing lasting solutions or managing these conflicts. Better still, this was to bring understanding between farmers and graziers in a

bid to minimise the conflict. The cases of the African Institute for Economic and Social Development, the Netherlands Development Organization, the Justice and Peace Commission of the Bamenda Archdiocese of the Roman Catholic Church and the Mbororo Social and Cultural Development Association are conspicuous (Kanjo & Michael, 2016) among others. The multiplicity of organisations after 1978 only drives home the fact that the law enacted in 1978 had failed woefully and there is the needed for it to be revisited and the management of these conflicts reverted to local governments or better still these institutions be given a greater responsibility in that direction. In this way, it is hoped that the outbreak of such dilemmas will be minimised.

VI. CONCLUSION

Farmer-grazier conflict is a moribund problem in the Bamenda Grasslands and has been animated by the demand for land which is a fix factor of production by increasing number of farmers and grazers. Furthermore, competition for water and pasture for cropping and grazing respectively has also encouraged incessant outbursts between farmers and grazers. discord between the two groups have been catalysed by the indigenes' believe that they owned the land and look unto the Fulani as foreigners and worse still, the existence of two distinct cultures have made things worst between the Fulani and indigenes and the struggle for cultural dominance has greatly contributed to the entrenchment of the crises in the region. These differences have resulted to trespass on farms, insecurity and the loss of lives, destruction of property, misery and hard ship or better still have not worked well for the development of the area. It was because of these negative consequences that the British colonial government, through the native authorities, instituted the alternation of farming and grazing lands and in this way, it was difficult for farmers and grazers to clash over land. Fencing in of farming and grazing land policy was also used in avoiding cattle from trespassing and charges or penalties were also levied on grazers when their cattle damaged crops. Furthermore, the 1949 Ordinance gave local governments through the Agricultural and Livestock Committees authority over the institution of rules and regulations that would help redress the situations. By this law, local governments had legislation over allocation of land for grazing, determine the number of cattle that could be grazed in their area of jurisdiction, demarcate grazing lands, constructed fences and instituted penalties and rates on defaulters of local government rules related to farming and grazing and they could refer matters to the native courts.

Upon independence, the President of the Federal Republic of Cameroon enacted the Farming and Grazing Law of 1962 and this initiated a dual control mechanism between Local Governments and federal officials. Local Governments still enjoy some authority in the management of farmer grazer conflicts as they trained and recruited cattle control assistants to manage or report such cases, encouraged and funded fencing in schemes, issue licenses and could withdraw them when a grazer proved recalcitrant and also constructed cattle

troughs to avoid crop destruction and reallocated grazing when necessary to avert conflict. They were aided in the exercise by Inspectors appointed by the federal governments. They coordinated activities that had to do with the demarcation and allocation of farming and grazing lands according to the needs of farmers and grazers and also set delimitations lines. Instead of making sure that these problems were minimised, inspectors instead fanned them. However, they instead made things worse as they were constantly absent from their stations and local government efforts were often neglected. They claim authority over such matters and saw local governments as intruders and would not accept any endeavour from them making them powerless because the Inspector was answerable to the federal government and not the local government. In spite of the successes recorded by increased local governments' involvement in the management of the conflict, the 1978 disregarded local governments and they had little or nothing to do the management of these conflicts and resultant effect has been the escalation of the crises over the years since then.

The district committees created were mostly manned by civil servants with the exception of the chiefs and Adoen representing their communities in areas where problems broke out. This committee was purely consultative. Members could only make proposals that had to be endorsed by the senior divisional officer or governor. Competence therefore lied not with the committee but with these authorities. Te failure of this law led to the degeneration of these conflicts after 1978 and there has been an escalation of the crises. Though often blamed on corruption, it is because of the absence of local governments which eroded the experiences gathered over the years and gave room for amateurs (majority members of the committee) who were not indigenes and understood little or nothing about farmer grazer problems. The failure of the committee system have seen the institution of temporary commissions of inquiry, which was uncommon before 1978, are often charged with the responsibility of inquiring into the matter and proposing solutions. To make up for the shortcomings, civil society organization are increasingly playing important rules and the multiplicity of these organisations after 1978 only drives home the fact that the law enacted in 1978 had failed woefully and there is the needed to be revisited and management of these conflicts reverted to local governments or better still these institutions be given a greater responsibility in that direction. In this way, it is hoped that the outbreak of such dilemmas will be minimised.

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