

Understanding Theoretical Underpinning of Wildlife Resource Based Conflict in Oban Hills, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT Evidences have shown that rapid growth in human population exerts pressure on the natural resources base of communities. Further, the scarcity of resources in rural communities often engenders contestations and conflicts among different stakeholders. This study examined the nature, typology and dimensions of resources based conflicts in support zone communities in Oban Hills. The data was collected through a purposive sample of six support zone communities and protection staff of the Cross Rivers National Park using in-depth interviews, key informant interviews and questionnaires. The research revealed that the establishment of the Cross Rivers National Park in by Acts Nos. 36 and 46 of 1991 and 46 of 1999 respectively has negatively affected the livelihood capacity of the people by reducing the proportion of land available for farming, placed restrictions on wildlife hunting within the conserved area and harvesting of protected wildlife species in the buffer zone. The result is the emergence of various forms and dimension of conflicts and contestations over resource use and control leading to the destruction of property, injuries and death. This study recommended that members of support zone communities should be engaged at all levels of wildlife management such as planning, implementing and sharing of revenue derived from eco-tourism. Government should also provide alternative sources of livelihood for the people, especially the youth.