

Conflict Resolution in Project Location Decision-Making: The Case of Old Ibadan Airport Commercialisation Project

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Abstract

This paper presents a case of how the exercise of state power can spell doom for an otherwise economically profitable, environment friendly and socio-culturally desirable large-scale real estate project. It is the case of the Old Ibadan Airport commercialisation project, aborted by a counter-claim of ownership of the project site by the Nigerian Air Force. The issue at stake presents an interesting example of locational conflict in the urban arena. Based on a model of locational conflict and conflict resolution as the conceptual framework, the paper presents some methods and strategies by which the commercialisation of Old Ibadan Airport was professionally evaluated at inception and later subjected to legal action by some of the aggrieved land allottees following a perceived breach of contract by the project's owners. After presenting some possible options that policy makers and key stakeholders could have considered and adopted in resolving the impasse facing the implementation of the project, the author concludes that locational conflicts can always be resolved if opposing parties are willing, able and ready to invest in cooperative dialogue based on mutual respect, rather than resorting to the force of arms in the interest of local, regional and national sustainability. Recommendations are put forward for avoiding similar conflicts in the future.

Key Words:

Conflict Resolution, Project Viability, Locational Conflict, Relocation, Decision-making.

Introduction

Economically profitable, environment friendly and socio-culturally desirable private-sector real estate projects are usually regarded as vehicles for sustainable national development. The commercialisation of the Old Ibadan Airport in Nigeria provides an interesting case study. Following the federal government's resolve of the early 1990's to privatise and commercialise a number of federal parastatals in the country, with a view to giving room for the injection of private capital into the investment market for national development in an era of structural adjustment, the Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN) decided to promote and implement a tripartite commercial real estate project agreement for the virtually abandoned Old Ibadan Airport in the northern part of Ibadan metropolis, a city widely reputed to be the third largest in Africa.

Consequently, a firm of registered estate surveyors and valuers (Jare Babarinde & Co, 1996) was commissioned for feasibility and viability study of the project by Tarmac Estates Limited after preliminary investigations had revealed that planning permission would be granted by the relevant local planning authority. Following the successful completion and acceptance of the feasibility report, the implementation of the project seemed to be getting on

well as planned until one day, when the unexpected suddenly happened – an *army occupation* of the project site was discovered during a visit to the site. This marked the beginning of a protracted conflict between two principal players in the implementation of a major project that was supposed to attract a lot of benefits to the residents of Ibadan and improve the tax base of the municipality and other stakeholders.

The purpose of this paper is two-fold: first, to demonstrate how the exercise of state powers can mean a big blow to what otherwise could be a very successful real estate project that could assist a metropolitan government ameliorate the housing and commercial accommodation shortages facing its residents and improve its property tax base. Second, the paper is intended to generate honest arguments among practitioners, policy makers and intellectuals for possible resolution of potential locational conflicts in the built environment in the interest of local, regional and national sustainability.

Nature of the Problem

Two opposing claims brought about a locational conflict at the Old Ibadan Airport. In the first instance, Tamac Estates Limited would like to see that its goal of developing a housing/commercial estate on the site of the Old Ibadan Airport was pursued to a logical conclusion and, in fact, the client had put in place all necessary measures for achieving that goal. A tripartite agreement had been signed by the collaborating developers and financiers, including the Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria. The Airports Authority was expected to have straightened its own records with the Nigerian Air Force authorities because both of them were supposed to be friendly autonomous parastatals under the same federal government's control. Furthermore, application forms had been sold to a good number of members of the public for land allocation. The Old Airport premises had been cleared and refurbished to pave way for the integration of the existing old buildings on the site into the proposed estate; work had started on the opening up of streets on the site to allow individual allottees take possession of their plots and negotiations with financial institutions had reached an advanced stage for project funding. Simply put, too much preparation had gone into this project which rendered its likely nullification at this stage a big blow to private investment initiative and an unwarranted colossal waste of human, material and financial resources that Nigeria or any other developing nation could ill afford.

Secondly, the Nigerian Air Force Authorities could be said to have acted rationally by forming an *army of occupation* on Old Ibadan Airport site because they always have a duty of care to guarantee the security of the nation. According to their own story, one way of achieving this goal was through the continued use of the Air Force Base building located somewhere on the Old Airport premises. The issue at stake, then, was that private financial objectives were at loggerheads with national security objectives. Both sets of objectives are required for the survival and economic sustainability of the nation. The consultants to the proposed project held the opinion that the proposed estate should be a top priority to the government because it sought to ameliorate the housing problems of the residents of one of the country's largest cities. On the other hand, every sovereign country desires to own a well-equipped and effective Air Force of its own, particularly in contemporary times when all nations should be able to defend themselves against local, regional or foreign aggressions. The question then was: What was the way forward?

Conceptual Framework

Locational conflict arises when individuals or groups believing themselves to be negatively affected express opposition to a locational or siting decision made by others (Lake, 1996). While effectively managed conflicts can have positive outcomes, unresolved conflict undermines projects and relationships, as well as the morale and reputations of stakeholders. The behaviour of one party to a conflict may be destructive particularly if a military response is used by one party to retaliate a provocation caused by another party to the conflict (Zeitsoff, 2011). Conversely, the response may be conciliatory, constructive or friendly but, regardless of its tone, the objective in both cases is to express the conflict and attempt to persuade the other party to meet one's needs' (Mayer, 2000).

By definition, conflict resolution means the termination of manifest conflict between individuals or groups (Filley, 1975: 21). In certain cases, such as compromise, the termination may leave both sides only partially committed to the resulting agreement. In other cases, the termination may provide high commitment to the resulting agreement. As revealed by some activities of NIMBY groups worldwide (an acronym for the phrase "not in my back yard"), locational conflict is neither a uniquely recent phenomenon nor one exclusively associated with highly industrialised societies. For example, analysis of newspaper accounts of locational conflicts in Worcester and Massachusetts in the USA (Meyer and Brown, 1989) had found that the frequency of reported conflicts on a per capita basis was essentially the same in Columbus, Ohio (Cox and McCarthy 1980). NIMBY further argues that the location of rendering plants, slaughter houses, and saloons generated protest in the nineteenth century, while waste incinerators, homeless shelters, and low-cost housing frequently motivated opposition in the late twentieth century. Today, 'a vexing new problem for local officials' in many Western countries 'is the location of cellular telephone towers, which are sometimes disguised inside church steeples or building cupolas to avoid protests over visual blight'. In general, therefore, while the targets of conflict have changed to reflect changes in technology, economic activity, and society at large, the intensity of conflict was no less virulent a hundred years ago than it is today.

Three concepts of space/location are pertinent: group territory; individual territory, and personal territory/space. According to Filley (1975: 81), the first two refer to fixed areas over which a group or an individual takes a proprietary interest. On the other hand, personal space has to do with the self-established areas of privacy and control which surrounds a person. As a result, we can have three kinds of locational conflict: person-to-person locational conflicts, intra-group locational conflicts, and inter-group locational conflicts. The last two are in the realm of group territoriality. Of the three, the focus of this paper is on inter-group locational conflicts and, eventually, on group territoriality (Tarmac Estates Limited Versus Nigerian Air Force authorities). Groups may establish boundaries around the territory which they seek to protect against intruders, and certain groups define their territory and defend it with violence (e.g. tribal or ethnic groups asserting their rights over landed property). In this regard, the conceptual framework adopted for this paper is provided by the model of Locational Conflict and Conflict Resolution (Cox. 1979; Cox and Johnston, 1982). According to these authors, locations are more the outcome of a political process than of adjustments at the margin by private decision-makers in the context of market-determined prices. As a result of the failure

of the spatial equilibrium models and market mechanism to satisfactorily handle locational analysis, in the land market, it has become necessary for us to retain the theoretical framework of the neo-classical economic theory for explanations of conflicts in terms of real world inadequacies. These inadequacies include externalities (positive and negative), immobility, and the monopoly effects of space (Cox and Johnston 1982: 11). These, in turn, have led to a focus upon the role of institutions (including local, state and federal governments, and the judiciary) as well as interest groups, in conflict resolution over location.

In adopting this theoretical construct, we can safely assume decision-making units at any number of geographical scales. On a micro-scale, these units could be households and firms, such as developers and allottees on an estate. On a macro-scale, the units could be jurisdictions, such as the local, state and federal governments of a country where a project is to be located. Each decision-making unit has a number of resources which are allocated to activities that maximize the owner's utility, such as housing or shopping. According to Cox, allocation is governed by a set of property rights which specify the uses to which the different resources can be put. From these private allocations, externalities can be anticipated which create localized stress and locational conflict. The conflict arises between decision-making units at the same geographical scale (such as between household or tenant and the municipality, state or federal government).

Resolution of locational conflicts may be achieved by either private locational strategies or private bargaining. The individual household or developer may relocate within the same metropolitan area, just as the individual jurisdiction can effect that relocation. It is possible to anticipate a variety of inter-jurisdictional or inter-household (inter-developer) bargaining procedures. However, private solutions to locational conflicts are sub-optimal. This is because externalities will remain in the form of residual localized stress. Furthermore, co-ordination by collective control of some of the individual decision-making units' property rights could make at least one unit better off without making any other one worse off. According to Cox, individual households or developers at the micro-level, therefore, cede some sovereignty over the use of their property to a superordinate authority. Co-ordination is then achieved by a modification of the property rights of individual households or developers. At the macro-level, individual jurisdictions can grant some of their sovereignty over the property rights of their constituent decision-making units to a super-ordinate jurisdiction, such as a local government within a metropolis, thereby creating new decision-making units on a new and wider geographical scale. These new units in turn create externalities for other units at the same or smaller geographical scale; consequently, a new cycle of locational conflict and conflict resolution is generated.

The role of institutions in modifying the intensity of externalities and the scope for the extraction of rents has also been highlighted by Cox and Johnston (1982: 7). Of particular interest is the central role of the juridical context of the state as a constraint to individual and corporate behaviour and as a matrix within which locational analysis should be set, Cox observed. Unfortunately, the role of the judiciary in many developing countries is questionable, particularly under dictatorial and totalitarian governments. In ideal situations, the judiciary should always be an impartial arbiter in conflict resolution.

As aptly argued by Takahashi (1998) and DeVercuil (2000), methods of resolving conflicts often revolve around community-centred, user-centred and state-centred approaches. The Canadian Institute for Conflict Resolution (CICR-<http://www.cicr-icrc.ca/en/about/our-approach>, 10/29/2012), adopts the community-based conflict resolution approach for its projects spread across the world. In this approach, “community” is regarded as a place ‘where we live, where we work, or where we share activities. A community is like a well that gathers people, brings them into regular interaction to fulfill certain psychological, emotional, relational and material needs. We can also imagine a global village, since communities are linked and interact with larger ones. They can also divide into smaller communities’. In short, a community-based conflict resolution approach, according to the CICR, moves communities towards healthy responses to conflict. From this perspective, ‘conflict is seen as normal and as an opportunity for growth and creativity enabling communities and their members become competent in resolving their own differences without resorting to violence, while pursuing a peace making process.’

However, community-centred approaches generally focus on community opposition to a proposed facility siting, which did not happen in our case under investigation. The user-centred approach usually applies to conflict over social service facility location, particularly from the perspective of facility users who often experience extreme poverty and/or physical, social, or mental disability as a barrier to access to needed services (Takahashi, 1998). Lastly, the state-centred approach (Lake and Disch, 1992) seeks to legitimise assumptions shared by community- and user-centred approaches, that facilities are needed by society. In the present case study, we believe that any solution to the challenge faced by the commercialisation of Old Ibadan Airport lie somewhere between user-centred and state-centred approaches.

Methodology Adopted for Old Ibadan Airport Commercialisation

The firm of Jare Babarinde and Co was commissioned in 1996 by Tarmac Estates Limited to submit a feasibility and viability report on the commercialisation of *Tarmac Estate*. Summarised below are some of the findings in the report.

(i) Location: The proposed “Tarmac Estate”, jointly owned by the Federal Aviation Authority of Nigeria (FAAN) and two indigenous firms of property developers, was to be located at the Old Ibadan Airport in the northern part of the sprawling Ibadan metropolis. The site is adjacent to the world-class Trans-Amusement Park, and is opposite Oyo State Government Permanent Trade Fair Complex. The oldest and most famous government residential estate in the city – Bodija Estate – lies immediately towards the eastern end of the proposed estate, being separated by a railway linking the Western part of Nigeria with the Northern part. The proposed estate could be reached easily from Lagos, the commercial and industrial nerve centre of Nigeria, through the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway and the Ibadan-Oyo Expressway, through the University of Ibadan Main Gate, which is less than one kilometer away from the site. In short, the project’s location, to the best of the consultants’ knowledge, was regarded as an ideal one.

(ii) Site and Tenure: The proposed site at that time (Old Ibadan Airport) measured approximately 44.43 hectares, as evidenced by a Survey Plan which was sighted by the consultants for verification purposes. The site was generally well-drained and firm, having served as the Tarmac of the Old Ibadan Airport that had existed before Nigeria’s independence in 1960. Presently, a new airport is in operation at another location in the city,

several kilometres away from the Old Airport. Title to land is clean and marketable by way of Freehold Absolute in Possession, held by the Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN).

(iii) Accommodation Description: The approved estate's master plan comprised a mixture of residential, commercial (shops and offices), institutional and recreational land uses. The following is a list of the facilities that were scheduled to be incorporated in the development:

- 15 Nos 3-Bedroom Bungalows on plots of 930m² each
- 15 Nos 4-Bedroom Bungalows on plots of 930m² each
- A hostel on a plot of 15,000m²
- A five-star hotel complex on a plot of 2 hectares
- A shopping complex on a plot of 1,400m² (3½ acres)
- A water park on a plot of 1,000m² (½ acres)
- A Museum of Civil Aviation (to be developed by FAAN)

The above listed facilities were to be provided by Tarmac Estates Limited (TEL), in addition to other facilities like petrol filling stations, restaurants, offices, banks and housing units, which would be owned by private land allottees on standard leasehold basis.

(iv) Services and Facilities: Electricity, pipe-borne water, and telephone mains had already been connected to the site, but these facilities were to be expanded as construction works progressed. In addition to the public mains, proposals were in top gear for the installation of two powerful electricity generators, while two boreholes were to be sunk to supplement public supplies. Extensive car parking lots had been incorporated at strategic points on the estate for the smooth ingress and egress of vehicular traffic. Refuse was to be collected and managed by our client, based on a private refuse disposal agreement to be entered into with each allottee. No thoroughfare traffic was to be allowed on the estate. In short, the estate was designed to be a self-contained and compact community.

(v) Project Derivatives: The following derivatives strongly justified the need to implement the proposed Tarmac Estate on the site of the Old Ibadan Airport:

- Easily accessible, highly functional and efficient community
- The analysed positive environmental and social impacts of the project far outweighed the negative impacts
- The possibility of incorporating a Water Park for recreational purposes, using the existing valley on the site, meant that revenue generation would be enhanced through visitors
- Plots of land on comparable estates at first-class locations in the city had already been fully allocated and tenancies over-subscribed
- Many compatible and complementary land uses were located around the project site, including Oyo State Government Secretariat, University of Ibadan, the Polytechnic, Ibadan, and Bodija Estate
- Shop and office accommodation, and high-class residential apartments were already in high demand within the locality of the proposed project site
- The project was to usher in two new petrol filling stations, hostel accommodation which was already in short supply for students of the nearby university and

polytechnic campuses, conference halls, a five-star hotel, a museum of civil aviation and restaurants, for the residents of Ibadan metropolis. Essentially, therefore, the project could most likely become a tourist attraction that could go a long way in improving the revenue base of the local, state and federal governments

- Private investors could lease land for their own projects within the complex, thereby making the project an avenue for attracting foreign capital into the country
- The existing old buildings on the site were still structurally sound and could easily be refurbished and adapted to suit the objectives of the proposed estate
- No heavy manufacturing industry was to be established within the estate, hence the issue of environmental pollution in the largely residential/commercial estate would hopefully not arise
- The abundance of land to be made available for the project in a suburban area of the city was to enhance the provision of adequate parking spaces for commuters visiting the site
- In addition to housing and commercial accommodation, the project was to provide short, medium and long-term job opportunities for the local population.
- In view of the above listed benefits achievable from the implementation of the project, in addition to its economic viability, it was generally agreed that the proposed commercialisation project should go ahead.

(vi) Feasibility and Viability Parameters - A combination of private sector and public sector appraisal techniques were used to determine whether or not the commercialisation project was physically feasible and economically viable. However, space constraints will only permit us to highlight only a few of the feasibility parameters adopted by the project's consultants:

Private Sector Techniques:

- Net Present Value (NPV), which was positive
- Internal Rate of Return (IRR), which was higher than the cost of borrowing
- Rate of Return on Capital invested, which was reasonably high
- Payback Period, which when compared with those of alternative investments, was very short
- Excess of Value over Cost (Profit), which also was very high and positive
- Sensitivity Analysis, which was satisfactory.

Public Sector Techniques:

Our Cost Benefit Analysis (Abouchar, 1985) revealed that the anticipated benefits of the project far exceeded the costs, including social costs, both to the client and to the community; and our Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) showed that the positive impacts of the project on both the micro- and macro-environments far exceeded the negative impacts. The impact assessment result enhanced the chances of our client in securing the local planning authority's consent for implementation of construction works on the project site.

Results of Investigations

Long before the initiation of the proposed Tarmac Estate project, the Nigerian Air Force (NAF) had been in total control of one office building located right inside the then functioning Old Ibadan Airport. This building had been strategically used as the Air Force

Base for Ibadan City. Subsequently, following a government policy that brought the control of all federal airports in the country under the umbrella of the Nigerian Airports Authority (FAAN), the Old Ibadan Airport became a property of the Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN). Unfortunately, even after the acquisition of the Airport by FAAN, three major activities continued to be performed on the site of the Old Airport unabated, namely:

- The unnoticed use of the Air Force Base by the Nigerian Air Force
- The Federal Meteorological Station for Ibadan City was located within the premises, and
- The residential quarters of the staff of the Meteorological Station were also located right inside the Old Airport premises.

Unknown to Tarmac Estates Limited, the Air Force Base building within the airport premises was very much in the “current assets” books of the Nigerian Air Force. Thus, when it dawned on the Air Force authorities that the Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN) had “colluded” with some private developers to turn the Old Airport into a private estate, the *inactive* Air Force Base building had to be promptly taken over by the Air Force authorities, “for strategic national security reasons”. According to reliable sources, there was no going back on this reversal to the status quo, as the whole site had already been taken over by men in uniforms before the fateful day when Tarmac Estates Limited paid a visit to the site.

Consequently, all construction works on site had to be stopped, while the whole site was declared a no-go-area to Tarmac Estates Limited, its agents, and all prospective allottees of the proposed estate, regardless of the fact that a substantial amount of money had already been sunk into the project. In fact, many prospective land allottees had hoped that within a relatively short period of time they would be able to take possession of their land and become property owners. Unfortunately, this was not to be.

Discussion

Against all expectations, hopes on the successful take-off of Tarmac Estate eventually began to dim when on 30th June, 2009, in the Court of Appeal, Ibadan Judicial Division, Oyo State of Nigeria, an appeal was held to lack merit and was dismissed in favour of the respondent in a suit between Professor Olajide Ogunbiyi and three appellants - Dr. S. Ayo Dada, Dada Estates Company and Tarmac Estates Limited (2009). The appeal, case suit No. LPELR-CA/1/77/2005, arose from a decision of the High Court of Oyo State, earlier delivered by I.S. Yerima, J. on 6th June, 2003.

Facts of the Case

The Respondent (Professor Olajide) as plaintiff originally commenced the suit against the 1st and 2nd Appellants as Defendants jointly and severally under the undefended list procedure of the High Court of Oyo State pursuant to the order of Court of 8th November, 2001. At the hearing, the Appellants then Defendants mentioned the 3rd Appellant (Tarmac Estates Limited) as their principal. The trial court thereafter ordered that pleadings be filed. The third Appellant was later joined as 3rd Defendant by the Order of the Court dated 21st March, 2002, on application by the Respondent.

The Plaintiff’s claim against the Defendants jointly and severally before the lower Court is as follows:

“The Plaintiff claims against the Defendants jointly and severally the sum of N1,792,218.00 (One million, seven hundred and ninety two thousand, two hundred and eighteen Naira) being money paid by the Plaintiff to the Defendants for the lease of 2 (two) plots of land at one Tarmac Estates, Samanda, Ibadan, which consideration has totally failed and which the Defendants have refused to refund despite repeated demand.”

The particulars of the decided case are as follows:

- Money paid for 2 (two) Residential Plots = N1,631,800.00
- Agency fee = N81,590.00
- Ground Rent, Survey and Legal fees for 2 (two) Residential Plots = N78,828.00
- **Total claim = N1,792,218.00**

“In addition to the above, the Plaintiff also claims 21% interest on the sum paid (total above) from the 1st day of January, 1997, until judgment and 10% thereafter until the Defendants pay the money. The bone of contention in the decided case was that at the conclusion of the transaction, and armed with the land allocation letter and survey plans delineating the two plots, the Respondent could not take possession of the plots and discovered that Tarmac Estate was a sham and that contrary to the representations made by the Appellants, the land purportedly allocated to him belonged to the Federal Government of Nigeria. The Respondent demanded for the refund of his money but the Appellants refused to refund the money which necessitated the Respondent commencing the proceedings at the trial Court but contended that the 1st and 2nd Appellants were agents of the 3rd Appellant and that 1st and 2nd Appellants are only liable to refund the agency fees received, the money for the survey having been expended. There was no Statement of Defence filed on behalf of the 3rd Appellant being put forward as the only party liable to refund the Respondent’s money. In course of trial the Respondent led evidence in proof of his case while the Appellants did not lead evidence in support of their pleadings.” The Judge granted the prayer of the Respondent and, dissatisfied with the judgment, the Defendants appealed to the Court of Appeal. In the end, the appeal failed.

We can see from the above decided case that the parties involved in any conflict have to realise that in solving one problem, many policies could generate, accelerate or in fact aggravate other problems. Perhaps an amicable solution could have been found to resolve the locational conflict if both parties had soft-pedalled and explored a non-legal settlement. In systems terminology, as Johnston (1979) observed, political responses to environmental issues have feedback effects, producing new environmental demands and requiring further responses. A solution ought to have been found, which could guarantee equal treatment of all the parties involved in the locational conflict in the interest of equity, peace and city sustainability.

Based on Johnston's theoretical proposition, three options could possibly have been considered by Tarmac Estates Limited for a peaceful resolution of the locational conflict surrounding the use and redevelopment of the Old Ibadan Airport in Nigeria. The way forward was for the two parties to the conflict to make a wise choice out of the following options, *inter alia*:

The Private Bargaining Option

This conflict involved an interest group at the federal level (Nigerian Air Force), and an interest group at the private sector level (Tarmac Estates Limited), with both parties attempting to achieve leverage with respect to each other by exploiting any particular bargaining resources at their disposal. In fact, to complicate matters, the local and state governments (Ibadan North Local Government and Oyo State Government respectively), in whose jurisdictional areas the project site was located, would like the proposed estate project to see the light of the day, particularly because of the tax advantages which the project could have in their favour. On the other hand, the Air Force authorities would want to put pressure on the federal government to apply its power of eminent domain in forcefully retaining its ownership of the Air Force Base building on the disputed project site. In this way, the conflict was between two spatially based conflicting interest groups to attract onto their turfs those activities providing positive externalities and enhancing rents on the one hand, and national security (territorial defence) on the other hand. In one breadth, conflicts between nations and within nations can make the possession of a sophisticated Air Force very compelling for national and territorial self-defense, and for regional and international peace keeping operations, in another breadth. Examples are the Nigerian military inputs in the West African Peace Keeping Operations (ECOMOG) in Liberia and Sierra Leone, as well as in the UN Peace Keeping Missions worldwide. At the same time, the individual citizen's business rights must be protected by the state, although the latter stance can only be possible when a nation is at peace and where the system of governance tends towards democracy.

The Relocation Option

Alternatively, relocation might be a way out of the dilemma. If either of the two parties was agreeable to relocation, then an alternative site could be secured for resettling the party that agreed to move to a suitable alternative site within the metropolis. To ease the implementation of this second option, however, the federal government had to be prepared to use its power of eminent domain to compulsorily acquire an alternative site and pay adequate compensation to the land allottees/owners that might be displaced in the process. This would be possible through the government's exercise of its powers as enunciated in the Constitution and land law of the nation. In this regard, the Land Use Act of 1978 and the Public Lands Acquisition (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act of 1976 are the two statutory instruments by which land could be acquired compulsorily in Nigeria in the public interest. Compensation, in respect of the former, was payable on the unexhausted improvements over land and in respect of any economic trees thereon. Since land has been nationalised in Nigeria, compensation in respect of land itself is nevertheless a peanut which is just the ground rent that is payable in respect of acquired land in the year of acquisition. Elsewhere, the recommendations put forward for the establishment of a Nigerian Employee Relocation Council (NERC) could also be helpful in ameliorating emerging relocation problems in a project's locality (Babarinde, 1995).

The Joint Agenda Option

Under ideal situations, it has been argued that feuding groups should meet together to develop a joint agenda of problems to be discussed, rather than meeting separately to prepare separate agenda. In joint meetings, members of both groups indicate that problems of one group are worth serious attention by the other, and that successful problem solving will take place only if all group members attack the problem together (Filley, 1975).

On this basis of co-operation, the Federal Government of Nigeria acting through its four relevant departments, namely: the Ministries of Defence, Commerce and Industry, Works and Housing, and Aviation and Transport, could constitute a panel to look into this locational conflict and seek ways of resolving it amicably. The Oyo State Government, in whose jurisdictional area the project site was lying, and the two stakeholder parties (Nigerian Air Force and Tarmac Estates Limited) would need to fully co-operate with the panel in this task of conciliation for the sake of the overall sustainable development and security of the nation.

However, the success of any joint agenda rests on the assumption of the principles of co-operation and trust that must be affirmatively pursued by both parties to the conflict. These principles include belief in the availability and desirability of a mutually acceptable solution, belief in cooperation rather than competition, belief that everyone is of equal value, and belief in the views of others as legitimate statements of their position. The other principles are belief that differences of opinion are helpful, belief in the trustworthiness of the other party, and belief that the other party can compete but chooses to cooperate.

Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

Prevention is always better than cure. Effective solutions to potential conflicts require that problems are nipped in the bud before they erupt and deteriorate into confrontations. On the other hand, if resolution efforts have to commence after conflicts have erupted, then care must be exercised in all cases to ensure that problems are always tackled peacefully and sustainably. In both cases, co-operative dialogue is to be preferred to the force of arms (Zeitsoft, 2011; Commonwealth Currents, 2000:3, 16; United Nations, 1998). For example, in respect of the Israeli settlements in the West Bank, ‘a weakening trend in Palestinian violence was observed in 2010, coupled with growing economic and security cooperation between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, when the Israeli military removed over 120 check points and planned on disengaging from major Palestinian population’ (Wikipedia, 2012). According to the IDF, terrorist activity in the West Bank at that time decreased by 97% compared to violence in 2002. Similar solutions to locational conflicts will be enhanced by the adoption of an integrative decision-making approach (IDM), information technology, as well as principles of accountability and transparency in decision-making for project selection and implementation. There can be no shorter and more sustainable approach to the amicable resolution of conflicts arising from project location/relocation decision-making in any contemporary urban setting that is already bedeviled with many externalities.

Furthermore, it is recommended that prospective project developers should always be sure that they are in full possession of registered land title deeds before embarking on site development. Where such developers are quasi-public authorities, such as Tarmac Estates Limited (partly owned by the Federal Airports Authority) which failed to pursue the legalisation of its acquisition of the Old Ibadan Airport from the erstwhile Nigerian Airports Authority, they should ensure that their acquisition is fully documented through a government gazette and that fair amounts of compensation are paid to all dispossessed property owners. In the case of private developers who buy land in the open market, no efforts should be spared to get the land title documents registered in the Lands Registry. To underrate these procedures is to leave room for possible future locational conflicts and even

loss of title to both the land and the project on the land, because, in legal parlance, “he who owns the land owns everything on it”.

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Acknowledgement: The author is grateful to the authorities of Tarmac Estates Limited, for allowing the unhindered use of their project as a case study for this paper.